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TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Jeanne Carroll, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: TANF DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

DATE: October 12, 2005

This memo is to announce and provide preliminary guidance for the “TANF Demonstration Program, Request for Applications (RFA).” The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) intends to issue an RFA for projects on or around November 2, 2005 in accordance with Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 5101.803.

### **General Information**

The Ohio General Assembly established the TANF demonstration program to fund “innovative and promising prevention and intervention projects that meet one or more of the four purposes” of the TANF block grant and that “are for individuals with specific and multiple barriers for achieving or maintaining self-sufficiency and personal responsibility.” In accordance with these provisions, ODJFS will issue an RFA requesting project applications in the following areas only:

- Employment Retention and Advancement. Projects in this area should concentrate on assisting low-income families to not only find employment but to provide support and build the skills necessary advance to higher wage employment with benefits, stability, and career potential.
- Domestic Violence. Projects in this area should emphasize early detection, intervention, and service strategies for TANF-eligible individuals experiencing or at risk of domestic violence.
- Asset Accumulation. Projects in this area should focus on helping eligible families build and manage assets; this may include the creation of individual development accounts (IDA) and micro-enterprise development.
- Disability Issues. Projects should focus on identifying and assisting TANF-eligible individuals who either have a disability or chronic illness, or have

responsibility for a family member with disability or chronic illness, in order to provide timely employment and habilitation strategies.

- Child Welfare - Targeted Employment and Training. Projects should focus on providing employment and training services to those families with children involved in the child welfare system. The projects should be designed specifically to offer employment and training services that will enable parents to effectively and appropriately care for their children in their own home.

These project areas were selected to maximize the use of available TANF dollars by avoiding duplication with TANF-funded initiatives either currently operating or in active development. These non-demonstration projects include student intervention (under development with the Ohio Department of Education) and “strengthening marriage and families” initiatives (under development by the Governor’s Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives). In consultation with the Office of Family Stability - Executive Leadership Council, TANF-demonstration program areas were identified based on the additional criteria below:

- Must address one or more of the four TANF purposes;
- Must meet the objectives established by the General Assembly;
- Must address a problem area either not being addressed or being inadequately addressed by an existing program in the state;
- Must address a problem or barrier affecting a significant number of individuals and/or with a severe impact; and
- Should have available approaches or strategies that are promising and can be implemented within the time available.

## **Process**

The ODJFS intends to issue an RFA on or around November 2, 2005 requesting applications from county departments of job and family services for projects in one or more of the targeted project areas. The application process will consist of two phases:

1. **Application Submission:** The RFA will establish specific demonstration project expectations as well as the minimum requirements for acceptance of the project and continuation to “readiness review.” The applicant’s response will be required to include at least the following:
  - a. detailed description of the proposed project;
  - b. demonstration of capacity to implement the project (e.g., timely staffing, management, eligibility determination, participant recruitment);
  - c. agreement to comply with all applicable state and federal regulations governing the expenditure of federal TANF dollars;

- d. description of the monitoring, data collection, and reporting necessary for project evaluation; and
- e. proposed project budget

ODJFS recognizes the potential need to initiate procurement processes prior to selection as a project site. This is permissible with the following considerations:

- there is no guarantee of selection;
- projects outside the specified project areas will not be considered; and
- any agreement entered as a result of a procurement process must be conditioned upon selection of the project by ODJFS.

2. Readiness Review: Applications meeting the minimum qualifications specified in the RFA will be selected for the “readiness review” phase. This phase will confirm the project’s readiness for implementation by, for example, determining that initial staffing and contracts (if applicable) are in place; recruitment and eligibility processes are ready; and reporting and oversight capabilities are documented.

ODJFS anticipates that the applications will be due in early December and selected for the readiness review phase on or around January 6, 2006.

### **Questions?**

Following the release of the RFA, an Applicant Conference will be held to provide assistance on completing the application. A web-based question and answer process will also be implemented to further assist potential applicants. More details will be provided in the RFA.

Thank you for your consideration.

- c: Barbara Riley, Director, ODJFS
- Fred Williams, Assistant Director, ODJFS
- Deputy Directors, ODJFS
- Loretta Adams, OJFSDA
- Crystal Allen, Executive Director, PCSAO
- Larry Long, Executive Director, CCAO
- Kim Newsome, Director, OCDA
- Family Stability staff