



VIRTUAL RECS 2022

Research and Evaluation
Conference on Self-Sufficiency

June 1-3, 2022
1:00-5:00 pm ET





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ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Administration for
Children and Families

330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov>

June 1, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS) 2022, convened by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This conference brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss cutting-edge research on employment, well-being, and self-sufficiency among families with low incomes. This 21st convening of the conference is our second virtual RECS. Although we will miss seeing you in person, we hope the virtual format allows a broad and diverse group of speakers and participants to exchange ideas and findings from the most recent and rigorous research in the field.

The conference sessions are organized in six thematic tracks:

- TANF Programs, Policies, and Populations
- Employment and Mobility in the Labor Market
- Youth Well-Being and the Transition to Adulthood
- Strengthening Families, Fatherhood, Marriages, and Relationships
- Evaluating Social Programs, Building Evidence, and Using Data
- Approaches to Alleviate Poverty and Expand Opportunity

These tracks are meant to encompass major areas of current research and to help you plan your participation in the conference. Each track is associated with a color to guide you through the program.

The detailed agenda in this program book provides session descriptions (pages 6–28). To join the virtual sessions, click “Join Live Sessions” on the virtual venue homepage or “Agenda” in the venue’s left-side menu.

I particularly want to highlight the plenaries taking place on each conference day. These sessions cover the timely and important topics of serving families through COVID-19 and beyond, exploring

and adapting to the changing nature of work, and engaging people with lived experience in efforts to improve programs and conduct research. We are honored to have speakers from all levels of government, researchers, practitioners, and individuals with lived experience in these sessions.

Additionally, we are pleased to have RECS Emerging Scholars, Marriage Strengthening Research and Dissemination Center Interns, and OPRE Behavioral Intervention Scholars at the conference. Please support them by attending the Emerging Scholars Lightning Talks on Wednesday, June 1 at 4:00 p.m. Eastern. Additionally, I encourage these scholars and any attendee who identifies as a student, recent graduate, or junior staff or faculty member to register to join the Research Mentoring and Networking Event on Friday, June 3 at 12:00 p.m. Eastern.

Several people deserve particular mention for their roles in planning the conference: Hilary Bruck, Nicole Constance, Lauren Deutsch, Marie Lawrence, Emily Ross, Sarita Barton, Selma Caal, Mina Addo, Elaine Carpenter, Ciara Bridges, Justin Falcone, Rowan Myers, and Elisa Rosman. I thank them all. I would also like to thank the RECS logistics contractor, AIR, for its work in planning this conference. Finally, I'd like to thank all of our speakers for sharing their time and knowledge.

In addition to the formal conference sessions, I hope you will also find opportunities for informal exchange of ideas about research, policies, and programs, including through the virtual venue's interactive chat features and the Social Wall. Additionally, we invite you to join the conversation and share your conference experience on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn using the conference hashtag #RECS2022.

Again, welcome to the conference. I am glad that you are here, and I look forward to your participation.

Sincerely,



Emily Schmitt

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning,
Research, and Evaluation

About OPRE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre>

The **Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)**, within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), studies ACF programs and target populations through rigorous research and evaluation projects. These include evaluations of existing programs, evaluations of innovative approaches to helping low-income children and families, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies. This research is directed to a broad audience, including ACF program offices, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and program providers. OPRE also works to improve data and coordinates performance management for ACF.

OPRE is comprised of four divisions:

- The **Division of Economic Independence** focuses on welfare, employment, training, education, and family self-sufficiency.
- The **Division of Family Strengthening** focuses on teen pregnancy prevention, youth development, healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, family violence, runaway and homeless youth, and early childhood home visiting.
- The **Division of Child and Family Development** focuses on early care and education, including subsidized child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, and child abuse and neglect.
- The **Division of Data and Improvement** supports ACF programs in responsibly managing and using data to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of human services programs.

Stay Connected

During the conference and throughout the year, we invite you to use the tools displayed here to engage with OPRE, conference participants, and others interested in well-being and self-sufficiency among families with low incomes.



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Visit RECS online at <http://recsconference.net/>

Detailed Agenda

All times in this agenda are in Eastern Time.

TRACK KEY



TANF Programs, Policies, and Populations (TANF)



Strengthening Families, Fatherhood, Marriages, and Relationships (Families & Fatherhood)



Employment and Mobility in the Labor Market (Employment)



Evaluating Social Programs, Building Evidence, and Using Data (Evidence)



Youth Well-Being and the Transition to Adulthood (Youth)



Approaches to Alleviate Poverty and Expand Opportunity (Alleviate Poverty)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

TIME EVENT

1:00 p.m. OPENING REMARKS

Emily Schmitt (*Administration for Children and Families*)

January Contreras (*Administration for Children and Families*)

1:15 p.m. PLENARY SESSION

Adapting to Serve Families and Build Knowledge During COVID-19 and Beyond

This opening plenary session will explore how ACF programs, specifically TANF, the Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants Program, and Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood programs, adapted to continue serving families during the COVID-19 pandemic, how the lessons that program leaders have learned over the past two years will influence their future work with families, and the implications of these adaptations for future research and evaluation with human services programs. The plenary will build on the [Virtual RECS 2020 plenary](#) on response and recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic by (1) sharing results from systematic research across multiple programs, and (2) asking practitioners to reflect on the longer-term effects of COVID-19 on their programs and clients and their plans to serve families “beyond COVID.” **Amelia Popham** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session and **Susan Golonka** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will serve as the discussant.

- **The Role of Positive Organizational Culture in a Pandemic Response: Lessons from Five TANF Programs**
Asaph Glosser (*MEF Associates*)
- **Tribal HPOG 2.0: Adapting Career Pathways Programs in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**
Carol Hafford (*NORC at the University of Chicago*)
- **Virtual Service Delivery in HMRP Programs: Lessons from the 2015 Cohort of HMRP Grantees**
Francesca Venezia (*Mathematica*)
- Lisa Tatum (*Fairfax County Department of Family Services*)
- Gerri LeBeau (*Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board*)
- Caitlin Maraj (*Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling Services, Inc.*)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

 TANF
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TIME	EVENT
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2:30 p.m.	BREAK
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2:45 p.m.	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS
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Adapting the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Employment Model

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, a promising approach to improving employment outcomes, has drawn great interest from federal and local policymakers. The model was developed for people with serious mental illness and has largely been studied with this group in community mental health centers. In that context, there is extensive evidence of IPS's success in helping people find jobs. This session will present IPS research that is part of ACF's Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) and Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies (NextGen) Projects. The session will offer context and examples of how IPS employment programs may be applied with a range of populations, including factors to consider in designing programs and developing service delivery strategies outside the serious mental health treatment setting. **Clare DiSalvo** (*Administration for Children and Families/VPD Government Solutions*) will moderate the session.

- **IPS: Background and Directions for Future Research**
Sam Elkin (*MEF Associates*)
- **Two-Year Findings From the Evaluation of Breaking Barriers: An IPS Program**
Lily Freedman (*MDRC*)
- **IPS for Adults With Justice Involvement: Engagement in a Challenging Context**
Tim Kautz (*Mathematica*)
- **Current BEES IPS Studies: Sharing Early Implementation Lessons**
Megan Millenky (*MDRC*)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1



TIME EVENT

2:45 p.m. Co-Regulation and Connection in Human Services: Developing a Learning Agenda

To further build the evidence base on regulation and connection capacity in human services, ACF has created a working framework and is in the process of developing a learning agenda with a special focus on strengthening youth regulation as they transition to adulthood. This session will highlight how three projects examined co-regulation and connection strategies and resources in a variety of settings, including healthy marriage programs, the child welfare system, and fatherhood programs. **Aleta Meyer** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- **Self-Regulation Approaches and Resources for Healthy Marriage Programs for Youth (SARHM)**
Caryn Blitz (*Administration for Children and Families*)
- **Building Co-Regulation Capacity to Support Positive Development for Youth With Foster Care Experience**
Desiree Murray (*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*)
- **Co-Regulation, Connection, and Father Engagement in Human Services Programs**
Katie Pahigiannis (*Administration for Children and Families*)
Pooja Curtin (*Administration for Children and Families*)

2:45 p.m. Exploring Evaluations of Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Programming

Healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) programs for youth aim to improve young people's understanding of romantic relationships and prepare them to have healthy romantic relationships in adulthood. This session will discuss research about young adults' perspectives and experiences of romantic relationships, reviews the existing evidence base on the effectiveness of HMRE programs for youth, and highlights the impacts of a HMRE program for high schoolers in Georgia. **Kriti Jain** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- **Adolescent and Young Adult Romantic Relationships: Attitudes, Experiences, and Quality – A Comprehensive Review of the Literature**
Karen Guzzo (*Bowling Green State University*)
- **Using an Evidence and Gaps Map to Understand the Effects of HMRE Programs for Youth**
Julia Alamillo (*Mathematica*)
- **The One-Year Impacts of a Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Program for High School Students**
Brian Goesling (*Mathematica*)

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TIME EVENT

2:45 p.m. **Facilitators and Barriers to Low-Income Latino Families' Uptake of Public Safety Net Programs**

Government policies and programs touch the lives of many families in the United States, including Hispanic families with low incomes. However, Hispanic families' experiences with these policies and programs are complex and many families may be missed by public safety net programs. The presentations in this session will examine the role that federal and state policy, as well as on-the-ground practices, have in shaping access to and uptake of public benefits among Latino families with low incomes, with the goal of providing a robust understanding of Hispanic families' experience of federal programs and policies aimed at improving economic well-being. The presentations will include actionable recommendations on how to increase access to programs for this population. **Lina Guzman** (*Child Trends*) will moderate the session.

- **A New Look at Administrative Burden From the Perspectives of Income-Benefit Workers Serving Latinx Families**
Luis E. Basurto (*Duke University*)
- **Exploring Policy's Role in Receipt of Tax-Based Incomes With a Racial Equity (and Latino) Focus**
Yiyu Chen (*Child Trends*)
- **A Policy Equity Analysis of the Earned Income Tax Credit: Fully Including Children in Immigrant Families and Hispanic Children in This Key Anti-Poverty Program**
Dolores Acevedo-Garcia (*Brandeis University*)

2:45 p.m. **TANF Data Collaborative: How States Are Building Data Analytics Capacity**

The TANF Data Collaborative (TDC) is an initiative of ACF's TANF Data Innovation project, launched in late 2017 to accelerate the use of TANF administrative data for program improvement and evidence building at the federal, state, and local levels. TDC supports TANF agency efforts to routinely use TANF and other administrative (e.g., earnings) data to inform policy and practice, with the intention of improving employment and well-being outcomes for individuals and families. This panel will provide an overview of the TDC project model and three pilot agencies will showcase their experiences exploring research questions that improve understanding of TANF participant and employment outcomes, TANF performance measures, and how patterns of TANF participation, among other factors, can predict models of success. **Melissa Wavelet** (*MDRC*) will moderate the session.

- **Wage Progression of TANF Leavers in California**
Caroline Moyer (*California Department of Social Services*)
- **Predicting Time on Cash Assistance at Case Opening**
Fang Cheng (*NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance*)
- **Expanding Minnesota's Family Cash Assistance Performance Measure**
Ben Jaques-Leslie (*Minnesota Department of Human Services*)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

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2:45 p.m.	<p>What Employment Programs Might Work for My Clients? Using Evidence to Inform Employment and Human Services Programming </p> <p>Administrators of TANF and other programs focused on job seekers with low incomes want access to clear, actionable information about which employment and training programs work for the clients they serve. The Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (Pathways Clearinghouse) funded by ACF and the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Chief Evaluation Office provide central sources of reliable, accessible information on the effectiveness of employment-related programs. This session will present findings from both Pathways Clearinghouse and CLEAR as well practitioners’ perspectives on how the clearinghouses help them meet their clients’ needs. Siri Warkentien (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>) will moderate the session and Kataney Couamin (<i>Philadelphia Works</i>) and Lisa Salazar (<i>Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles</i>) will serve as the discussants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing What Works in Employment Programs: Findings from Pathways Clearinghouse Meta-Analyses Sarah Wissel (<i>Mathematica</i>) • The Effectiveness and Implementation of Community College Interventions Kristin Abner (<i>ICF</i>)
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3:45 p.m.	BREAK
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4:00 p.m.	Emerging Scholars Lightning Talks – Human Services Policy and Practice
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Please tune in for a fast-paced session of five-minute “lightning talks” from RECS Emerging Scholars—scholars and researchers early in their careers who were selected to participate in the conference. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentations. Scholars’ presentation materials will also be made available for viewing in the Emerging Scholars gallery within the virtual venue. **Siri Warkentien** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate this session focused on human services policy and practice.

- **The U.S. Tax and Transfer System: Structure, Interactions, and Limitations**
 Ellie Terry (*University of Washington*)
- **Virtual Human Services Delivery During COVID-19: Lessons About Effective and Equitable Approaches**
 Alec Vandenberg (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*)
- **How a Permanent Expansion of the Child Tax Credit Could Affect Poverty**
 Kevin Werner (*Urban Institute*)
- **Examining TANF Programs’ Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis in California**
 MinJee Keh (*University of California at Berkeley*)
- **New Directions in Employment and Training: Approaches From Human-Computer Interaction on Technology-Based Support for Low-Income Job Seekers**
 Marisa Putnam (*Georgetown University*)
- **Employment Coaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons Learned From Four Programs**
 Miranda Kharsa (*Mathematica*)
- **Pushed to the Precipice: Benefits Cliffs/Financial Gaps Undermine NY’s Safety Net**
 Julia Casey (*Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies*)
- **State TANF Policies in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**
 Ilham Dehry (*Urban Institute*)

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4:00 p.m.	Emerging Scholars Lightning Talks – Supporting Parents and Strengthening Relationships
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Please tune in for a fast-paced session of five-minute “lightning talks” from RECS Emerging Scholars—scholars and researchers early in their careers who were selected to participate in the conference. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentations. Scholars’ presentation materials will also be made available for viewing in the Emerging Scholars gallery within the virtual venue. **Erin Cannon** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate this session focused on supporting parents and strengthening relationships.

- Providing HMRE Programs Virtually: Lessons From a Case Study of the ELEVATE Program in Florida**
 Katie Bodenlos (*Mathematica*)
- Black Fathers Setting Their Policy and Program Agenda**
 Zoelene Hill (*New York Academy of Medicine*)
- The Effects of Subsidized Uber Rides for Low-Income Mothers: Results From a Field Experiment**
 Seth Chizeck (*Carnegie Mellon University*)
- Effects of the Online OurRelationship Education Program Provided Nationwide to Low-Income Couples**
 S. Gabe Hatch (*University of Miami*)
- African American HMRE Participation, Economic Stability, and Positive Mental Health Outcomes: A Review of the HMRE Literature**
 Elvis Gyan (*Child Trends*)
- HMRE, Economic Stability, and Mental Health Among African American Couples**
 Tia Dickerson (*Child Trends*)
- Increasing Access to Basic Needs Hygiene Products to Alleviate Poverty and Expand Employment Opportunities**
 Kelley Massengale (*Diaper Bank Network*)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

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4:00 p.m.	Emerging Scholars Lightning Talks – Youth and Family Well-Being
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Please tune in for a fast-paced session of five-minute “lightning talks” from RECS Emerging Scholars—scholars and researchers early in their careers who were selected to participate in the conference. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentations. Scholars’ presentation materials will also be made available for viewing in the Emerging Scholars gallery within the virtual venue. **Elaine Carpenter** (*Administration for Children and Families/VPD Government Solutions*) will moderate this session focused on youth and family well-being.

- Understanding Economic Self-Sufficiency Within the Culture and Context of Native American Early Childhood Programs**
 Chelsea Wesner (*University of Colorado-Anschutz Medical Campus*)
- Activate: The Collective to Bring Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Research to Youth Supporting Professionals**
 Rachel Rosenberg (*Child Trends*)
- The Long-Term Impacts of Benefit Conditions and Sanctions on Family Well-Being**
 KaLeigh White (*University of Iowa*)
- Understanding Their Circumstances: How Grief Negatively Affects Youth Transitions to Self-Sufficiency**
 Dorothy Handfield (*Newark Board of Education*)
- Engaging Low-Income African American Adolescents in a Virtual Avatar-Based Nutrition Education Program**
 Basheerah Enahora (*University of North Carolina Greensboro*)
- Understanding Families Returning to Homelessness: Disparities and Utilization of Housing Programs and Other Assistance**
 Gina May (*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*)
- The Labor Market Effects of Reducing Perceptions of Discrimination**
 Hannah Ruebeck (*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*)
- Lessons From a Researcher-Practitioner Partnership Implementing YouthWorks: An Online Program for Adolescents in Child Welfare**
 Brittney Davis (*New York Academy of Medicine*)

THURSDAY, JUNE 2



TIME	EVENT
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1:00 p.m.	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS
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Peer Support Strategies to Build Social Capital in Social Services Programs 

Many human services programs recognize the power of “social capital,” or the value that arises from relationships. Peer support can help increase well-being and build social capital between people with shared experiences, and programs may help participants build these connections through peer mentors, peer navigators, or peer support groups. This session will highlight research on the use of peer supports in social service programs for individuals who have experiences with human trafficking, intimate partner violence, or reentry. Presenters will offer valuable insight into practical, research-based methods to build social capital and improve outcomes through peer support, and identify opportunities to advance the peer support evidence base. **Laura Erickson** (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) will moderate the session.

Please note that this session will include discussion of sensitive topics including human trafficking, intimate partner violence, and reentry.

- **Peer Support at the Intersection of Human Trafficking, Substance Use, and Co-Occurring Mental Health Disorders**
Beth Pfenning (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- **How My Life My Choice’s Evidence-Based Survivor Mentoring Model Helps Youth Improve Well-Being**
Ann Wilkinson (My Life My Choice)
- **Peer Supports for Individuals Who Have Experienced Human Trafficking, Intimate Partner Violence, or Reentry**
Sofi Martinez (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

1:00 p.m.	Programs and Policies to Improve Young Adults’ Life Trajectories 
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This session will provide an integrated perspective on youth’s transition to adulthood, first by describing young adults’ employment paths and then by examining simulations of education and employment policies and programs that may improve youth’s life course trajectories. The first presentation will examine employment and income trajectories among youth from families experiencing varied disadvantages. The next two presentations use the Social Genome Model, a lifecycle model that uses data from three longitudinal surveys to track a matched panel of individuals from birth to age 30. The simulations estimate the adult economic outcomes associated with associate’s and bachelor’s degree attainment as well as the impacts of training programs and job quality on earnings.

Kimberly Brown (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) will moderate the session.

- **Young Adults’ Pathways to Upward Mobility**
Martha Ross (Brookings Institution)
- **Increasing Postsecondary Degree Attainment to Improve Adult Economic Outcomes**
Kristin Blagg (Urban Institute)
- **Job Training and Improvements in Job Quality in Early Adulthood to Improve Adult Economic Outcomes**
Gabriel Piña (Child Trends)

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1:00 p.m.	Research and Tools for Examining Wage Instability and Benefit Cliffs 
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Earnings changes can affect eligibility for public benefits and can potentially lead to benefit cliffs, which occur when the value of lost benefits exceeds an earnings increase. Earnings volatility and benefit cliffs can exacerbate economic instability for both low-wage workers and people who receive public benefits. This session will focus on research examining wage and benefit instability in two states (Washington and New Jersey) and present a federally-developed, practitioner-tested tool to help clients and their case workers anticipate benefit reductions and benefit cliffs as their income changes. **Mina Addo** (*University of Wisconsin-Madison*) will moderate the session.

- Dynamic Earnings, Stable Benefits? An Examination of How Social Programs Respond to Household Earnings Volatility**
 Hilary Wething (*Pennsylvania State University*)
- Benefit Cliffs, Categorical Eligibility, and Program Interactions: Pitfalls and Potential Policy Solutions**
 Seth Hartig (*National Center for Children in Poverty*)
- A Marginal Tax Rate (aka "Benefit Cliff") Calculator for Case Workers and Program Recipients**
 Nina Chien (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*)

1:00 p.m.	Strategies for Addressing Healthy Relationships in Fatherhood Programs – Lessons Learned From the CHaRMED Study 
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Fathers, children, and their families benefit from healthy romantic and coparenting relationships. Fatherhood programs aim to improve relationship skills to support such healthy relationships, yet recent research has found that these services are not highly attended by participating fathers. The federally-funded Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED) study seeks to better understand how fatherhood programs support fathers' healthy romantic and coparenting relationships, examine how program approaches align with the needs of the fathers they serve, and inform the field about future directions for programming. This session will highlight findings from the CHaRMED study, drawing on interviews conducted with fathers, coparents, program staff, and experts. **Millicent Crawford** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads**
 Samantha Ciaravino (*Child Trends*)
- Supporting Fathers' Coparenting and Romantic Relationships During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic**
 Andrea Vazzano (*Child Trends*)
- Strategies to Support Healthy Relationships for American Indian and Alaska Native Fathers**
 April Wilson (*Child Trends*)

THURSDAY, JUNE 2

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TIME EVENT

1:00 p.m. **Syntheses of Evidence on Sectoral Training Strategies' Effectiveness**

Job training programs have evolved over the past decade, with greater emphasis on sectoral approaches and use of the career pathways framework. These efforts respond to perceived shortcomings in traditional training approaches, particularly with regard to supporting low-income workers in advancing. They also aim to meet employers' demands for a skilled workforce. The body of evidence regarding the effectiveness of sectoral and career pathways training interventions is growing rapidly. While findings from several evaluations have highlighted the promise of both approaches at improving participants' labor market outcomes, there is room for improvement. Presentations in this session will move beyond the question of simple program impacts to address which program components and practices show particular promise, and for which subgroups of participants. **Marie Lawrence** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- **Meeting the Needs of Job Seekers and Employers: A Synthesis of Findings on Sector Strategies**
Richard Hendra (*MDRC*)
- **Lessons from the PACE and HPOG 1.0 Evaluations: Synthesis of Six-Year Impact Findings**
Randall Juras (*Abt Associates*)
- **Enhancing Evidence-Based Program Design: Preliminary Evidence From a Meta-Analysis of 45 Career Pathways Programs**
Laura Peck (*Abt Associates*)

1:00 p.m. **Using Spatial Analysis to Understand Access and Engagement in TANF and Other Social Services**

Geospatial analysis can be used to support and improve research on the delivery of social services. As its application expands, information learned from this type of analysis can provide greater comprehension of specific programs and their contexts. This session will feature two presentations that focus on TANF and offer greater understanding of how well the program reaches those it is intended to benefit. Speakers will also address the promises and challenges of spatial analysis for assessing the need for, access to, and engagement in social services. **Sarita Barton** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session and **Maria Ocampo** (*Washington University in St. Louis*) will serve as the discussant.

- **Ratio of Child Recipients to Poor Children: A Metric of TANF Performance in the 21st Century**
Gilbert Crouse (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*)
- **New and Actionable Insights for Welfare-to-Work: Understanding Access and Engagement in Los Angeles**
Robert Santillano (*California Policy Lab at UCLA*)

THURSDAY, JUNE 2

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TIME	EVENT
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2:00 p.m.	BREAK
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2:15 p.m.	PLENARY SESSION
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The Changing Nature of Work and Implications for Families, Programs, and Research

This plenary session will explore emerging and ongoing trends in the labor market and implications for the nature of work over the coming decade. Key themes include worker displacement due to technology or automation, the rise of alternative and “gig” work arrangements, and increasing demand for care work. Speakers from across perspectives will discuss what these trends mean for individuals and families with low incomes, the employment and training programs designed to serve them, and research intended to improve programs and advance positive outcomes for program participants. Speakers will address disparate impacts of labor market shifts across racial and ethnic groups, genders, and geographic contexts, as well as the influence of COVID-19 on the changing nature of work. **Dan Bloom** (*MDRC*) will moderate the session.

- Cynthia Miller (*MDRC*)
- Kristen Broady (*Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago*)
- Alex Camardelle (*Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies*)
- Paul Osterman (*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*)
- Shelly Steward (*The Aspen Institute*)

3:30 p.m.	BREAK
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3:45 p.m.	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS
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Administering Human Services in Different Contexts: Approaches, Experiences, and Remaining Need

There are many challenges and opportunities in administering human services to families based on the context that those services are operating in, such as urban/rural, in-person/virtual, and the coordination of multiple services. To better serve families and meet them where they are, there is a growing need to further understand the different approaches for administering services in these varied contexts and the remaining need that families face. This session will highlight two ACF-funded studies that explore how human services are administered in different contexts and the challenges and opportunities that present themselves in these settings. **Kathleen Dwyer** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session and **Agnes Black Weasel** (*Blackfeet Manpower*) will serve as the discussant.

- **Early Findings From the Understanding the Value of Centralized Services Study**
Kimberly Foley (*MEF Associates*)
- **Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts**
Corianne Payton Scally (*Urban Institute*)

THURSDAY, JUNE 2

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3:45 p.m.	<p>Employment Coaching: Impact Findings From a Multi-Program Evaluation and Implications for Practitioners and Policymakers </p> <p>Recent research has led policymakers and scholars to argue that some people might not achieve economic independence in part because of difficulty applying the self-regulation skills—sometimes referred to as soft skills or executive functioning skills—needed to get, keep, and advance in a job. Evidence suggests that facing poverty, and the multiple stresses that accompany it, can make it particularly difficult to develop and use self-regulation skills. However, emerging research suggests that employment coaching from a trained staff member may strengthen self-regulation skills, and these skills, in turn, may improve employment outcomes for low-income people. This session will present initial implementation and impact findings from ACF’s Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations. The session will also include a practitioner’s perspective on implications of the findings. Lauren Deutsch Stanton (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>) will moderate the session and Ruthie Liberman (<i>EMPath</i>) will serve as the discussant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Coaching: What It Is, Programs That Use It, and Successes and Challenges in Implementation Sheena McConnell (<i>Mathematica</i>) • What Are the Impacts of Employment Coaching? Interim Findings From an Experimental Multi-Program Evaluation Quinn Moore (<i>Mathematica</i>)
3:45 p.m.	<p>Engaging and Supporting Fathers in Human Services Programs to Promote Father Involvement </p> <p>Fathers play a significant role in the healthy development and well-being of their children. However, many fathers face competing responsibilities, stressors, systemic barriers, and other challenges to being involved with their children. Many human services programs incorporate creative strategies to support and engage fathers in their programming and promote father involvement with their children. This session will highlight an array of programs, including employment and retention programs and economic stability programs, that employ father engagement strategies. Mindy Scott (<i>Child Trends</i>) will moderate the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for Strengthening Father Engagement Across Human Services Programs Matthew Cournoyer (<i>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</i>) • Narrative Change for African American Fathers Through Transforming Impossible Into Possible for Fatherhood Philip Hong (<i>Loyola University Chicago</i>) • The Impact of Psychological Well-Being and Co-Parenting Relationship on Fathers’ Involvement With Their Children Patricia Kohl (<i>Washington University in St. Louis</i>) Destini Goodwin (<i>Fathers and Families Support Center</i>)

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3:45 p.m. Exploring How TANF and Other Forms of Cash Assistance Support Employment and Well-Being

TANF is one of several programs in the social safety net that provides cash assistance to families experiencing poverty. This session will explore innovations in TANF policy and practice, and interactions with other forms of cash transfer, to understand how increases in the amount of money available to families participating in TANF can improve employment and well-being. **Sarita Barton** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- **Does a Lump-Sum Payment at TANF Program Entry Impact Employment Outcomes?**
Megan Kauffmann (*Colorado Department of Human Services*)
- **Early Outcomes of Maryland’s Partial Child Support Pass-Through Policy**
Letitia Passarella (*University of Maryland*)
- **Trends in Work Support: Examining the Effect of TANF and EITC on Low-Income Families**
Rhucha Samudra (*Augusta University*)

3:45 p.m. Supporting Youth With Disabilities in the Transition to Adulthood: Findings from Recent Experiments

Many young people with disabilities face challenges at the individual, family, and systemic level that can make the transition to adulthood and employment more difficult. This session will present findings from recent studies of programs that aimed to serve young people with disabilities and that emphasized work-based learning experiences and other employment-promoting services. In addition to describing the various service models and summarizing the impacts on youth outcomes, the session will share lessons learned about developing and implementing transition services for youth with disabilities. **Gabrielle Newell** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session and **Jeffrey Hemmeter** (*Social Security Administration*) will serve as the discussant.

- **Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE): Five-Year Impacts of the PROMISE Projects**
Ankita Patnaik (*Mathematica*)
- **Work Experiences for Students With Disabilities: A Synthesis of Findings Across Four Model Demonstration Projects**
Susan Foley (*University of Massachusetts Boston*)

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3:45 p.m.	Using Data and Equitable Research Approaches to Improve Indigenous Programs 
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Colonization, historical injustice, and discrimination have influenced the research and evaluation conducted on or with Indigenous Tribes and communities in the United States. Consequently, these populations have often been excluded from the collection and use of data that shaped many policies and programs that have harmed Indigenous families and communities. This session will feature three presentations that highlight approaches for research, evaluation, and data collection and use that promote equity for these communities. **Amelia Popham** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- **How to Engage with Indigenous Tribes and Communities in Evaluation and Research**
Heather Gordon (*Child Trends*)
- **Collaborative Partnerships for Growth: Using Data to Strengthen Native Programs**
Kristen Hudgins (*Administration for Community Living*)
- **Measuring Collaboration: Using Data to Improve Tribal TANF-Child Welfare Collaboration and Coordination**
Laura Nerenberg (*Administration for Children and Families*)

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12:00 p.m.	NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY
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Research Mentoring and Networking Event

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation and the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families, in partnership with the National African American Child and Family Research Center and the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center, are pleased to host this virtual networking opportunity.

The event is designed to facilitate relationships between mentees (conference attendees who identify as emerging scholars, including students, recent graduates, and junior staff and faculty) and mentors (senior researchers and leaders in the field) who study family self-sufficiency and social welfare programs and policies, including the experiences of diverse populations and racial and ethnic equity in human services. Mentors and mentees will be grouped in Zoom breakout rooms based on topical interest. Discussions will be informal, and topics will include conducting studies with diverse populations, applying an equity lens to research, and career development more broadly.

This event is free and open to all RECS attendees who identify as emerging scholars.

Separate advanced registration is required by June 1.

1:00 p.m.	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS
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Employment Services for People With Substance Use Disorders: Findings From Recent Implementation Studies



The United States is experiencing a crisis in addressing the wide-ranging needs of individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs)—a crisis that has been exacerbated by increases in substance misuse and overdoses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employment can be a critical element in addressing substance misuse, as working can help those with SUDs stay on the path to recovery. However, many people in recovery may struggle with employment, particularly during periods of economic disruption such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This session will present implementation findings from two recent evaluations of a range of employment services for people with SUDs. **Clare DiSalvo** (*Administration for Children and Families/VPD Government Solutions*) will moderate the session and **Christina Yancey** (*U.S. Department of Labor*) will serve as the discussant.

- Workforce System Approaches to Supporting Individuals and Communities Impacted by the Opioid Crisis**
 Jill Berk (*Mathematica*)
- Integrating Employment Services With SUD Treatment and Recovery: The Experiences of Five Programs**
 Hannah Betesh (*Abt Associates*)

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TIME EVENT

1:00 p.m. **Impact Findings From the Strengthening Relationship Education and Marriage Services (STREAMS) Evaluation**

Research suggests that children and their parents fare better on a range of outcomes when living in stable, low-conflict, two-parent families. Healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) programs focus on strengthening and improving the quality of relationships by offering a range of services from relationship education for high school students to marriage and relationship skill building for adult couples. ACF funded the Strengthening Relationship Education and Marriage Services (STREAMS) evaluation to help identify strategies for improving the delivery and effectiveness of HMRE programs, with a particular emphasis on understudied populations and program approaches. This session will present findings from three of the STREAMS impact studies to demonstrate the many ways programs are providing HMRE services and reflect the current state of evidence of the impacts of these programs. **Alan Hawkins** (*Brigham Young University*) will moderate the session.

- **Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education for Expectant and New Mothers: The One-Year Impacts of MotherWise**
Ankita Patnaik (*Mathematica*)
- **Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education With Integrated Economic Stability Services: The Impacts of Empowering Families**
April Wu (*Mathematica*)
- **Integrating Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Into an Employment Training Program: The Impacts of Career STREAMS**
Julieta Lugo-Gil (*Mathematica*)

1:00 p.m. **Next Generation of Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS-NG): Going Beyond Nudges in Child Welfare and TANF**

The ACF Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency-Next Generation (BIAS-NG) project aims to improve human services program design and outcomes through the application of behavioral science principles. BIAS-NG partners with state and local agencies to diagnose behavioral barriers to program success; design interventions to address those barriers; and test the efficacy of those behaviorally informed interventions relative to status quo service delivery for TANF, child welfare, and Head Start programs. The presentations in this panel will offer the audience new evidence to better understand the implementation and effectiveness of behavioral science interventions. **Kimberly Clum** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- **BIAS-NG: A Randomized Trial With Allegheny Child Welfare**
Rekha Balu (*MDRC*)
- **BIAS-NG: Two Randomized Trials With Monroe County TANF**
Clinton Key (*MDRC*)
- **BIAS-NG: The Practitioner Perspective**
Elizabeth O'Brien (*Monroe County Department of Human Services*)

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1:00 p.m.	<p>Sexual Risk Avoidance Education: Emerging Evidence for Program Improvement </p> <p>Nearly a decade ago, federal policy making surrounding adolescent health began to shift from a focus on abstinence to sexual risk avoidance, with a strong emphasis on the successful transition to adulthood. As an emerging program, the federal evaluation agenda for Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) is using a descriptive and formative approach to enrich programming, build data and evaluation capacity, and improve a growing evidence base. This session will present two distinct SRAE research efforts and their emerging findings pointing towards program successes and opportunities for improvement Caryn Blitz (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>) will moderate the session and Calonie Gray (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>) will serve as the discussant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the Benefits of Success Sequence for Economic Self-Sufficiency and Family Stability Hande Inanc (<i>Mathematica</i>) • Enhancing SRAE Programming Through Improved Facilitation: An Application of Program Components Research Heather Zaveri (<i>Mathematica</i>)
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1:00 p.m.	<p>The Promise of Administrative Data in Long-Term Follow-Up Research </p> <p>Many social programs are intended to generate long-term benefits for their participants, but evaluations of those programs have historically not had access to the necessary resources to measure such outcomes over the long run. Administrative data present a potentially low-cost opportunity for tracking the long-term effects of policy or program interventions. However, there are open questions around what makes a study a worthwhile candidate for long-term follow-up; how to navigate the many considerations associated with this type of work; and whether administrative data are of sufficient quality and completeness to adequately support long-term outcomes research. This session will feature three presentations that have started to address these questions. Brett Brown (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>) will moderate the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding Considerations for Examining Long-Term Outcomes in Program Evaluations Using Administrative Data Jonathan Bigelow (<i>MDRC</i>) • Long-Term Employment Experiences of NEWWS Study Participants Deondre Jones (<i>MDRC</i>) • The Marginal Value of Public Funds: Identifying the Long-Term Cost-Effectiveness of Public Policies Ben Sprung-Keyser (<i>Harvard University</i>)
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1:00 p.m.	Understanding Clients’ Perspectives on Poverty and Public Assistance Receipt 
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Considerable evidence links experiences of poverty with harmful effects on many outcomes for adults and children. Yet relatively little is known about individuals’ perceptions of their experiences of living in poverty and accessing social safety net programs such as TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The presentations in this session use qualitative data to explore both children’s and adults’ perspectives and experiences with poverty and receiving public assistance. Greater understanding of these experiences may inform potential program improvements. **Lisa Zingman** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session and **Luke Shaefer** (*University of Michigan*) will serve as the discussant.

- **Disability, Work, and Self-Sufficiency Programs: Client Perspectives on SSI and SSDI**
 Matthew Borus (*University of Chicago*)
- **Understanding Families’ Experiences of Poverty: Parents’ and Children’s Perceptions of and Experiences With Public Assistance Programs**
 Rashmita Mistry (*University of California, Los Angeles*)

2:00 p.m.	BREAK
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2:15 p.m.	CLOSING REMARKS
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Hilary Bruck (*Administration for Children and Families*)

ACF’S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Amanda Coleman (*Administration for Children and Families*)

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2:30 p.m.	PLENARY SESSION
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	Engaging People With Lived Experience in Program Improvement and Research Initiatives 
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	<p>Engaging individuals with lived experience of human services is one strategy for advancing equity in program improvement and research initiatives. This plenary session will explore promising practices for such engagements through discussion of federally-funded projects implemented at the federal and state levels. Federal staff, program staff, and individuals with lived experience will share the projects' goals, the structure of the engagements, and lessons learned through the process that may be useful to practitioners and researchers considering similar work. Gabrielle Newell (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>) will moderate the session.</p>
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People With Lived Experience
 Laura Erickson (<i>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</i>)
 Faith Davis (<i>South Carolina Program for Infant Care</i>) Engaging Iowa Youth in the National Youth in Transition Database
 Kathryn Kulbicki (<i>Administration for Children and Families</i>)
 Doug Wolfe (<i>Iowa Department of Human Services</i>)
 Kayla Powell (<i>Iowa Department of Human Rights</i>) |
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3:45 p.m.	BREAK
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4:00 p.m. CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Examining Innovative Rental Subsidies as a Means of Promoting Housing Stability and Family Well-Being

This session will present work examining innovative types of rental assistance and their role in promoting housing stability and family well-being. The first presentation will discuss findings from a recent ACF study to understand how TANF funding is being used to support families experiencing homelessness. The second presentation will feature findings from New Jersey's Keeping Families Together Program, a supportive housing model designed to increase self-sufficiency and prevent child maltreatment among families involved with the child welfare system. The final presentation will examine the DC Flex rent subsidy program, a conditional cash transfer program that provides direct support to participating families. **Anice Chenault** (*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*) will moderate the session.

- **Approaches for Using TANF Funding to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness**
Lauren Dunton (*Abt Associates*)
- **Keeping Families Together: An Evaluation of a Supportive Housing Program for Child Welfare-Involved Families in New Jersey**
Pamela Lilleston (*New Jersey Department of Children and Families*)
- **Do Shallow Rental Subsidies Promote Housing Stability? Evidence From the DC Flexible Rent Subsidy Program**
Maria Alva (*Georgetown University*)

4:00 p.m. Executing the Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²) Phases: Lessons From Iowa, Baltimore, and New York

State, local, and Tribal leaders need quick, low-burden strategies to make evidence-driven decisions about their approaches in a rapidly evolving world. Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²) is one model that draws upon evidence and analytic methods practitioners can use to support rapid change and continuous program improvement. As part of ACF's Project SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Advance Research and Knowledge), Mathematica and The Adjacent Possible have been working with TANF programs to support their need to modify, test, and innovate to find processes that can better support their staff and clients. This session will highlight three programs' experiences using LI². **Michelle Derr** (*The Adjacent Possible*) will moderate the session.

- **Understanding What to Change: Implementing a Learn Phase to Optimize Remote Service Delivery**
Lorie Easter (*Iowa Department of Human Rights*)
- **Baltimore Health Corps Initiative: A Transitional Jobs Program to Improve Health and Employment Outcomes During COVID-19**
Yvette Clark (*Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development*)
- **Learning to Improve: NYC HRA's Redesign of Their Assessment for Youth and Families Receiving TANF**
Angela Ghesquiere (*New York City Department of Social Services*)

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4:00 p.m.	Experiences and Perspectives of TANF-Eligible Individuals and TANF Recipients 
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Many factors influence participation in the TANF program and outcomes associated with TANF receipt. This session will examine the TANF life-cycle by featuring presentations that explore eligible participants' decision-making around whether to apply for TANF, indicators of long-term TANF receipt, and employment outcomes related to TANF participation.

- Perceptions of TANF Among Low-Income, Justice-Involved Parents Who Did and Did Not Apply for TANF**
 Amelie Petitclerc (*Universite Laval*)
- Indicators of Long-Term TANF Receipt: TANF Utilization Among New Maryland Recipients**
 Lauren Hall (*University of Maryland*)
- Employment and Family Cash Assistance in Minnesota**
 Ben Jaques-Leslie (*Minnesota Department of Human Services*)

4:00 p.m.	Improving Services to Fathers Through Continuous Improvement Mechanisms: Lessons From Two Evaluations 
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Fathers intersect human services systems in a variety of ways. Supporting the diverse set of programs that serve fathers while also bolstering such programs' research readiness and continuous improvement requires a range of methods grounded in a common set of principles, such as those from continuous quality improvement approaches and implementation science frameworks. This session will share program improvement experiences from two different program settings serving fathers and their families: fatherhood programming and child welfare services. Each presentation will share an overview of the continuous learning approach employed, highlighting data that were collected and how rapid-cycle tests were incorporated. **Pooja Curtin** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session and **Taffy Compain** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will serve as the discussant.

- Rapid Learning Methods to Enhance Father Engagement and Program Implementation**
 Emily Marano (*MDRC*)
- Designing Systems That Effectively Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives and Promote Racial Justice**
 Jill Spielfogel (*Mathematica*)

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4:00 p.m.	Mixed Approaches for Serving Youth in Work Readiness Programs and Beyond 
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This session will explore different approaches aimed at connecting youth with education and work opportunities. The presentations will describe the features of and research findings regarding three distinct approaches—increasing local financial and programmatic flexibility, building relational capacities of current or former foster youth, and implementing a checklist to assess positive youth development practices in workforce development organizations. **Jan DeCoursey** (*Child Trends*) will moderate the session.

- Serving Disconnected Youth Through Federal Flexibilities: The National Evaluation of the Performance Partnership Pilots (P3)**
 Armando Yanez (*Mathematica*)
- Skills to Pay the Bills: Skill Building and Relationally Centered Practice for Transition Age Youth**
 Kristina Halmai-Gillan (*YMCA of San Diego County*)
- Positive Youth Development in Workforce Development Settings: A Practical Application**
 Hannah Lantos (*Child Trends*)

4:00 p.m.	Moving Ahead or Falling Behind: Factors Related to Disparities in Employment and Training Program Outcomes 
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Employment and training programs hold promise to help people with low incomes improve skills, expand their employment opportunities, and increase their wages and economic mobility. However, some participants face challenges to completing such programs and to attaining and advancing in employment after program completion. Research finds that some individual characteristics predict more positive employment and economic mobility outcomes. This session explores how different factors may support or impede upward mobility in the labor market. It features presentations that assess the relationship between type of training or skill development and labor market advancement; racial and gender disparities in training completion and earnings; and program and policy interventions that support mobility to higher wage occupations among diverse populations. **Megan Reid** (*Administration for Children and Families*) will moderate the session.

- Earning Multiple Entry-Level Credentials and Career Pathway Advancement in HPOG**
 Nathan Sick (*Urban Institute*)
- Expanding Registered Apprenticeship to Underrepresented Populations: Findings From the American Apprenticeship Initiative Implementation Study**
 Doug Walton (*Abt Associates*)