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**Effective Date:** February 1, 2014

**Contact Person:** Your Agency Planner

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:** Engagement and Being Engaged

### **Ennui**

**It's such a  
Bore  
Being always  
Poor.**

Langston Hughes

The terms *engagement* and *engaged* are two sides of the same coin but they do not mean the same thing. They are often used as though interchangeable but they are distinct, different.

Engagement is the term used to describe process steps taken by the employment guidance counselor. It is about the Employment Guidance Counselor's ("EGC") leveraged connection to the participant and the

counselor's support, reinforcement, or mandate of the participant's plan and activities aimed at achieving and maintaining employment and gaining additional financial stability.

Engagement can be measured: the EGC opens and or closes select activities such as *Assessment, Participating in Social Services, etc.* on Workforce One ("WF1"); an EGC or Data Specialist inputs participation hours; an Employment Plan outlines steps the EGC and participant will take in order to achieve mutually agreed upon self-sufficiency goals; regularly documented contact with the participant; or the EGC documentation of participant activities such as attendance to workshops and/or job club and participation with one-on-one career guidance sessions within the "Engagement" case note section on WF1.

### **Island**

**Wave of sorrow,  
Do not drown me now:**

**I see the island  
Still ahead somehow.**

**I see the island  
And its sands are fair:**

**Wave of sorrow,  
Take me there.**

Langston Hughes

### **Dreams**

**Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.**

**Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.**

Langston Hughes

An engaged participant has an idea of what they wish to achieve with their employment goals and are in motion and moving forward, in sometimes small, incremental steps, or sometimes no steps, sometime leaps. The engaged participant's dream is the promise, a pledge, a dedication they have made to themselves, their children, or grand-children or other significant person. Engaged participants are working the puzzle, finding and fitting together the pieces, as they engage in work readiness and other activities that help carry them toward the dream.

The dream is the participant's dream, and as they work towards it, there arise uncounted opportunities to assist

them. An employment counselor enters those opportunities through engagement, through tangible examples of support from themselves and the Employment Services (“ES”) agency.

The ES Manual and WFS Policies and Procedures define engagement. The included Langston Hughes poems give voice to the importance of the dream.

WFS believes that all participants, including those participating with Family Stabilization Services (FSS), can achieve a range of engagement hours (from minimum of three hours of activity to a maximum of forty) toward their dream per month. Guidance counseling and coaching by the employment counselor provides important support to the participant in taking their meaningful and incremental steps within their career pathway; working toward their short-term and long-term education, work readiness and self-sufficiency goals.

**The Dream Keeper**

**Bring me all of your dreams,  
You dreamers,  
Bring me all of your  
Heart melodies  
That I may wrap them  
In a blue cloud-cloth  
Away from the too-rough fingers  
Of the world.**

Langston Hughes

Engagement on the part of the employment counselor can assist the engaged participant to balance the meaningful countable core/non core activities with the pursuit of the dream. Work or engagement hours contributed by the participant toward the realized dreams will continuously build up as the participant masters each level within their pathway until the participant is successful and achieves self-sufficiency. Eventually, the target EP hours should model that of the recommended hours of successfully employed person (30-40 hours per week).

**Dream Dust**

**Gather out of star-dust  
Earth-dust  
Cloud -dust,  
Storm-dust,  
And splinters of hail,  
One handful of dream-dust  
Not for sale.**

Langston Hughes