

April through June 2011

Work Participation Data

Month	Work-Eligible Cases	Work-Eligible Clients
April 2011	3074	3183
May 2011	3144	3253
June 2011	3002	3116
<b>Total</b>	<b>9220</b> ( <i>duplicated count</i> )	<b>9552</b> ( <i>duplicated count</i> )

Month	Cases Met Participation	Work Participation Rate ( <i>tentative</i> )
April 2011	833	(833/3074) = 27.1%
May 2011	842	(842/3144) = 26.8%
June 2011	790	(790/3002) = 26.3%
<b>Quarterly Work Participation Rate (<i>tentative</i>)</b>		<b>(2465/9220) = 26.7%</b>

Month	Work-Eligible Clients in Count Activities	All Clients in Countable Activities
April 2011	834	1692
May 2011	842	1569
June 2011	791	1494
<b>Total</b>	<b>2467</b> ( <i>duplicated count</i> )	<b>4755</b> ( <i>duplicated count</i> )

There was a duplicated count of **2288** clients who had verified hours in countable activities, but did not meet participation requirements. The count is distributed below by Federal Category (*services are duplicated*).

Federal Category	April 2011	May 2011	June 2011
Unsubsidized Employment	237	208	202
Subsidized Private or Public Employment	9	11	0
Work Experience	137	123	102
On-the-Job Training	2	2	3
Community Service Work Sites	123	82	91
Vocational Education	55	49	43
Job Skills Training	110	92	93
Satisfactory School Attendance	90	70	55
Other Work Activities*	289	228	230

\*Other work activities used to record time-limited hours that will not be used to meet participation when an individual has reached the statutory limit for a time-limited activity or because the hours are not enough to count toward participation.

Of the remaining **4797** (9552 – 2467 – 2288 = 4797) duplicated count of work-eligible individuals, who did not participate in any countable activities, **3030** individuals participated in the following non-countable activities:

- 148 in HS/GED
- 75 in basic education/ESL

- 1395 in treatment activities
- 159 in family life skills
- 186 in work support
- 1938 in assessment

*Note: Some individuals may have participated in more than one activity during the the month/quarter.*

The remainder of work-eligible individuals, **1767** ( $9552 - 2467 - 2288 - 3030 = 1767$ ), did not participate in any activities for the following reasons:

**751** were disregarded using federal guidelines for being the parent of a child in the home who was under the age of 1;

**841** had a documented medical issue, qualifying them as having a disability; and

**175** were in the process of being sanctioned for non-participation.

*Note: Parents caring for a disabled family member are not considered work-eligible and were therefore not included in this report.*

In reviewing the summary of the data, the most significant finding is that **2288** individuals (*duplicated over the quarter*) participated in countable activities for less than the required hours to meet participation. That is over 90% of the total who actually met participation with the appropriate number of weekly hours. Of the **2288** duplicated count of individuals, 310 had hours in Job Search or Vocational Education which could not be counted towards participation because the statutory time-limits were exceeded; **147** had a total of 30+ weekly average hours in priority and non-priority activities, while **202** had a total of 20-29 weekly average hours in priority activities alone; and **486** individuals had a total of 20-29 weekly average hours in priority and non-priority activities.

- Of the 147 individuals with 30+ weekly average hours in priority and non-priority activities, 81 were a single-adult with a child under age 6 in the home; 7 were a single-parent with a child under age 1 in the home; and 9 were a member of a two-parent household.
- Of the 486 individuals with 20-29 weekly average hours in priority and non-priority activities, 170 were a single-adult with a child under age 6 in the home; 31 were a single-parent with a child under age 1 in the home; and 44 were a member of a two-parent household.

It is interesting to note that of the **841** individuals with a medical issue, some of these individuals are intact families with one parent having a medical issue that prevents participation in a work activity and some are single-parent families. In fact, **515** of these individuals are from single-parent households and they are still considered by federal guidance as ‘work-eligible’ individuals and are included in the work participation rate calculation.

Utah does not believe that any parent should be “exempted” from working on their barriers to work. On the other hand, if States were permitted to disregard those single parents with temporary, documented medical issues from the calculation and include participants who met the

30+ or 20+ hour participation requirement regardless of the priority vs. non-priority activities, the work participation rate for the quarter would change as follows:

Client Calculation

$(2467 + 147 + 170 = ) 2784$  divided by  $9037 (9552 - 515 = 9037) = 30.8\%$

Case Calculation

$(2465 + 147 + 170 = ) 2782$  divided by  $8705 (9220 - 515 = 8705) = 31.9\%$

Utah would witness a 5 point increase if the rate was calculated using all countable hours, regardless of distinction of 20+ and 10; and including only those that are able-bodied and medically able to work.

One new reporting element requires States to track hours for countable activities that the state was unable to report because of not meeting the federal standards for verification and participation. This is a significant change in current reporting requirements, and if continued, will be impactful to line staff, who document (electronically or with paper) the hours of participation. These are hours that do not currently count towards the 50% work participation requirement because the verification is not available or complete to verify that participation actually took place. Line staff currently reports all verified hours, therefore no verified hours are left unreported. If hours can be counted that clients are unable to provide complete verification for, line staff would diligently gather this information for reporting purposes. Since these hours currently have no value with regard to the work participation requirement we consider them as lost participation. Another new reporting element requires States to track hours for noncountable activities that do not currently meet the federal standards for verification and participation. These are hours that do not currently count towards the 50% work participation requirement. In order to comply with this change to reporting, our systems would have to change. Because of the nature of the agency administering TANF funding, many of our systems are integrated with other programs. There are also a number of processes by which any system changes must go through before approval is granted. Once the system changes are approved, a combination of staff from our agency and our technology sister-agency would have to create the programming required for staff to enter this data. If the requirement didn't include the need to verify that the activity was completed or the number of hours of participation that actually took place, no systems changes would be necessary. However, we were advised during conversations with the central and regional offices that planned hours of participation were not appropriate to use for these elements. Utah knows having to report non-countable hours will be very time-consuming and will require the procurement of resources from a number of different areas, some outside of our administering agency, in order to become realized. If the verification requirements for this element were not as stringent as those for countable hours, a workable solution would be more readily available to comply with the new requirements.

These are significant changes for systems and reporting staff, but also for line staff. We were not able to make the necessary system changes or to train line staff for these new expectations because of the short time period in which the data was requested, as well as the normal operations and changes that are taking place within our local agency. For this reason, some of the data was not available. If these elements are added to the TANF Quarterly Reports, and we are given enough advance notice to make the necessary system changes and train staff, we feel

confident that we will be able to provide a more complete and accurate picture of what we are doing to help our TANF families move toward self-sufficiency.

### **Analysis Statement**

Utah feels at best the participation rate is a problematic method in determining what TANF families are doing to move towards self-sufficiency. That said it is important to note that expectation to be fully engaged in work activities is still an important expectation and does move parents toward self-sufficiency. We find the verification processes and the time-limitation to some of the important activities problematic, not the expectation to participate. Our agency has recently made a more concerted effort to focus on employment outcomes for our TANF-family population. We have implemented a Work Success program, which is the first activity after engagement for the work ready for full time employment of our work-eligible individuals. Work Success uses a Job Club model to immerse participants in job search and job readiness activities. We firmly believe that in order to obtain employment, job search and job readiness is paramount. Without placing a focus in those areas, we cannot expect a majority of the participants to obtain employment quickly and in the current competitive job environment. We are working on using our research to determine if there is a correlation between participation and employment. We hope to focus on employment outcomes in a more effective manner and would like to believe that an increase in employment outcomes will aid in increasing the participation rates. If that is not the case, we feel increasing our employment outcomes is the best indicator of self-sufficiency.

In the meantime, Utah expects that reporting hours for non-countable activities and countable activities that lack complete verification can provide more opportunity to reach or exceed the 50% goal if partial hours of participation are included in the calculation. Field staff work diligently to gather paper and electronic verifications for the hours clients participate in countable activities Documenting and verifying hours in non-countable activities adds to the work load without adding to the mandatory 50% rate, which in the end, can effect our federal funding.