

***NH Department of Health and Human Services  
Plan to Close the Cliff Effect for Individuals and Families  
who Receive Public Benefits Working Group Meeting  
Minutes***

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

**I. Call to order**

Donnalee Lozeau called to order a meeting of the Cliff Effect Working Group meeting at 3:00 PM on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, at NH Employment Security (45 S. Fruit Street, Concord, NH)

**II. Attendance**

- Susan Huard, designee for Chancellor Gittell, NH Community College System
- Lisa English
- Chris Santaniello
- Gene Patnode
- Christina Lachance
- Allison Joseph
- Representative Mary Jane Wallner
- Danielle Bishop, designee for Commissioner Caswell
- Rich Lavers
- George Copadis
- Anna Hamel
- Dee Pouliot, designee for the Executive Director of NHHFA Dean Christon
- Donnalee Lozeau
- Chris Tappan
- Senator Cindy Rosenwald
- Kim Runion

Absent:

- Christine Brennan, designee for Commissioner Frank Edelblut

Quorum is present

### **III. Review of Working Group's Legislative Defined Duties**

- The members of the workgroup approved the minutes from the November 22, 2019 meeting.
- Lisa English reviewed what the enabling legislation requires from both the Department and the workgroup. This group will work with the Department to create a plan to close the cliff effect, and will file quarterly reports per HB 4.
- The first report is due to the legislature by March 1, 2020.

### **IV. Review Efforts Supporting a Whole Family Approach to Jobs**

- Group discussed the five components of the workgroup: the Whole Family Approach to Jobs, NH Chapter; DHHS's Whole Families Integration Team; this workgroup; Economic Analysis of the cliff effect in the state; and the development of the benefits calculator.
- Chris Tappan discussed how the workgroup should work collaboratively and across departments and borders in order to work with employers to create better paying jobs that will allow people that are receiving state assistance to obtain economic mobility.
- Discussed how Rhode Island created their Whole Family workgroup and the items that they are working on.
- The Whole Family logo was discussed; it includes national efforts, ACF and Region 1, NH State chapter and Cliff Effect working group, state chapter subgroups, NH DHHS integration team and DHHS leadership and ACF technical support. The state chapter sub-groups include employers/workforce, childcare, transportation and housing.
- Goals were discussed and the approach of the workgroup participating in a regional and national learning community to accelerate innovation.
- Goal to support businesses and disrupt poverty by creating an economic mobility pathway in every community.
- Leverage an evidence-based multi-generational integrated framework with families at the center of the policy making.
- Incentivize work, boost individual effort and responsibilities while strengthening communities.
- Promote efficiencies in government and multi-section partnerships.

- Manhattan Strategy Group (MSG), through funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (HHS, ASPE) and in coordination with NH DHHS, will be creating a benefits cliff calculator
- Chris Santaniello discussed the whole families' chapter with the group. That group, in a sense, acts as the ambassadors for this effort. The Chapter will help guide the workgroups and DHHS Integration Team.
- Explained what the DHHS integration team was, who is part of the team and what they are working on for this group. Discussed what the barriers around the cliff effect and then drilled down.
- Gene Patnode is looking forward to focusing on the integrating programs, policy, services and supports for whole families.
- Rich Lavers discussed the economic analysis and share additional information that was not final at the last meeting. There is now an official approved contract with Econsult Solutions, Inc (Econsult). Econsult is based out of Philadelphia, PA. Econsult is partnering with the National Center for Children in Poverty.
- The timeline is aggressive, which is driven by the NH but Econsult is confident to be able to complete all goals by the intended deadlines. Lots of data going back and forth and is very engaging.
- By Valentines' Day, the group will have policy recommendations and the final report is expected to be complete by June 18, 2020.
- Reviewing each choice at the state and county level and will be localizing and will be looking at the impacts within the communities. This will involve communities with populations of 10,000 or higher.
- Econsult and DHHS should have plenty of information that will feed into the policy recommendations.
- Chris Tappan discussed the RFP for this and explained how NH was selected by the US DHHS/ACF as a pilot state to have a custom calculator developed for NH.
- Group discussed the economic analysis and how that will show information about the communities within NH. NH needs to create a model that we can continue to update over time and not have to recreate in the years to come.
- Chris discussed how Econsult and NH will be able to understand how the benefit cliff calculator will help to provide a deeper look into the communities and this

calculator will also be available to the public, employer, businesses, non-profits, community services, etc.

- Chris Tappan explained what the Atlanta Federal Reserve is working on and how they are looking at long-term. If people would like to get additional education or a degree, what will that do to their own individual cliff effect and how will it impact the individuals' social security in the long run.

#### **V. Update from Regional Whole Families Convening in Rhode Island (Chris T)**

- Discussion and take away from Rhode Island:
  1. Parent engagement
  2. Transportation
  3. Solving the Cliff Effect (state sharing)
- The two most critical voices in NH are the parents and the employers. We need to make sure that parents are given the freedom to speak and they are being heard. We also need to make sure that we are hearing from the employers and make sure that they want to be involved.

#### **VI: What are we missing from our conversation?**

- Donnalee Lozeau discussed cross-pollinating amongst the groups. Parents and businesses at the center being heard and informing our work.
- What subject matter or voice or stakeholder haven't we heard from? How else can we make sure that everyone that should be at the table is at the table?
- Encourages the workgroup to bring forth any and all ideas not only about the calculator but what should be included in the discussions.
- Want to continue to include our policy makers in the legislature and hear what they have to say on this subject.

#### **VII: Open discussion on Concepts for the Plan**

- Lisa provided a brief overview of the overlapping timeframes of the five components
- Anna Hamel (parent) discussed the problems that she dealt with about when she got married, she lost her TANF for her older children.

- Anna also spoke to the group about one of her co-workers and how her co-worker couldn't accept a promotion due to the fact that she would end up losing her child care benefits.
- What should we include on the plan/task list? Calculator, policy, educational information (workgroup would like to hear from teachers or school staff).
  - Video vignettes and stories.
- Chris Tappan asked if the Dept. of Education would want to share what their plan is with the work group.

### **IX: Adjournment and Items for Next Meeting**

- Request for stories for the next meeting regarding the impact of the benefit cliff on families.
- Lisa English would like to increase the meeting time to 2 hours instead of 90 minutes. Group voted for increase the meeting time to two full hours.
- Working on a document to share with the group for the next meeting.
- What/who are we missing from the conversation?
- Conversation for next meeting: What activities does your organization participate in that link with whole families/ cliff effect work? What concerns from the group you represent do you want to highlight for the working group?
- Feedback on the power point presentation.
- If you know organizations that are working on the cliff effect, send that information to Lisa.
- Meetings may be posted in the House and Senate calendars.

Chris Tappan motioned to adjourn the meeting and Chris Santaniello second it.

*Minutes submitted by: Kathie Capron*