

COLORADO WORKS PROGRAM EVALUATION

Colorado Department of Human Services

March 2005 – June 2008

Project Summary: The Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) has contracted with the Lewin Group and its partners, the University of Colorado's Health Sciences Center, the Johns Hopkins University's Institute for Policy Studies, and Capital Research Corporation to perform an in-depth evaluation of the Colorado Works program. In active consultation with DHS and an Advisory Committee that includes representatives of the counties and Colorado's advocacy community, the research team will design a study focusing on both client outcomes and the wide range of programmatic approaches used by Colorado's counties. This study will provide administrators with information that will help them develop strategies for improving performance and efficiently and effectively implementing the program. The study relies on three sources of data:

- *Administrative data files.* The research team will analyze state administrative data – including both data from the new CBMS system and historical data from the “legacy” systems it replaced and Unemployment Insurance quarterly wage records – to examine statewide client and program outcomes and to understand regional variation.
- *Survey of County Colorado Works Programs.* Fundamentally important to the study will be the experiences and input of county administrators and other county partners. The research team will design a survey, to be administered over the Internet, asking administrators about the practices, successes, and challenges of their respective offices.
- *Field-based site visits.* Based on findings from the statistical analysis and the county survey, the research team will select a sample of 16 local programs for more in-depth field-based studies. The counties will be chosen based on their potential to shed light on key research questions.

Reports:

S. Elkin, J. Trutko, D. Nightingale, B. Barden, and I. Chan, *Colorado Works Program Evaluation: 2009 Annual Report*, The Lewin Group, prepared for the Colorado Department of Human Services, 2009 (available at: http://www.lewin.com/content/publications/Colorado_Works_2009_Annual_Report.pdf).

B. Barden, R. Wright, and J. Trutko, *Key Features of Colorado Works in Comparison to Other State TANF Programs: Final Report*, The Lewin Group, prepared for the Colorado Department of Human Services, 2008 (available at: <http://www.lewin.com/content/publications/COWorksComparativeStudy.pdf>).

M. Farrell, D. Nightingale, B. Barden, B. Barnow, S. Elkin, K. Gardiner, J. Trutko, and L. Turner, *Colorado Works Program Evaluation: 2006 Annual Report*, The Lewin Group, prepared for the Colorado Department of Human Services, 2006.

J. Trutko and B. Barnow, *Program Coordination and Collaboration in the Colorado Works Program*, The Lewin Group, prepared for the Colorado Department of Human Services, 2006.