

# Citizens Services Employee / Team

Midwest Interagency  
Economic Mobility Workgroup

**Health and Human Services-  
Administration for Children and Families**

Years of Service: 10



## **Summary:**

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Regional Operations the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL-ETA), and the United State Department of Agriculture-Food and Nutrition Service have partnered create the Midwest Interagency Economic Mobility Workgroup. The workgroup has enhanced the collaboration between Workforce and Human Services leaders in the states leading to innovative action plans that address Economic Mobility.

**Description:** As part of the role and responsibility of the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Regional Administrator position, Angela Green, meets regularly with State Human Service Commissioners. As she met with them she heard the same issues repeatedly, that it was very difficult to implement Human Services and Workforce programs due to the lack of federal coordination. Each program had different eligibility and reporting requirements and were housed in many federal agencies. Better alignment of programs could advance efforts for economic mobility for low-income families.

With this problem in mind, ACF and the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL-ETA) first created an Economic Mobility Summit in 2018 to bring together Human Services and Workforce Leaders in the region. The Summits have continued each year and have expanded in the number of attendees and scope. Staff had to pivot in 2020 due to COVID-19, creating a virtual summit that attendees would still find useful and engaging. 140 people attended and reviews were overwhelmingly positive.

In 2020, two states implemented innovative projects created from Action Plans from the 2019 Summit to address Economic Mobility. Michigan created a pilot to encourage the obtainment of a high school diploma or a GED for those in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Ohio has created a pilot in seven counties to address the benefit cliff.

In late 2020 the United States Department of Agriculture -Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) became full partners in the Economic Mobility work in Region 5. The regional federal group is now called the Midwest Interagency Economic Mobility Workgroup (MIEMW). The group meets jointly with each state to review their 2020 Action Plan and is able to comprehensively address any barriers they may face with Federal programs.

The workgroup is the true model of what interagency work should look like. Recently representatives from the workgroup met with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to discuss their Benefit Bridge Pilot. From that conversation, all three agencies were able to provide technical assistance to the State and examine where there might be funding flexibilities to address the benefit cliff. The State was able to see that all of the Federal Agencies are supporting their innovation, and in turn low-income families will have greater access to Economic Mobility. The work of ACF, DOL-ETA, and FNS has shown that federal partners can come together to successfully address issues and promote innovation.