Welcome to the Welfare Transition program’s Up-front Diversion training. This training is intended for WT program staff, managers, supervisors, quality assurance, trainers and all other staff who directly interact with program participants.

Blaise Pascal, the noted 17th century French philosopher, physicist and mathematician, once quipped “Man finds nothing so intolerable as to be in a state of complete rest, without occupation, without diversion, without effort. Then he feels his nullity, loneliness, inadequacy, dependence, helplessness, emptiness”.

What Pascal meant, to freshen the vernacular, is that all people desire to experience the joy of being needed, of contributing to society – a feeling of accomplishment that can be found in a meaningful, productive job and career. Many applicants who come to seek help have a job or job offer and only need to remedy a specific barrier in order to start or continue working. This is what Up-Front Diversion services are all about – fixing problems that are preventing a customer from working.
In this presentation, we will discuss what Up-Front Diversion is, who may apply, who is appropriate for a diversion service and how to document the services.
So, what does it mean to divert someone from cash assistance. Diversion means “to change the course of action.” Many of our participants are detoured from success because of an emergency situation. Our goal is to get them back on track fast so they can go back to work as soon as possible. Sometimes, it is possible to use the Up-Front Diversion program, and sometimes it is not.
What is Up-Front Diversion?

- **Up-Front Diversion** is a program that is designed to help cash assistance applicants who may not need ongoing cash payments
  - The goal of the program is to change their course of action back to a successful course of action
  - The goal is to provide the services applicants need to help them get right back into employment

We want to get these applicants back to work as soon as possible. A diversion service could be just the ticket. Let’s illustrate this principal… Let’s pretend that we are auto mechanics for a moment. We have two customers come in with car problems requesting a complete diagnosis. After talking briefly with the first customer, we learn that her car may have several serious issues that may require a lot of time to diagnose and repair, so we ask her to leave her car for several days so that we may correct the problems. Our second customer’s vehicle, however, only seems to have a hole in a tire, causing it to go flat every few days. Instead of keeping her car and performing unnecessary diagnostics, this customer would be better served by us simply fixing the tire.
What is Up-Front Diversion?

- Form of *IMMEDIATE* assistance
  - Support services
  - A once in a lifetime payment of up to $1,000
- Used to alleviate an emergency situation or unexpected barrier to self-sufficiency
- Used only when a diversion service or payment would resolve the emergency
  - Resolution would lead to work

Up-Front Diversion is a form of immediate assistance used to alleviate an unexpected circumstance or emergency situation. If this emergency issue were resolved, the individual could go right into a job. This means that the person is both employable and has a job or job offer. This means the individual is both eligible and appropriate for a diversion service.
What is Up-Front Diversion?

There are four steps that are critical to the success of Up-Front Diversion

**Step 1: Link the applicant to job opportunities**

- The Up-Front Diversion process is a part of the applicant process
  - Work registration process
  - Applicants are engaged in employment services
  - Applicants should be given the opportunity to look for work, and if appropriate, the individual should be connected to employers by the career center staff
  - Look at page five of the guidance, fourth point

There are four steps that program staff MUST take prior to approving a diversion payment. This progression is actually a natural progression if it is implemented correctly as a part of the work registration program.

Remember, during the work registration process, we are getting to know our participants. We have to determine if this program is appropriate. Also, our applicants are getting to know us. This includes accessing employment services in the career center. The first step is to connect the individual to job opportunities. This is not just “self-initiated” job search. This is actually identifying individuals who are work-ready and helping connect them to employers and job openings to help them get back into the work force fast. Other individuals will already have a job or job offer but they cannot go to work because of an emergency.
The second step in the Up-Front Diversion process is to offer the applicant support services that will help him or her get to work. This is an integrated part of the applicant process. This may include traditional services, such as childcare and transportation, which an applicant may need to get to workshops offered during the work registration process. Services may also include more specific services, such as a car repair.
The third step in the process is screening applicants so we can respond to their emergency situations. We should be screening our applicants to help meet their needs or offer appropriate services as a part of the work registration process. We recommend assessing the family’s situation to determine if the applicant is both eligible and appropriate.
Step 3: Screening applicants to respond to emergency situations

- What type of screening is appropriate?
  - The initial assessment
  - Interviews
  - The [AWI WTP 2073](#) - Screening Form
- Section 1 and Section 2
  - Is the individual eligible?

Applicants must be formally screened as well. Make sure that the first page of the 2073 is completed with the applicant. Discuss the information to ensure the individual is an appropriate candidate, as well as eligible.
The last step is to offer the applicant a cash payment which would be applied to his EBT card by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The amount is up to $1,000 and should be directly related to the amount the family needs.
Determining a person eligible includes screening the individual to ensure:

- The individual documents his or her identity;
- The individual provides information regarding household composition, diversion eligibility, and TANF eligibility;
- The individual is an applicant and is not currently receiving TCA;
- The applicant has an emergency/unexpected situation that may be resolved through Up-Front Diversion; and
- The applicant has secured an on-going means for meeting monthly recurring expenses.
Who is eligible?

- The RWB must
  - Verify that the individual is an applicant for cash assistance
    - The individual is NOT receiving cash assistance
  - Document the applicant’s identity and citizenship
    - Use FLORIDA if possible
  - Document that the household meets the definition of “family”
  - Document the household composition, including names and Social Security Numbers

The RWB must verify that the individual is an applicant and document
- their identity
- that they meet the definition of family
- household composition.

For in depth instructions on the Up-front diversion process, access the guidance located on the Agency for Workforce Innovation’s website.
Who is eligible?

The family must:

- Have an emergency need that if resolved would allow the family to return to work immediately
  - The family must document the emergency need
- Document how the emergency need would be resolved
  - The family must create a plan demonstrating that the resolution would lead to the family being able to meet their own expenses

Eligibility includes both an emergency and a resolution that leads to the family NOT needing cash assistance.
To be an appropriate candidate for a diversion service, the applicant must have a job or job offer that has been disrupted or impeded by the emergency situation.
Who is an appropriate candidate?

- **Services and/or the payment must resolve the emergency situation**
  - Does the family have recurring emergencies interrupting employment?
    - Take a look at the parent’s work history
    - Is the work history steady?
    - Is the work history often interrupted?
  - Will the Up-Front Diversion resolve the emergency and help him/her meet the family’s needs or will it only resolve this situation?
    - Does the family have the ability or planning to manage other emergencies?
  - Does the family have the means to meet their day-to-day needs if Up-Front Diversion Services are provided?

Applicants considered for a diversion service must also have the financial means to meet their recurring day-to-day needs and obligations.
Who is an appropriate candidate?

- Would the family be better served with a diversion payment or a diversion service?
  - If a service resolves the problem, is a cash payment of up to $1,000 really necessary?
    - This is a once in a lifetime payment

After determining an applicant both eligible and appropriate for a diversion service, you must determine which service would be most appropriate. Some situations will call for a cash payment, but many will not. Careful consideration should be given prior to offering any diversion services, particularly a payment.
So, here we have John, a diligent employee, who has recently been unable to get to his job in the next town because his truck is not working. John’s boss is holding his spot for him, but can only do so for a couple of weeks before a replacement must be hired. Would John be a good candidate for a diversion service?

Answer: Yes, John would be an excellent candidate for Up-Front Diversion services. He has a stable work history, a job available for him to resume, and an issue that likely can be resolved with a diversion service.
Now, we have Mary who has lost 3 jobs this year already. During the initial interview with Mary, you learn that she has another job offer that she may have to turn down because she must supply her own equipment, which she doesn’t have. Is Mary a good candidate. Why or Why not?

Answer: Mary’s unstable job history could preclude her from being offered a diversion service. A thorough interview with Mary may reveal the cause of her difficulties in keeping a job and offer a glimpse of how to best help Mary secure and keep a good job.
Up-Front Diversion services are considered “non-assistance” and utilize the Regional Workforce Board’s TANF funds.
What must be documented?

- The RWB must document:
  - That the household meets the definition of a “family”
  - The household composition
  - The SSNs of family members is not required
  - The household income
  - The emergency situation or unexpected situation
  - The resolution of the emergency situation

Documentation is vitally important and required by statute. RWBs must ensure that all pertinent information is recorded and placed in the participant’s permanent file. The RWB must document that the household is a family by definition, the household size, income, and the emergency situation that needs to be resolved. After services are rendered, the results of the services must also be recorded.
What must be documented?

- The RWB must document that the family has the means to meet their on-going needs if Up-Front Diversion assistance is provided.

Since the ability of the family to meet recurring financial obligations is a requirement of eligibility for diversion services, this must also be documented.
Up-Front Diversion

- If the applicant is approved for a payment by the WT program
  - The applicant must sign an agreement to receive diversion payment *instead of* on-going cash assistance
  - This means the entire family *cannot receive cash assistance for three months* after receipt of the payment unless an emergency exists

Those customers approved for a diversion payment must sign an agreement stating that they elect to receive the payment in lieu of on-going cash assistance. Once a diversion payment is received, the family cannot apply for cash assistance for a period of three months unless a qualified emergency exists.
The signed diversion payment agreement is forwarded to DCF who then enters the information into the FLORIDA system for processing.
Diversion payments do not count against a participant’s cash assistance time limits and may be stopped by the RWB anytime before the money is released.
Up-Front Diversion

- If employment is secured within 90 days of the start of the diversion process, the family may receive
  - Transitional childcare for up to two years based on local operating procedures
  - Transitional transportation for up to two years based on local operating procedures
  - Transitional education and training for up to two years based on local operating procedures

Those participants who receive a diversion payment and start work within 90 days may be eligible to receive transitional childcare, transitional transportation, and transitional education and training for up to two years as defined by the region’s local operating procedures.
Up-Front Diversion

- How do we know when the 90 days has passed?
  - It is based on the *Upfront Diversion Screening Form, AWI WTP 2073*
  - *Date on the bottom of page 1*

The 90 day time limit begins on the day that the participant signs the Upfront Diversion Screening Form which appears at the bottom of page 1 on the form.
As mentioned briefly earlier in the presentation, a family who receives and diversion payment cannot reapply for TCA for a period of 3 months after the payment is received, unless a qualified emergency exists as defined by the RWB.
Qualified emergencies may include: a natural disaster, an accident or illness that results in a loss of income or work, hospitalization. Of course, this list is far from comprehensive since the RWB must decide what it considers a qualified emergency.
Up-Front Diversion

What information has to be entered in the One-Stop Service Tracking (OSST) system?

ALL applicant services are entered in the system

So how do we track all of this information? In the One-Stop Service Tracking system, better known as OSST.
Once a participant’s case has been opened and changed to applicant, the case manager must record ALL applicant services and activities in OSST.
To enter a diversion service or payment, click on the Add Service button on the Skill Development screen.

To enter a diversion payment in OSST, you must log onto the system with your user ID and password. Your system Desktop will display. Select the option to go to the Skill Development page, either from the left hand side navigation menu or the folder tab located at the top of the screen. The options are indicated with a burgundy arrow. To add the payment service, click the “Add” button on the bottom right hand corner of the screen under the “Service Plan” module.
Enter the Provider Search information in the system

The provider should reflect who is providing the “diversion”, which is the RWB

Once you have selected to “Add” tab for a diversion service or payment, the next system screen will prompt you to enter the provider who will grant the service and/or payment. To do this, type the provider’s name in the appropriate field and click “Search”. When the results populate, choose the correct provider from the list. Remember, the provider should be the entity providing the service.
After choosing the provider for the diversion service and/or payment, you will see the screen where you will enter the diversion information. Under service details, you will see Service Type. This is a required field. You will choose the appropriate service from the drop down box. In this case, the service type is Upfront Diversion, code 842. The screen also asks for the persons in the home who will receive the service. You will select all that apply. You will see the “Actual Start Date” associated with providing the service or payment. The actual start date is the date you formally started assessing the individual for a potential service or payment. This date is the date located on the AWI WTP form 2073. Since providing a diversion service or payment is time sensitive, you are encouraged to use the anticipated end date to track the service or payment process. Although the anticipated end date is not a required field, it prompts you when the time limit for the process is about to expire and should be used to remind you to follow up on the case.
Once you have entered all of the applicable information, click “Save” to save the information.
To edit or end the upfront diversion service or payment, click on the blue hyperlink under the “Service Type” module from the Skill Development page in OSST.
When a service or a payment is approved, record this information in the financial section of the module, along with the date the diversion was approved or denied, the actual end date, and the outcome in the case.
The diversion was approved on January 12, 2009.

Received a service and a payment

In this scenario, the participant was approved for both a diversion service and payment. We know this because the case manager answered “Yes” to both questions located under the “Financial Outcome” section. The case manager recorded the “actual end date”, January 12, and the outcome of the service and payment. The case manager also recorded a brief description in the “Detailed Reason for Service Outcome” field.
In this example the diversion was denied. The questions under the “Financial Outcome” section are both marked “No” and the “Reason for Service Outcome” dropdown has the outcome of “Denied”. The actual end date is January 14, 2009, which is the date the service/payment was denied. A simple note is provided and asks the reviewer to see the participant’s case notes for more information on the upfront diversion denial.
Finally, case managers should always document the entire process from initial engagement to the final outcome in the participant’s case notes.
So to review: We covered who is eligible and appropriate for diversion services, the types of services available and how to record the information in the One-Stop Service Tracking system.

If you have more questions, comments or concerns about the Up-front Diversion program, please contact the Welfare Transition Team at 1-866-352-2345.