



Federally-reported TANF Data

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Outline

- What is the federally-reported TANF data?
- How is the data used?
- Challenges of making better use of these data
- Needs assessment results
- Current effort

What is the federally reported TANF data?

States submit TANF data on a quarterly basis to the Office of Family Assistance (OFA).

Case-level data:

- Benefits received
- Time limit status
- Sanctions

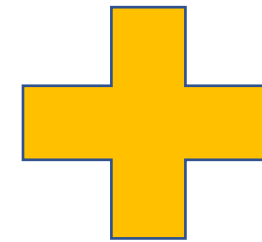
Person-level data:

- Demographics
- Work activities



Aggregate data:

- Total families applying for assistance
- Total families receiving assistance
- Total amount (\$) of assistance provided



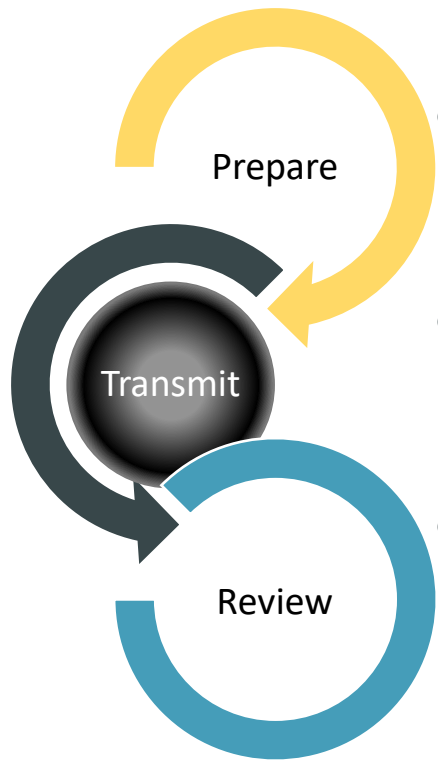
**States can submit data for sample of cases*

How does OFA use these data?

Topic	Questions answered with the data	Latest Numbers
Caseload	How many families are applying for and receiving assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2 million families • 2.38 million child recipients
Work participation	What proportion of TANF families are engaged in work-related activities ? How many states met their work participation targets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48.1 % of work-eligible families in work activities. • Among two-parent families: 57.9%. • 7 states missed at least one of WPR target.
Characteristics	What are the characteristics of the average TANF family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About \$425/mon in assistance • Adult recipients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% w/ < HSD or equivalent • 28% employed
Time Limits	How long have families been receiving assistance, and how many are exempt from the 5-year time limit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 of families w/ < 13 countable months toward the 5-year limit. • 2.1 % of families exempt due to hardship

Challenges of making better use of the data

- Transmission process: complicated



- Up to 9 different types of records to prepare every quarter.
- Limitations on how much data can be submitted at once
- Transmission feedback not easy to understand

- Written guidance: dense



- 120+ data elements
- 50+ pages of instructions
- Some info out-of-date
- Interpretation varies by state

- Sample data: highly variable

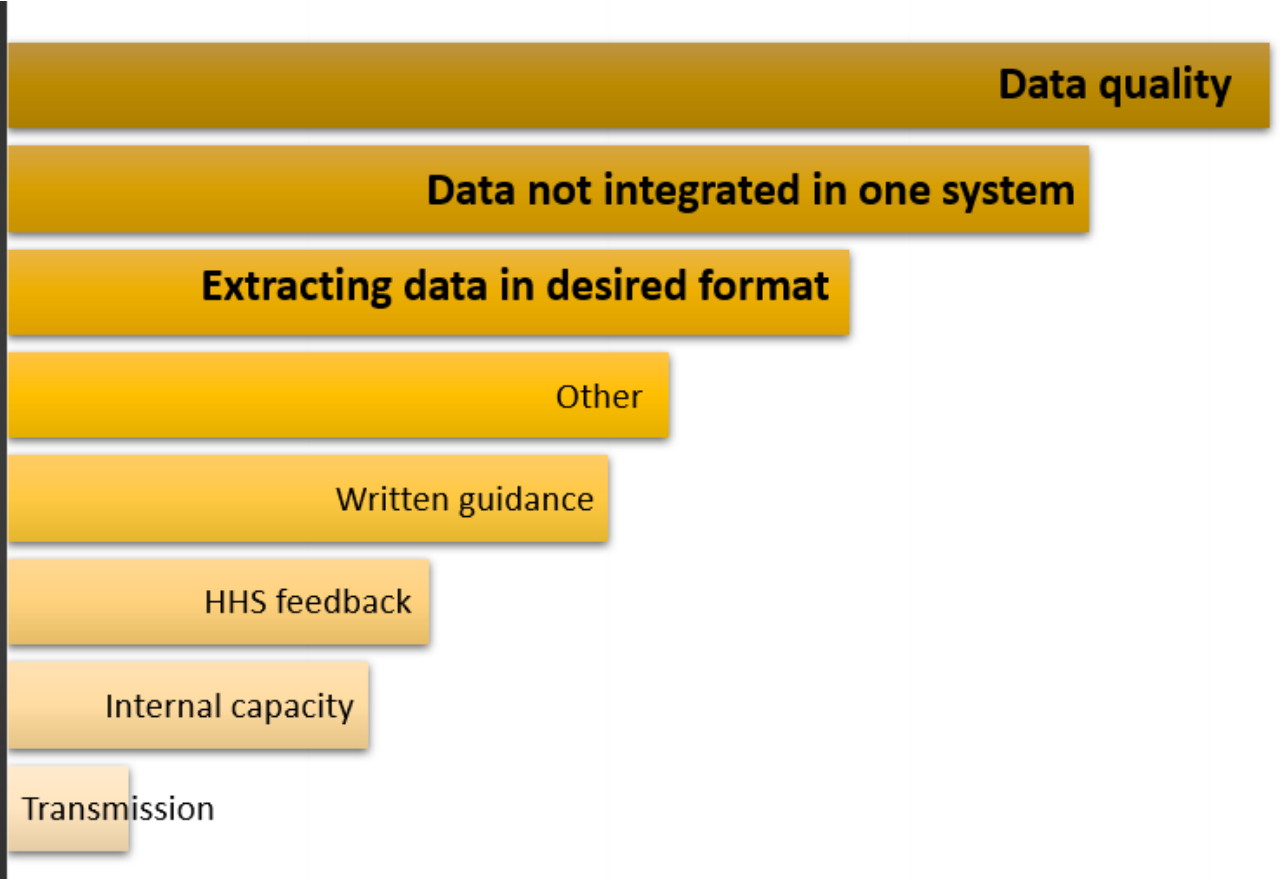
State Z	Case A	Case B	Case C
Month 1	X		X
Month 2		X	
Month 3			X

- Did Case A close after Month 1 or did state select different sample in Month 2?
- If Case A closed, was it due to employment? Did the family move out of state? Other reason?

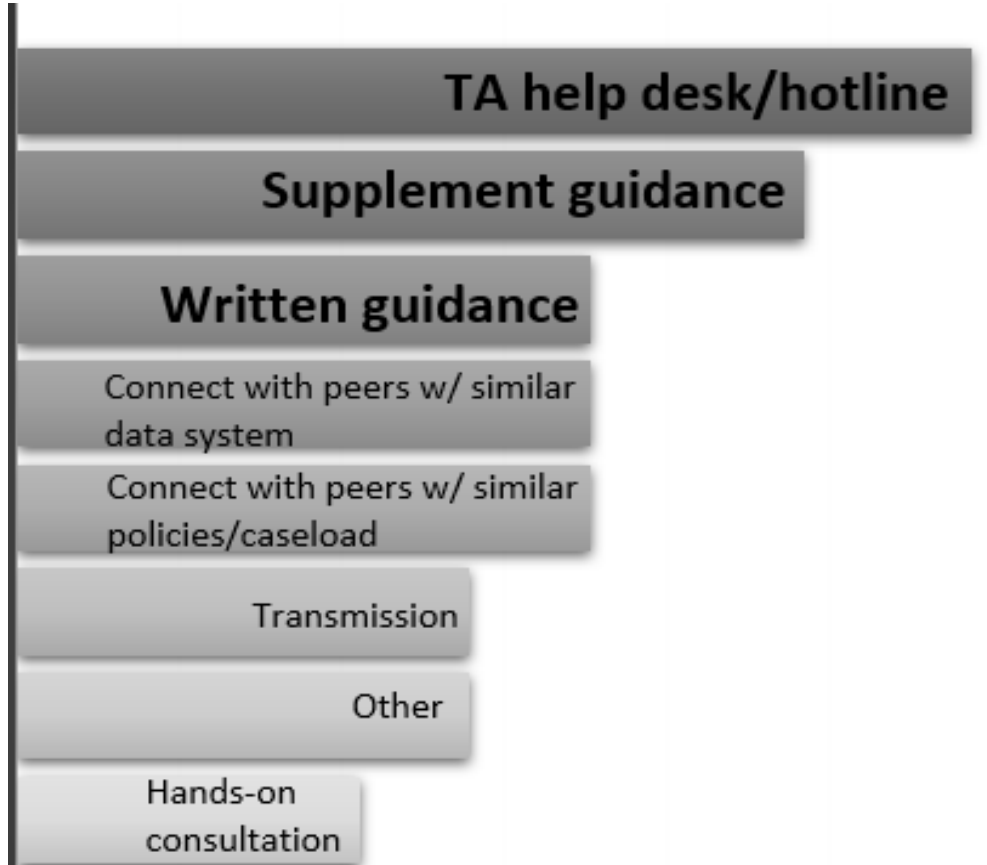
Needs Assessment Results

- Difficulty with some aspect of federal reporting, mostly as it relates to work activities and participation and other benefits.
- Sample states said submitting more data would take more time. and data quality/accuracy of the data are of concern.

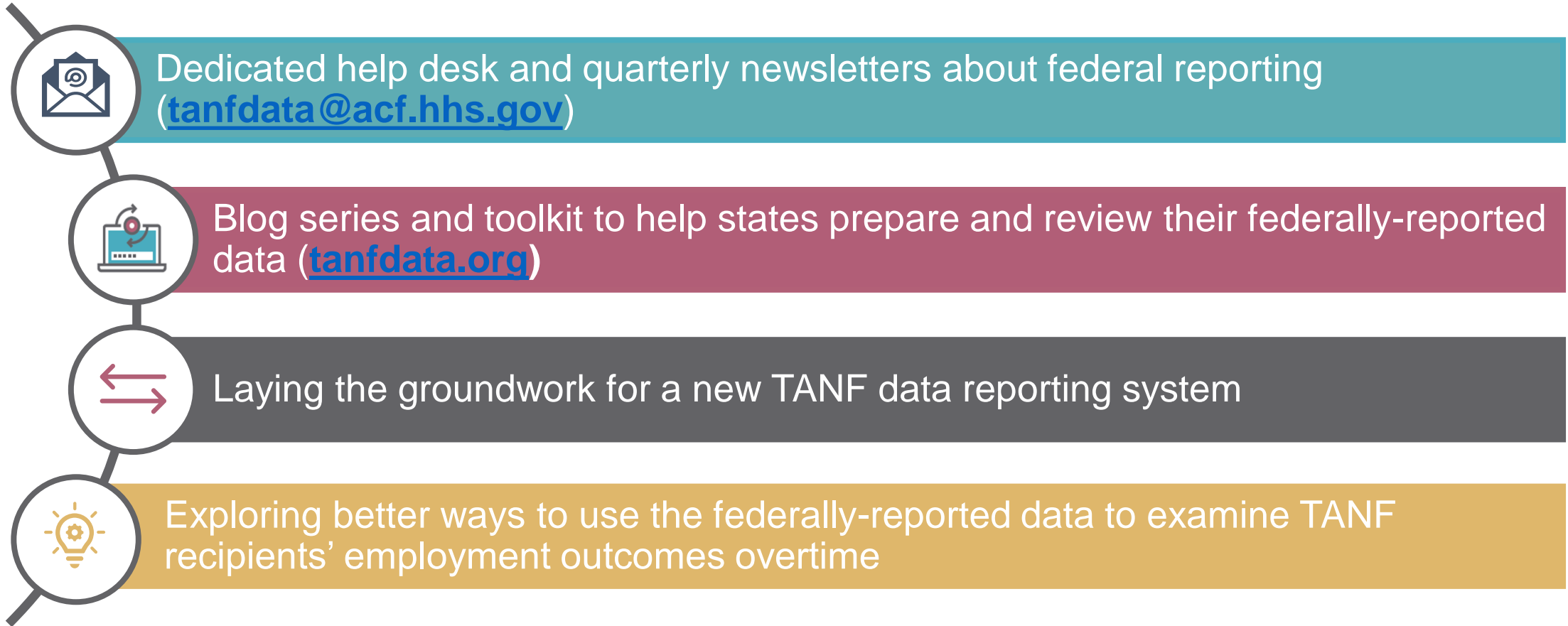
• Barriers



• Help wanted



OFA efforts to support states with federal reporting



- **Questions?**

Contact me at: Alexandra.Pennington@mdrc.org

- **Federal reporting help desk**

Email: tanfdata@acf.hhs.gov

- **Federal reporting resources and tools**

Learn more at: www.tanfdata.org