



The LEWIN GROUP

Program Coordination and Collaboration in the Colorado Works Program

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PROGRAM COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION IN THE COLORADO WORKS PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS

This report examines the variety of cross-agency collaboration and coordination strategies used by county Colorado Works/TANF programs across the state. Based primarily upon information collected during site visits to 18 Colorado Works county programs, this report focuses on collaborative arrangements in two major areas: (1) partnerships with local Workforce Centers (sometimes referred to as One-Stop Career Centers) and other community organizations to obtain employment, education, and training services; and (2) collaboration with other public agencies and private organizations to obtain a wide array of support services, including substance abuse and mental health services, child care, child welfare and other family services, housing assistance, disability-related assistance, and transportation assistance.

“Program coordination” refers to situations in which two or more organizations work together, through a formal or informal arrangement, to meet one or more of the following goals: (1) improve the effectiveness of programs, (2) reduce program costs, (3) avoid unnecessary duplication of services, and/or (4) improve measured performance on outcomes of interest to program administrators. Coordination efforts can vary in complexity. The simplest form of coordination involves the sharing of information by two or more programs. Other forms of coordination include joint planning, coordinated referrals, and coordinated provision of services. The most complete form of coordination is program integration, where two or more programs merge their funding and jointly conduct outreach, assessment, service provision, and job placement.

The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) legislation and the State of Colorado Legislature, as well as the Colorado Department of Human Services, have created a climate conducive to county TANF programs collaborating with other agencies and local organizations to provide a wide array of human services needed by TANF participants and their families. While encouraging coordination, the state did not mandate county TANF programs to collaborate in a specific manner. Rather, the state allowed coordination to flourish from the “bottom up” and to take on forms that made sense to local agencies (both local TANF programs and the other collaborating agencies).

The evidence from the survey of all county TANF programs across the state—backed up from in-depth site visits to 18 of these county programs—indicates that program coordination is extensive and that no two counties are collaborating with the same set of organizations. While there is some cross-fertilization, such as one county drawing from experiences of another (for example, in the formation of linkages between TANF and child welfare programs), there is not a simple “cookie cutter” approach to program coordination. Even where collaborative efforts have been modeled after initiatives in other counties, it has been necessary for local TANF programs to tailor linkages to willing partners in the locality, the service needs of the local TANF population, resources available, and the existing structure of the TANF program in the locality (e.g., client flow through the Colorado Works initiative).

The survey conducted with all counties suggests that while some vital services for TANF clients are primarily being provided in-house (e.g., intake, eligibility determination, assessment, and case management), there are many others being provided through linkages with other public agencies and community-based organizations. **Among the services commonly provided through referrals to other human services agencies (with over 90 percent of counties reporting such cross-agency referrals) are: mental health and substance abuse services; public health services and other medical/dental services; child welfare services; child support enforcement; domestic violence services; housing assistance; SSI and other disability-related services (including through Vocational Rehabilitation); education, training, and workforce development services; housing assistance; and legal aid.**

The site visits corroborated the general findings of the survey—coordination at the local level is extensive and takes many different forms—and provided many specific examples of ongoing partnerships. Collaborative efforts at the county program level are very dynamic—throughout each program year, new linkages form, existing partnering relationships adjust to new circumstances or opportunities, and other existing arrangements come to an end for lack of either resources or the will to collaborate among partners. The site visits have been successful in highlighting the vast array of partnering arrangements, the specifics of how agencies partner, and the services that result for TANF participants. This report explores collaborative efforts in three principal areas:

- **Linkages with Colorado Workforce Centers.** Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, all local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are required to have at least one physical One-Stop Career Center (often referred to as Workforce Centers in Colorado), and larger WIBs often have more than one such Center. Of the 18 counties visited, all are served by at least one full-service Workforce Center, though two (Saguache and Bent) did not have a Workforce Center located within the county. Several counties are served by two or more Workforce Centers. Although all of the Workforce Centers offer a range of services that could potentially be of assistance to Colorado Works participants, the extent and nature of the collaboration between the TANF agency and the Workforce Center varies substantially across counties. The 18 county programs visited can be arrayed along a continuum from virtually no partnering, to extensive collaboration featuring co-location of Workforce Center and TANF agency staff, to joint case management and delivery of services to all TANF participants. Workforce Centers offer a core set of employment and training services designed to move Colorado Works individuals into unsubsidized jobs and toward self-sufficiency, including: labor market information (including listings of job openings in the county and throughout the nation), job readiness and resume preparation workshops, job search and placement assistance, help with obtaining suitable job training, on-the-job and other subsidized work experience positions, and links to employers.
- **Linkages with Employment, Training, and Education Providers (Other Than Workforce Centers).** County TANF agencies have also sought to enhance job-specific skills of Colorado Works clients, who often come to the program with little or no work experience and lacking marketable skills. Collaborative arrangements have been established with community colleges, proprietary schools, and local WIBs to provide job training for high-demand occupations (such as in health professions) with the potential for career advancement. With regard to post-secondary education and training, collaboration has sometimes been directly with community colleges or other post-secondary training

institutions; in other instances, arrangements to obtain occupational training have come through an intermediary, such as the Workforce Center or local WIB.

- **Linkages to Obtain a Range of Other Support Services.** TANF programs across the state have found that given the widespread needs of the low-income population, they cannot go it alone, but rather must reach out to other organizations within their localities to bring together the full package of services needed. Through such collaborative arrangements they are able to provide the needed diagnostic and service delivery expertise, as well as use the additional funding to address the needs of TANF participants and their families. Among the most prevalent support services being addressed through extensive links with other public agencies and through for-profit and non-profit organizations are: (1) substance abuse and mental health counseling/treatment; (2) child care; (3) child welfare and other family services (including domestic violence services); (4) housing and homeless services; (5) disability-related services; and (6) transportation-related services.

Despite providing evidence of the extent and nature of coordination, the survey and site visits only hint at the potential benefits and costs of linkages for participating agencies. For example, interviews with TANF staff and many partnering agencies provide clear indications that TANF programs and the individuals served have been able to access a far greater range of services than would have been possible had such arrangements not been in place. We also know from discussions that TANF programs are successful in sharing costs with partnering agencies—and hence, in leveraging resources from other programs. From discussions with TANF and partnering agency staff (as well as focus groups with participants) it is clear that there is a common belief that such collaborative efforts are worth their costs, benefit TANF participants, and contribute to better client outcomes.

Examples of potential promising collaboration efforts in the counties visited are described in the report, a sampling of which are noted in the following table.

Selected Examples of Potential Promising Collaborative Efforts

Linkages with Colorado Workforce Centers:

- **Weld County (p. 12):** A key partner is the Weld County Employment Service (ES) -- the WIA administrative agency and the One-Stop (Workforce Center) operator—which provides all employment-related services for TANF (Colorado Works) and Food Stamps (Employment First) participants.
- **Denver County (p. 12):** Employment services for TANF participants are provided primarily through the Westside Workforce Center, located in the TANF (Castro) building. The Westside Center is a comprehensive one-stop career center, providing a full range of WIA and other workforce development services.
- **Mesa County (p. 12):** The Mesa Department of Human Services operates the Grand Junction Workforce Center. The close relationship between Colorado Works and the Workforce Center, both in proximity and organizational structure, helps coordinate services offered to Colorado Works clients through the two programs.

Collaborative Arrangements to Obtain GED/Basic Skills Preparation:

- **Rio Grande County (p.14):** The Bueno-HEP program, operated in conjunction with the University of Colorado, offers a weekly, 3-hour GED preparation class for TANF participants who have dropped out of high school.
- **Fremont County (p.14):** Under a collaborative arrangement with the Family Center, GED preparation classes are provided for Colorado Works participants twice a week (for a total of 12 hours) at the Family Center and once a week (for six hours) at the DHS offices. On-site child care is provided.

Collaborative Arrangements to Obtain Post-Secondary Degrees and Training Credentials:

- **Bent County (p.15):** A liaison is available at Otero Junior College to help TANF participants with class selection, financial aid, and tutoring.
- **Jefferson County (p.15):** DHS contracts with Red Rocks Community College to operate the Pathways Program, which offers three components: (1) Bridges, which helps participants prepare for the GED test; (2) college preparation; and (3) vocational certification.
- **Larimer County (p. 15):** The “Business Technologies for the Office” program is provided twice a year by Front Range Community College. Participants earn a certificate and, if desired, nine college credits. The 14-week course covers employment skills, computer operation, instruction in Microsoft Office software, business communication, grammar and punctuation, resume development, and interview preparation.

Linkages with Public and Private Sector Employers to Provide Work Experience and Training:

- **Rio Grande County (p.16):** The TANF agency has a roster of about 50 employers willing to sponsor up to 12 community work experience program (CWEP) positions each. Generally, participants are placed into full-time CWEP positions (usually 35 hours per week) and paid minimum wage for each hour worked beyond the amount needed to pay off their TANF grant (with this amount added to the participant’s electronic benefit card on the 15th of each month).
- **Larimer County (p.16):** Under the county’s Transitional Employment Program, TANF participants learn skills on the job while providing clerical and other assistance to county agencies. Participants sign a one-year contract and work 40 hours per week in entry-level positions at DHS, the Workforce Center, or the Department of Veteran’s Affairs.

Collaborative Arrangement to Obtain Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services:

- **Jefferson County (p.18):** Jefferson County Mental Health provides a therapist to the TANF office for individual counseling and group sessions. TANF participants can also be referred to the Access and Emergency Team and psychiatrists at Jefferson County Mental Health for crises, medication, and off-site groups.
- **La Plata County (p. 19):** The SUCCESS program, which is based on the Dialectic Behavior Therapy model and operates out of Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center, requires a six-month commitment from clients to attend weekly sessions that last two hours. The target population is individuals with serious mental health issues, suicidal thoughts, or chronic problems in maintaining relationships. The curriculum covers mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance.

Collaborative Arrangements to Obtain Child Care Services:

- **El Paso County (p.19):** Child Care Connections serves as a child care resource and referral agency for the TANF program, screening child care applications and assisting clients in finding child care. Child Care Connections co-locates staff at the main TANF office.
- **Rio Grande County (p.19):** DSS has a consultation agreement with the local public health department to provide technical assistance aimed at enhancing the quality of child care services in the county. Public health nurses run workshops and training for staff at the 14 facilities serving the county. The public health department also serves as a clearinghouse for information to providers and parents on health care concerns, child safety, and provision of high quality child care services.

Selected Examples of Potential Promising Collaborative Efforts (Continued)

Collaborative Arrangements to Obtain Child Welfare and Other Family Services:

- **Mesa County (p. 21):** Colorado Works partially funds two programs conducted by Hilltop, a community-based organization: (1) *Get Real*, a pregnancy prevention program for youth age 10 to 19, which provides weekly after-school groups, case management, and home visits; and (2) the *Families First Program*, an early childhood program offering services including a moms' weekly group, dads' weekly group (with a "training camp" for new dads), in-home curriculum, and case management.
- **El Paso County (p. 21):** El Paso has pursued a number of initiatives to increase collaboration between TANF and Child Welfare. The TANF Kinship and Family Support Team includes both TANF and Child Welfare staff who provide support to relative caretakers. Another program that involves cross-agency collaboration is the Direct Link Program, which serves families dealing with substance abuse issues who are involved with or at risk of becoming involved with Child Welfare.
- **Denver County (p. 21):** A TANF/Child Welfare Integration Team helps integrate services between Child Welfare and Colorado Works programs and prevents children from being removed from their homes. The team, co-located on the third floor of the Castro Building, consists of two Primary Case Managers, two Family and Children (Child Welfare) social workers, and a supervisor.
- **Yuma County (p. 21).** Baby Bear Hugs, a nonprofit, is under contract with DSS to provide parental support, parental education services, and connection to resources for parents with children up to age 3, and pregnant women. Most services are provided by paraprofessionals through home visits.

Collaborative Arrangements to Provide Housing Assistance and Homeless Services:

- **Adams County (p. 23).** The Adams County Public Housing Authority, located in the same building as DSS, is contracted to provide an hour each day during which TANF case managers can refer TANF participants for housing counseling and other assistance.
- **Denver County (p. 23).** As part of the Mayor's plan to end homelessness, DHS has placed TANF staff at shelters to perform TANF intake activities (including assessment and eligibility determination). The program also offers eviction assistance for TANF participants.
- **La Plata County (p. 23).** Housing Solutions provides housing and energy assistance to low-income families in SW Colorado, including many TANF clients who are homeless or facing homelessness.

Collaborative Arrangements for Disability-Related Services:

- **Arapahoe County (p. 24):** Workforce Specialists have developed a strong partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). TANF clients fill out forms patterned after DVR forms. If they are eligible for DVR services, their initial DVR paperwork is ready.
- **Denver County (p. 24):** The TANF program has negotiated a contract with Catholic Charities to fund a Navigator program to provide intensive case management services for hard-to-serve clients. Navigators are provided to all participants after 48 months of TANF receipt. Navigators perform assessments and develop self-sufficiency plans with the clients, provide services and referrals, and help disabled clients apply for SSI.
- **Fremont County (p. 24):** A state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, outstationed to the DHS building, has a caseload that is about 10 percent joint vocational rehabilitation/Colorado Works clients. After an in-depth intake and assessment (which covers medical issues and disabilities), the counselor develops a plan that describes the client's functional limitations and how to address them.

Collaborative Arrangements to Provide Transportation Assistance:

- **Adams County (p. 25):** Through its Auto Purchase Program, the TANF agency partners with an auto wholesaler to assist pre-screened participants with the purchase of an automobile.
- **Mesa County (p. 25):** Under a Department of Transportation Matching Grant the TANF agency contributes \$200,000 per year (from the TANF block grant) for five years to help with development of a bus system in Grand Junction, an area previously not served by public transportation.

I. Introduction

The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) dramatically changed the nature of cash assistance, replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant. PRWORA placed limits on lifetime cash assistance provided by federal funds and imposed stricter work participation requirements on states. PRWORA also increased the flexibility states have to design their TANF programs, allowing for a great deal of variation in state programs.

Colorado's TANF program, Colorado Works, is administered by the Colorado Works Division, Office of Self-Sufficiency, within the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). The state has a long tradition of local control of programs and, as a result, its 64 counties have considerable autonomy in the design and implementation of their Colorado Works programs. This level of county control is largely due to the diversity within the state, and ensures that local policies target the specific needs of residents.

CDHS has funded The Lewin Group and its partners—the University of Colorado's Health Sciences Center (UCHSC), the Johns Hopkins University's Institute for Policy Studies (JHU), and Capital Research Corporation (CRC)—to perform an in-depth study of the Colorado Works program. This study is aimed at providing administrators with information about program strategies and approaches being used in various counties that others might find useful for improving program implementation, performance, and outcomes. The study's design was developed by the Lewin team in consultation with DHS officials and an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of the counties and Colorado's advocacy community.

County social services departments throughout Colorado, in their role as TANF agencies, engage in extensive collaborations with other agencies, including Workforce Centers, community colleges, child welfare agencies, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and mental health providers. This report—one of four “special topic” reports produced as part of a broader study of the Colorado Works program—examines the cross-agency collaboration and coordination strategies used by county programs across the state. The research team is also producing reports on three other special topic areas:

- ***Strategies for assisting the hardest-to-serve clients*** who face barriers to employment, such as disabilities or lack of education, or are otherwise in need of special services or professional resources.
- ***Employment services*** used by county Colorado Works programs, particularly relationships with employers.
- ***Family-oriented and preventative services*** including interventions to keep families from entering the child welfare system, youth initiatives, and fatherhood programs.

The topic reports draw on research conducted since the evaluation's start in January 2005. Key data sources include a survey of counties, site visits to selected counties, and analysis of administrative data.

The survey, administered in the summer of 2005, asked county directors about their agency's activities, operations, and their county's policies.¹ Follow-up phone interviews were conducted with nearly all county directors,² providing an in-depth understanding of topics covered by the survey, and giving directors an opportunity to discuss interesting policies and practices they wished to share with other counties. Through the survey and follow-up interviews, the research team documented the diversity of practices employed by human services agencies across the state in administering the Colorado Works program.³

Site visits were conducted in 18 counties between September 2005 and January 2006. The counties were selected in consultation with CDHS and the Advisory Committee. Counties were chosen based on their innovative, unique, or interesting service delivery strategies and initiatives, as well as to represent the range of economic and geographic conditions across the state (**Box 1** lists the counties selected.) During the site visits, field teams conducted interviews with Colorado Works administrators, program staff, and with representatives of other agencies and nonprofits who serve a significant number of Colorado Works participants or collaborate with the county human services departments. In some counties, the researchers conducted focus groups with program participants. Topics included program structure, case processing and client flow, assessments, work participation activities, education and training programs, post-employment programs, support services, partnerships, special initiatives, and particular challenges, as well as a range of county- and program-specific topics.

Box 1: Counties Where Site Visits Were Performed

- Adams
- Arapahoe
- Bent
- Boulder
- Denver
- El Paso
- Fremont
- Garfield
- Huerfano
- Jefferson
- La Plata
- Larimer
- Mesa
- Pueblo
- Rio Grande
- Saguache
- Weld
- Yuma

Finally, several of the topic reports incorporated preliminary analysis of statewide Colorado Works administrative data. Further analysis of this data will be performed for the project's final report, to be released in June.

¹ The survey had a response rate of 97 percent with 62 of the 64 counties completing it.

² Fifty seven follow-up interviews were conducted.

³ Findings from the survey and follow-up call were presented in a report prepared for CDHS See Elkin, Farrell, Gardiner, and Turner, *Colorado Works Program Evaluation: Findings from County Survey*, October 20, 2005.

II. Overview

A. Background

For purposes of this report, “coordination” refers to situations where two or more organizations work together, through a formal or informal arrangement, to meet one or more of the following goals: (1) improve the effectiveness of programs, (2) reduce program costs, (3) avoid unnecessary duplication of services, and/or (4) improve measured performance on outcomes of interest to program administrators. Coordination efforts vary in complexity. The simplest form of coordination involves sharing information between two or more programs. Other forms include joint planning, coordinated referrals, and coordinated provision of services. The most complete form of coordination is program integration, in which two or more programs merge their funding and jointly conduct outreach, assessment, service provision, and job placement. When coordination is particularly strong, provision of services is seamless to the participants, who often do not know which organizations are providing the services they receive.

Past studies of coordination between welfare and other human service organizations (such as employment and training programs and other support service providers) at the local level reveal substantial diversity among coordination models. Coordination efforts may be characterized as: (1) "top-down" versus "bottom-up" coordination: the initiative to coordinate may be developed locally ("bottom-up" coordination) or may be encouraged or imposed by federal or state officials ("top-down" coordination); (2) broad-scope and narrow-scope coordination: coordination efforts may involve two agencies, or many independent agencies; and (3) degree of integration: coordination efforts may vary considerably in terms of the types of activities coordinated and the extent of coordination (e.g., in some efforts agency budgets and lines of authority remain largely untouched, while in others funding and staff responsibility are shared or pooled).

The literature on coordination of welfare programs with other state and local human service programs identifies a number of advantages for program participants and for agencies involved. Some examples of ways in which welfare agencies involved in collaborative efforts with other human service programs may benefit include:

- Increased access to additional resources, including funding;
- Ability to offer a wider range of services targeted on client needs;
- Enhanced ability to place program participants (through other agencies) at little or no additional cost;
- Better tracking of services received by clients, and client outcomes;
- Improved image with clients, employers, and the community;
- Increased ability to place clients in high-wage and high-demand jobs;
- Enhanced performance outcomes; and
- Cost savings through elimination of duplicative efforts.

Some of the ways in which clients might benefit from collaborative arrangements include:

- Better assessment of client needs and subsequent targeting of services;
- Access to a wider range of services;

- Reduction in the barriers to accessing services, including more convenient service location;
- Increased resources available to meet client needs; and
- Increased expertise of staff providing services, and enhanced quality of services.

The literature also identifies potential drawbacks to coordination. The most significant disadvantage is the amount of time and effort required to plan and sustain successful coordination. Organizations involved in coordinated efforts often must hold regular joint meetings, and while such meetings are generally useful, they are time-consuming. Time spent doing additional paperwork is also mentioned as a cost of coordination. Other disadvantages include: loss of autonomy in decision making; need to resolve interagency conflicts; need to develop and maintain new operational procedures, client flows, and information systems; and potential inefficiencies of out-stationed staff. Some of these disadvantages may be ameliorated as agencies become accustomed to dealing with one another and as the time needed to sustain coordination is reduced. Disadvantages to the agencies appear to be more significant than disadvantages to the clients. The latter consist primarily of the potential for completing additional forms or problems accessing services.

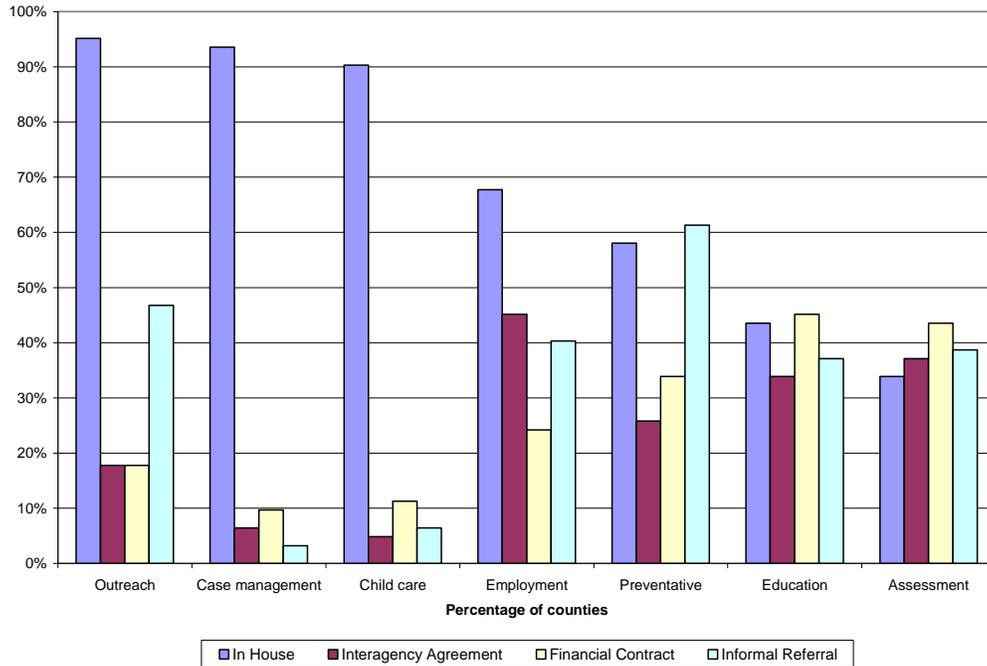
B. Findings from the Survey of County Colorado Works Programs

The Colorado Department of Human Services has emphasized the importance of county programs tapping into the array of public agencies and private for-profit and non-profit organizations available to provide services tailored to the needs of TANF participants. At the local level, Colorado Works program officials realize that their TANF programs alone can not effectively meet the widespread needs of the TANF population, and that it is vital to partner with the rich network of human service providers in their locality. These local program officials also recognize that it is possible to leverage additional resources by collaborating with other service providers. The results of the survey of all county Colorado Works programs attests to the importance that local program officials place on program coordination, and highlights the many agencies with which county welfare agencies have partnered.

Exhibit 1 displays seven of the common Colorado Works functions and the method by which each activity is performed. The survey asked county respondents whether these services were provided in-house, through an interagency agreement, via a financial contract, or through an informal referral to another organization.⁴ Counties were able to indicate more than one method by which services were provided (e.g., some counties may provide case management in-house and through a financial contract). As the exhibit indicates, programs are most likely to provide outreach, case management, child care, and employment-related services in-house. Over 90 percent of counties provide case management in-house, compared with 10 percent that provide the service through a financial contract and fewer than 10 percent that rely on interagency agreements or informal referrals. Although employment services are most likely provided in-house (almost 70 percent of counties), interagency agreements and informal referrals are also common (about 40 percent of counties each). About one quarter of the counties provide employment services through financial contracts. Preventative services are most commonly provided through informal referrals of clients; assessment and testing are most commonly

⁴ Directors could select more than one option, so the percentages for each type of service may add to more than 100 percent.

Exhibit 1: Agency Services

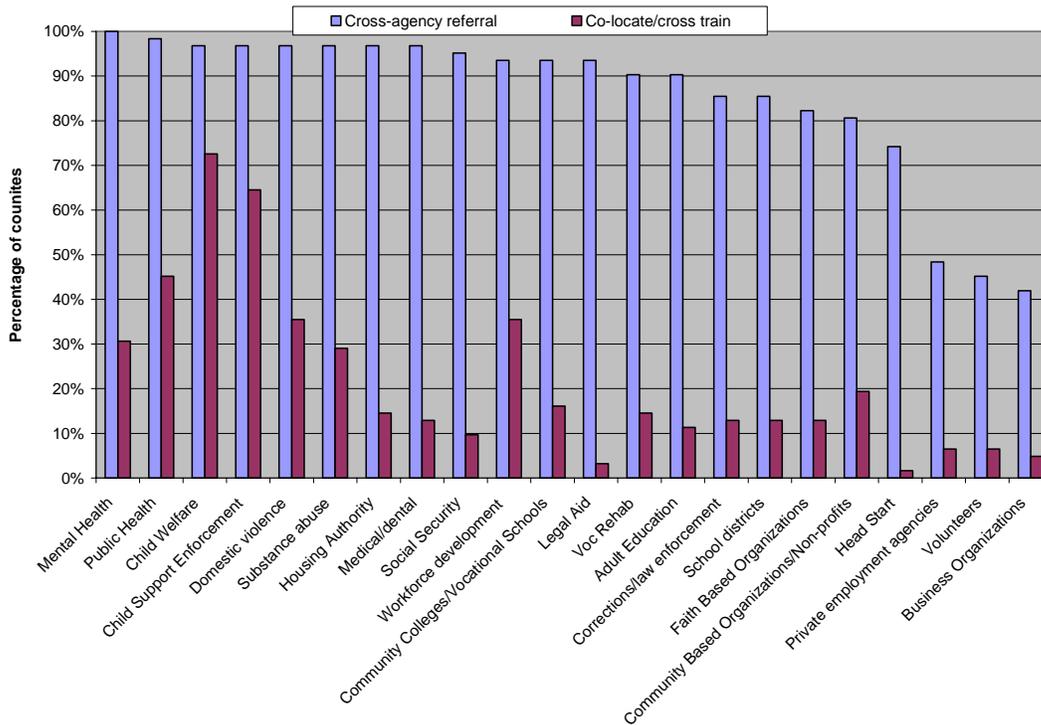


provided through financial contracts; and education-related services are most commonly provided through both financial contracts and in-house.

As discussed in the next section, many services for Colorado Works clients are provided through collaborative arrangements with a number of organizations. For example, some county DHS offices provide employment-related services internally (using DHS staff, rather than linking with other agencies); other county programs rely extensively on the Workforce Center to provide employment and training services; while others counties contract with non-governmental organizations.

Exhibit 2 provides additional detail from the survey about services provided through cross-agency referrals, as well as patterns of co-location and cross-training of staff. Almost all counties report referrals to or from a variety of organizations. Over 90 percent of counties refer to, or receive referrals from mental health agencies, public health agencies, the local housing authority, child support enforcement, child welfare, Social Security, and vocational rehabilitation agencies. Almost 75 percent have a referral relationship with Head Start. The only areas where fewer than 50 percent of counties have referral relationships are private employers, volunteers, and business organizations.

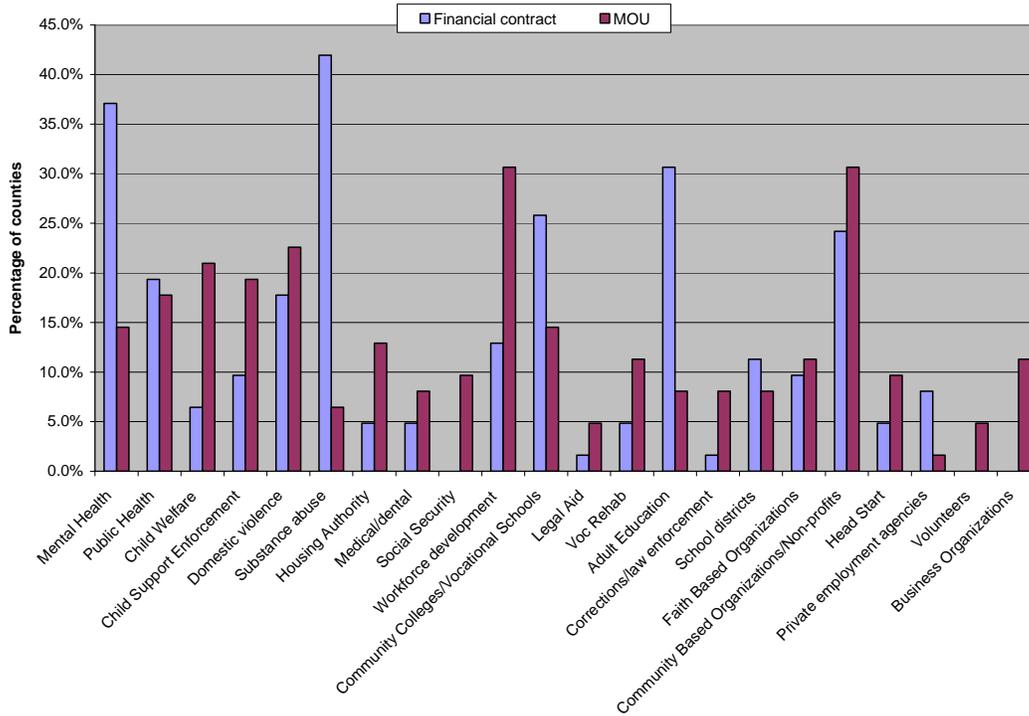
Exhibit 2: Coordination and Collaboration



Staff cross-training and/or co-location with other agencies or organizations was less common. More than half of the counties reported either cross-training or co-locating with child support enforcement (64 percent) and child welfare (73 percent), and almost half do so with public health (45 percent). About one-third of counties cross-train or co-locate staff with the workforce development agency; a similar proportion do so with domestic violence organizations

Exhibit 3 shows the extent of financial contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between counties and other agencies or organizations for delivery of specific types of services. Counties are most likely to have contracts with substance abuse providers (42 percent), followed by mental health agencies (37 percent), adult education providers (31 percent), and local community colleges or vocational schools (26 percent). These contracts are often used to provide services on a fee-for-service basis. In terms of services, Colorado Works programs were most likely to negotiate MOUs for workforce development services (31 percent), domestic violence services (23 percent), child welfare services (21 percent), and child support enforcement agencies (19 percent).

Exhibit 3: Coordination and Collaboration



III. Site Visit Findings

This section of the report highlights findings regarding collaborative efforts across the 18 Colorado counties where site visits were conducted. It begins with some general observations about the extent and nature of coordination across these counties. It then focuses on collaborative arrangements in two major areas: (1) partnerships with local Workforce Centers (sometimes referred to as One-Stop Career Centers) and other community organizations to obtain employment, education, and training services; and (2) collaboration with other public agencies and private organizations to obtain support services, such as substance abuse and mental health services, child care, child welfare and other family services, housing assistance, disability-related assistance, and transportation assistance. Also provided are examples of interesting collaborative arrangements that have evolved in some Colorado counties. Given the extensive nature of the collaborative arrangements, it is not possible to provide examples from all counties.

A. General Findings About Coordination of Colorado Works with Other Service Providers

One of the most distinguishing features of Colorado Works programs is the extensive collaboration with other service providers. The Colorado Works program has evolved differently in each county. While there are similarities across counties in the types of government agencies and other organizations with which the county programs coordinate, each county has a different constellation of partners. A hallmark of coordination under the Colorado Works program is that decisions about whom to collaborate with is decentralized and made at the county level. County program administrators and staff look at the landscape of service providers surrounding their programs and then determine how best to deliver the services needed by participants. County

directors, supervisors, and staff have learned that because there is such a wide range of needs, their programs cannot possibly meet all client needs in isolation from other agencies and community organizations; therefore, they must collaborate with a broad range of service providers.

Hence, coordination has evolved in county TANF programs from the “bottom up” (rather than forced from the “top down”). County TANF programs have been granted great latitude (under PRWORA, by the State of Colorado Legislature, and by DHS) in determining how and with what organizations they may collaborate, and they have taken advantage of this local discretion by being creative in forming local partnerships. No two counties configure their service delivery systems in the same way, and each county TANF program involves a range of partners. In some instances, county welfare programs have been able to refer Colorado Works participants to initiatives already operating within their service areas (e.g., existing domestic violence initiatives, in-school programs to prevent pregnancy or other risky behaviors, and local programs to provide mental health or substance abuse counseling and treatment); in other instances, county programs have been able to provide funding or other support to get new initiatives off the ground.

All 18 counties visited rely upon collaboration with other organizations to provide services, and in nearly all county programs there is extensive coordination with a wide range of other local agencies. County TANF programs (and their collaborating partners) are motivated to collaborate by a number of factors, including:

- **An inability to respond to all the needs of clients.** The mandate under welfare reform to carefully assess individual client needs and barriers to employment, and then to bring a wide array of services to bear tailored to the individual needs of each client, has provided a strong impetus to collaboration. Local TANF directors, supervisors, and program staff have come to understand from many years of serving low-income families and individuals that a single agency lacks the funding or range of service offerings to meet all of the needs of TANF participants.
- **A desire to bring expertise to the delivery of services.** TANF agencies have partnered with other human services in their localities to obtain expertise in providing certain types of services and to enhance services to particular subpopulations. So, for example, county TANF programs have forged links with: local Workforce Centers (i.e., One-Stop Career Centers) for help with job readiness training and referrals to job openings, as well as help with funding training opportunities; community college systems for training programs (such as Certified Nursing Assistant training programs); local school districts to obtain GED preparation for those individuals lacking high school diplomas; public health departments and nonprofit agencies to arrange mental health and substance abuse counseling/treatment services; local housing authority and homeless service agencies to arrange housing assistance, etc.
- **Possibilities for leveraging additional resources.** County TANF agencies have limited resources. Collaborative arrangements permit county welfare agencies to stretch existing resources and, in some instances, leverage additional funding. For example, TANF agencies refer individuals in need of training services to the local Workforce Center for assessment and, if appropriate, referral to training paid for by WIA or Pell Grants (rather than using TANF funds). Some county TANF programs have collaborated with other agencies to obtain grant funds for new initiatives.

Collaborative arrangements in county programs have varied in their success—some arrangements never got beyond the planning stage or were short-lived, while others have thrived. Efforts where one or multiple collaborating parties (or their participants) are not benefiting are shed quickly because collaboration is not without its costs (see below for some of these costs). Other links have continued for as long as outside funding is available, but once funding for a specific initiative evaporates, the collaborating parties have gone their separate ways. Other partnerships have persisted over a long period and are likely to continue for many years. For example, there have been many arrangements across the 18 localities that started small (perhaps with a trickle of referrals between the agencies), but have been sustained over many years and have gradually grown to involve more significant numbers of referrals and expanded services. In some instances, agencies began coordinating in one area and then found other service delivery areas in which they could benefit one another. Hence, the nature of the collaboration between agencies shifts over time, and some of the arrangements may morph into other types of service delivery arrangements and referral patterns, while some may simply disappear.

From the perspective of agency administrators and staff, developing and maintaining links can require substantial commitments of time and energy. There are often differences of opinions or conflicts and sometimes turf issues have to be clarified. Collaborative arrangements are sustained over time because agency administrators and staff regularly meet to discuss problems and reach consensus on how to resolve challenges (e.g., inadequate numbers or inappropriate referrals of clients between agencies; attrition during the referral process or once clients are receiving services; difficulties that may occur with joint case management; issues that may arise around sharing costs of service delivery; and strategies for improving outcomes). The formality, structure, and ways in which collaborative arrangements are sustained vary substantially and even differ significantly within county programs:

- Some agencies have negotiated formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or contracts which spell out mutual responsibilities and how collaborative activities are to be funded. Other agencies involved in collaborative efforts do not have formal agreements, but rather have worked out informal arrangements, including methods for referral of individuals between organizations and types of services to be provided.
- In some instances, county TANF programs have transferred significant amounts of funds to support the collaborative effort to partnering agencies (e.g., to Workforce Centers) or have reimbursed costs for services (such as diagnostic tests).
- Some agency administrators meet monthly or quarterly) to discuss how things are going and what needs to be adjusted. In other instances, operational staff rather than agency administrators meet to review cases weekly or monthly to make certain individuals receive the blend of services needed to overcome challenges to becoming self-sufficient.
- Some collaborative arrangements are fundamental to the operation of the TANF program; for example, in some county programs, most or all TANF recipients must report to a Workforce Center for assessment prior to qualifying for TANF benefits. Workforce Centers may also play a central role in arranging work activities that help TANF participants to become work-ready and meet work participation requirements. In many other instances, collaborating agencies are peripheral to the operation of the TANF program. Some of the collaborative arrangements are primarily referral arrangements which do not take a lot of time or energy to maintain (e.g., referral on an as-needed basis to another agency for vocational rehabilitation, substance abuse treatment, or GED preparation).

In the remaining sections of this report, we highlight some of the principal types of linkages that have emerged in county Colorado Works programs and provide illustrations of some of the interesting collaborative arrangements that have come to play a major role in the delivery of a comprehensive range of services tailored to meet the varied needs of Colorado Works participants

B. Linkages to Obtain Employment, Training, and Education Services

The enactment of TANF—with its emphasis on time-limited receipt of welfare benefits, “work first,” and moving large number of TANF recipients off the welfare rolls into full-time, unsubsidized employment—created an impetus for strengthening coordination between the welfare and workforce development systems. If one considers the options available to state and local welfare agencies with respect to moving large numbers of welfare recipients into jobs, these agencies can (1) “go it alone” and provide the full gamut of employment-related services to move TANF recipients to jobs on their own, or (2) link with the workforce development system to share some or all of the work- and education/training-related functions required to move TANF recipients into jobs. For example, with regard to an activity such as a multi-week job readiness workshop for TANF recipients, a welfare agency might choose to directly run such a workshop using its own agency staff (at one of its own agency offices); alternatively, the welfare agency might partner with a workforce development agency (such as a Workforce Center or WIA agency) that may already be running such workshops and refer appropriate TANF recipients to the workshop.

There are many instances in which it makes sense for a welfare agency to link with a workforce development agency. Welfare agencies might consider:

- Keeping some functions in-house—for example, intake, eligibility determination, and sanctioning;
- Sharing others with a workforce development agency—for example, initial orientation, assessment, ongoing case management, provision of support services, and provision of post-employment services; and
- Relying upon workforce development agencies for other services—for example, job readiness training, family life skills, general equivalency diploma (GED) or adult basic education (ABE) classes, basic skills training, job specific skills training, supported work experience, and job development/ placement services (e.g., job search/job club/job placement, labor market information).

From the perspective of a local welfare agency, coordination with workforce development agencies may bring added resources (for example, Vocational Rehabilitation or WIA funding) and, perhaps more importantly, expertise related to workforce training and job placement. For example, WIA agencies are likely to have long-standing relationships with local employers that greatly enhance the possibility that TANF recipients can secure subsidized or unsubsidized work.

In our visits to 18 counties in Colorado, we found substantial variation in the extent and scope of coordination between welfare and workforce development agencies. In some localities, there are few links between the two systems; in other localities, the two systems are highly integrated. The local sites vary substantially in terms of the numbers and types of organizations partnering, the ways in which coordination has evolved, the types of work-related services integrated, and numbers of individuals referred between agencies. Below, we first highlight the highly varied

arrangements that county Colorado Works programs have with local Workforce Centers, and then examine collaborative arrangements that have evolved with other local agencies and employers to provide employment, education, and training services for TANF participants.

Linkages with Colorado Workforce Centers. Under WIA, all local WIBs are required to have at least one physical One-Stop Career Center (referred to as Workforce Centers in Colorado); larger WIBs often have more than one such center. Of the 18 counties visited, all are served by at least one full-service Workforce Center, though two (Saguache and Bent) did not have a Workforce Center located within the county.⁵ Several counties are served by two or more Workforce Centers (e.g., Adams County is served by five Workforce Centers, though most TANF participants are served by the Workforce Center located in Thornton). Though there are significant differences in structure, client flow, and partners involved in Workforce Centers across the 18 counties, each Center offers a core set of employment and training services, including: labor market information (including listings of available job openings in the county and throughout the nation), job readiness and resume preparation workshops, job search and placement assistance, help with obtaining suitable job training, on-the-job and other subsidized work experience positions, and links to the employer community. All these Workforce Centers are open to the public and thus are available to Colorado Works participants on a voluntary, walk-in basis (with or without referral from county TANF offices).

Though all Workforce Centers offer services that could be of assistance to Colorado Works participants, the extent and nature of the collaboration between the TANF agency and the Workforce Center varies substantially across the 18 counties. These county programs can be arrayed along a continuum from virtually no partnering, to extensive collaboration featuring co-location of Workforce Center and TANF agency staff, to joint case management and delivery of services to all TANF participants. **Box 2** illustrates the approaches of three county programs where the Workforce Center is a key partner and to which Colorado Works participants are referred. **Box 3** illustrates two Colorado Works county programs (El Paso and La Plata Counties) at the other end of the spectrum on collaboration—where there is no formal (and little informal) collaboration beyond informing TANF participants of the services available within the local Workforce Center and ad hoc referral of suitable TANF participants (usually job-ready individuals or those seeking training) to the Workforce Center.

5 Though there are four Workforce Centers that serve the eight-county Workforce Investment Area in which Saguache is located, so there are several centers that are potentially available within commuting distance of the residents of Saguache County. Three centers are likewise located in the six county region of the Southeast Region of the Rural Workforce Consortium, where Bent County is located.

Box 2: Three Counties Where Collaboration with Workforce Centers Is Extensive

Weld County. A key partner is the Weld County Employment Service (ES)—the WIA administrative agency and the One-Stop (Workforce Center) operator—which provides all employment-related services for TANF (Colorado Works) and Food Stamps (Employment First). All the Colorado Works activities are provided in the single One-Stop Career Center in the county, located in Greeley (about 3 miles from the TANF office). TANF funding accounts for about one-quarter of the One-Stop Center’s annual budget. The ES staff assigned to work with TANF clients are called Colorado Works case managers. All TANF participants must register at the One-Stop and are assessed for service needs by One-Stop staff. Many activities are available through the One-Stop to help TANF participants meet work requirements and find unsubsidized work, including: (1) job search assistance, (2) a 4-week job readiness workshop at One-Stop Learning Lab (e.g., resume-writing, interview skills, guest speakers, etc.), (3) referral to community work experience program (CWEP) jobs, (4) GED and ESL preparation, (5) vocational certification programs, or Associates Degree (mainly through referral to Ames Community College), (6) enrollment in WIA, and (7) other specialty programs held at the One-Stop (e.g., youth programs).

Denver County. Employment services are primarily provided through the Division of Workforce Development (DWD) Westside Workforce Center, co-located in the TANF (Castro) building. The Westside Center is a comprehensive center, covering the full range of WIA and other workforce development services. All TANF participants are referred to the Workforce Center for assessment. Following assessment, Workforce Center advisors make recommendations to TANF’s Primary Case Managers (PCMs) about the proper work-related activities to include in Individual Responsibility Contracts (IRCs) and frequently participate in team meeting with the PCMs to discuss service plans for participants. Services provided by DWD to those TANF clients deemed ready include:

- **Employment Readiness Certification:** This is a nine-class curriculum, involving at least 50 hours of participation, to ensure that DWD is supplying a pool of candidates qualified for jobs in demand industries (such as the medical, hospitality, protective services, business services, energy sectors). Participants who complete the curriculum receive certification that they have mastered particular skills and abilities.
- **Community-based training:** DWD offers CWEP-like community service placements where clients can gain work experience, meet work requirements, and get training. The placements are at mostly government agencies or nonprofit partners, although there are some for-profit organizations that participate.
- **Job club, job search assistance, and other workshops:** Job club is offered as a daily service and is an open-entry/open exit activity open to TANF recipients to help with structuring job search activities and providing ongoing support and input to help TANF participants obtain a job. Workshops including parenting classes offered through Catholic Charities; Learn-to-earn workshops; housing; etc.

Mesa County. The Mesa Department of Human Services operates the Grand Junction Workforce Center, within which, the Colorado Works program operates. The Self Sufficiency Division, within DHS, houses the Colorado Works program, in addition to Child Support, Long Term Care, Ongoing Medical, LEAP, Child Care, and Employment Services. The close relationship between Colorado Works and the Workforce Center, both in proximity and organizational structure helps coordinate services offered to Colorado Works clients through the two programs.

Box 3: Two Counties Where Collaboration with Workforce Centers is Minimal

El Paso County. DHS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pike’s Peak WFC in Colorado Springs. At one time, WFC workers were co-located at the DHS office, but they were pulled out. Currently, DHS refers clients to the WFC when appropriate, but a significant percentage of clients do not qualify for WFC programs. Most of the job readiness and job placement activities provided through the TANF program are provided through DHS’ contract with Goodwill. Goodwill operates career centers (offering similar employment-related services as Pike’s Peak WFC) in two TANF offices. DHS would like to more closely link with the Workforce Center in the future.

La Plata County. The county Colorado Works program conducts most employment services in-house, with only informal referral of some TANF recipients to the local workforce center. Referrals are limited to those who are job-ready and who meet the WFC’s criteria for particular training programs. At the time of the site visit, about four individuals were co-enrolled in WIA and TANF.

Differences in the extent of partnerships across the 18 local programs are manifested in a number of areas, including:

- **Numbers of TANF participants referred to the Workforce Center for services**—Six county TANF programs among the 18 visited refer all (or nearly all) TANF participants to the local Workforce Center, three county TANF programs visited refer many participants for services at Workforce Centers, and six county TANF programs refer only some or few participants for services available at the Workforce Center.
- **Whether TANF and Workforce Centers are located in the same building or in close proximity of one another**—Several Workforce Centers are located in the same building or very close to the TANF office (such as in Denver, Fremont, Jefferson, Mesa, and Pueblo Counties). If not co-located, another approach is to set up a satellite office. For example, in Yuma, while the Workforce Center is not in the same building, a Workforce Center Employment Specialist set up a satellite office with drop-in hours at one of the DSS offices in the county. In other counties, the Workforce Centers are located at some distance from the TANF building.
- **Whether staff from either the Workforce Center or the TANF program are co-located with one another**—In several counties, TANF and Workforce Center staff work side-by-side and/or one agency located staff at the other’s premises to facilitate client flow and staff collaboration.
- **Whether the TANF program makes a financial contribution to support the operation of the Workforce Center**—In most of the 18 counties, TANF programs do not make a financial contribution to support Workforce Center operations (and Workforce Centers do not make financial contributions to TANF operations). There are, however, several counties where the TANF program makes a financial commitment to support Workforce Center operations—for example, in Weld County, TANF funding accounts for about a quarter of the Workforce Center’s budget, and in Larimer County, the Workforce Centers receives over \$2 million per year to provide employment services for Larimer County TANF clients.
- **Linkages with Employment, Training, and Education Providers (Other Than Workforce Centers).** Many individuals are receiving TANF benefits because they lack the skills necessary to be competitive within the workplace and to obtain wages to achieve long-term self-sufficiency for their families. Whether or not county TANF programs link closely

with Workforce Centers in their localities, all county programs recognize the need to partner with other providers of employment, training, and education services.

County TANF programs have found that many participants lack basic skills and a high school diploma or GED, which makes it nearly impossible for them to prosper in the workplace. Those without high school diplomas or GEDs also cannot gain entrance to many training programs that might enable them to gain education or training credentials needed to obtain jobs paying self-sustaining wages. With regard to basic skills and GED preparation, TANF programs have typically forged direct linkages with local school districts or community colleges operating GED programs. These programs typically already exist within the community and Colorado Works participants can be referred free-of-charge to the programs (though TANF programs may need to pay expenses associated with the GED test). In some counties, TANF programs have made special efforts to increase the likelihood that those lacking basic skills will earn their GEDs by setting aside slots for TANF participants in GED preparation programs and bringing GED instructors on-site at county TANF offices to provide instruction. **Box 4** provides examples of linkages to provide basic skills/GED preparation services through collaborative arrangements in two Colorado communities.

Box 4: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Obtain GED/Basic Skills Preparation

Rio Grande County. The Bueno-HEP program helps high school dropouts prepare for the GED. The program, which operates from the University of Colorado campus in nearby Alamosa County, offers a weekly, 3-hour GED preparation class in Rio Grande County (at the Monte Vista Head Start building). The first hour is devoted to social studies and reading, the second hour to math, and the third hour is flexible, but is most often spent on math. There are 5 to 10 attendees. The Head Start program requires that the classes be open to everyone in the community, but primarily referrals come through the Colorado Works program. While there is no cost to the TANF program during the regular school year, the TANF program pays for the program to operate during the summer. The program pays for books and GED test fees. When Colorado Works participants receive their GEDs, the Bueno-HEP program helps participants enroll in junior college or other training programs. The Bueno-HEP program also supports TANF caseworkers by educating them about changes to the GED.

Fremont County. GED preparation classes are provided for Colorado Works participants under a collaborative arrangement with the Family Center. Classes are held six hours, two days a week at the Family Center, and once a week for six hours at the DHS offices Colorado Works participants can attend all 12 hours if they choose, but must attend at least six hours of instruction per week. Colorado Works and the Board of Cooperative Education Services each pay half of the GED instructor's salary. The Colorado Works program can refer up to 15 Colorado Works participants per class (generally about 10 attend). Child care is provided on-site during class time. Instruction is tailored to how each client learns best (e.g., some participants are audio learners while others are visual learners).

County TANF agencies have also sought to enhance job-specific skills of Colorado Works clients, most of whom come to the program with little or no work experience and lack marketable skills. Collaborative arrangements have been established with community colleges, proprietary schools, and local WIBs to provide job training for high-demand occupations (such as in health professions) with the potential for career advancement. With regard to post-secondary education and training, collaboration has sometimes been directly with community colleges or other post-secondary training institutions; in other instances, arrangements to obtain occupational training have come through an intermediary, such as the Workforce Center or local WIB.

Where possible, because of the expense of post-secondary education and training programs (particularly longer-term training), county TANF programs rely on WIA and Pell Grants to pay most training costs. However, TANF program funds have been used to pay for short-term training to supplement funding from other sources, such as WIA. TANF funding has also been used to pay for supportive services (such as car repair, transportation assistance, child care) that make it possible for Colorado Works participants to take part in education or training programs. **Box 5** provides several examples of linkages made to offer degrees and certifications to Colorado Works participants.

Though not leading to a degree or certification, job-specific skills training is available through placement of participants in community work experience program (CWEP) slots in conjunction with public or nonprofit agencies. These CWEP slots have been used to provide employment experience for many TANF participants who lack experience and skills. In addition to providing the individual with a chance to build skills and confidence in the workplace, participants are able to meet TANF work requirements and may even be able to earn income above their TANF grant. In addition, some participants have been placed either directly or through the Workforce Center (with WIA funding) in on-the-job-training (OJT) positions with nonprofit and for-profit firms.

Box 5: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Obtain Degrees and Training Credentials

Bent County. Bent County Colorado Works has a liaison at Otero Junior College (OJC) available to help clients interested in enrolling in the college with class selection, financial aid, and tutoring. There are usually 10 Colorado Works clients from Bent County enrolled at the college. The Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program is one of the most popular. In some cases, clients will move on to Registered Nursing (RN) programs. Colorado Works funding cannot support the full training for these programs because of the length of the training programs. However, the Colorado Works case manager works closely with the Workforce Center and the Junior College to identify other funding. One instructor, under contract to teach classes for Colorado Works clients, also helps clients with on-line classes offered through OJC, especially clients without access to reliable transportation. In this case, the OJC liaison will travel to Las Animas to register clients for these classes. The county also has a MOU with the college to provide tutors.

Jefferson County. DHS contracts with Red Rocks Community College to run the Pathways Program, which has three components. The Bridges program component helps participants prepare for the GED test and consists of large group, small group, and individual tutoring sessions. Students who have completed a GED or have a high school diploma are eligible to participate in the College Preparation program component. All college preparation TANF students participate in the “semester survival” class which covers note taking, study skills, test taking, and time management. Clients who participate in the third Pathways component, Vocational Certification, take regular classes offered by Red Rocks Community College and can select a certificate program that complies with their Individual Responsibility Contract (IRC).

Larimer County. The “Business Technologies for the Office” program is provided twice a year by Front Range Community College (FRCC). Participants earn a certificate and, if they choose, nine college credits. The 14-week course covers employment skills, computer operation training, instruction in Microsoft Office software, business communication and problem-solving skills, grammar and punctuation, resume development, and interview preparation and practice. There is also a life skills component. FRCC is under contract to provide the course for up to 20 Larimer County Colorado Works participants per semester. Participants do not need a GED or diploma and are registered at FRCC as regular students. Participants have classes at FRCC Monday through Thursday. On Friday, they attend a Critical Skills class at the local Workforce Center, which covers the requirements for successful employment such as good attendance, timeliness, time and task management, team work, workplace communication, appropriate dress and behavior, and problem-solving skills. Towards the end of the semester, participants focus on completing job applications, developing resumes, and conducting mock interviews. Employers sit in on the mock interviews and provide feedback. At the end of the course there is a graduation ceremony.

OJT slots typically feature payment of a subsidy to the employer (generally by WIA or the TANF agency), for up to six months, of up to half of the TANF participant's wage. Employers commit to hire the individual, should he or she successfully complete the OJT period. Both CWEPs and OJTs provide an opportunity for TANF programs to partner with area employers, which benefits the TANF agency (e.g., helps in meeting work requirements, job placement goals, and keeping TANF agencies well-connected to trends in the job market), employer (e.g., provides low-cost labor and an often untapped labor market), and the TANF participant (e.g., provides job-specific training and work experience to enhance the resume, the possibility for future employment with the sponsoring employer, and earnings). **Box 6** illustrates how several counties have linked to employers through CWEP and other subsidized transitional work initiatives.

Box 6: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements with Public and Private Sector Employers to Provide Work Experience and Training

Rio Grande County. The county TANF program uses CWEP extensively to provide a bridge to full-time, unsubsidized employment for TANF participants who are not work ready or have been unsuccessful in their job search activities. As of December 2005, about 20-25 adult TANF participants were engaged in CWEP positions with public agencies and local nonprofit organizations. The TANF agency has a roster of about 50 employers willing to sponsor up to 12 CWEP positions. Generally, participants are placed into full-time CWEP positions (usually 35 hours per week), though some are placed into part-time positions. Depending upon the amount of their TANF grant, participants work a specified number of hours each month to pay off their grant (calculated by dividing the grant amount by minimum wage to determine a specific number of hours). DSS encourages CWEP participants to work beyond this minimum number of hours, and most do. CWEP participants are paid at minimum wage for each hour worked above paying off their grant; this amount is added to their electronic benefit card on the 15th of each month following the month worked. Employers submit time sheets and performance evaluations on each CWEP participant at the end of each month. There is no cost to employers for wages, and DSS also pays for Workers' Compensation (one aspect of the program that employers particularly like). Typically, TANF participants are placed in CWEP positions for up to 9 months, though this period can be extended for several weeks or even months if agreed to by the employers and DSS. Some examples of the types of CWEP jobs available include: (1) Del Norte Head Start Center—classroom assistant, bus monitor, kitchen helper; (2) Colorado State Nursing Home—kitchen helper, maintenance worker, administrative/clerical, housekeeping, certified nursing assistant; (3) San Luis Valley Tourist Information Center – administrative clerical (e.g., answering telephone and in-person inquiries, filing, responding to e-mails, and other duties as needed); and (4) City of Monte Vista Parks and Recreation—assist with maintenance and upkeep of parks and oversee youth programs

Larimer County. The Transitional Employment Program is a subsidized employment program. Transitional employees learn skills on the job while providing clerical and other assistance to county agencies. Participants sign a one-year contract and agree to work 40 hours per week. They are placed in entry-level positions at DHS, the Workforce Center, or the Department of Veteran's Affairs. Participants are paid more than the minimum wage (for example, one participant earned \$11.53 per hour). DHS provides funding for this initiative. Most participants earn too much to remain on cash assistance. However, they are still eligible for Food Stamps and Medicaid. Once hired, the participant is treated like other employees and expected to work standard hours and dress appropriately. Participants attend a four-hour training one Friday per month at the Workforce Center that focuses on resume development, interview skills, and soft skills. It also functions as a support group where participants can discuss issues. The expectation is that the client will move into unsubsidized employment following the conclusion of the transitional employment program.

C. Linkages to Obtain a Range of Other Need Services

All 18 counties visited utilize a rigorous assessment process to identify deficits and challenges that Colorado Works participants (and their families) face in moving off the TANF rolls and achieving long-term self-sufficiency. The assessment process, together with one-on-one engagement of TANF clients with a DHS or contracted agency case manager, identifies a range of other supporting services that participants are likely to need in addition to employment- and training-related services. Through this assessment process, county TANF programs have learned that there is a wide range of support services needed to move clients toward self-sufficiency and that each individual's circumstances are different. Some Colorado Works clients have need for one or two critical services, such as child care and transportation assistance, while other participants have greater needs, which may have to be provided in a sequential manner—perhaps beginning with child care assistance and help with finding transitional housing, followed by substance abuse treatment, then help with transportation and short-term training, followed by job placement.

TANF programs across the state have found that given the widespread needs of the low-income population served, they must reach out to other organizations in their localities. Through such collaborative arrangements they are able to bring the needed diagnostic and service delivery expertise, as well as often leverage the additional funding to comprehensively address the needs of TANF participants and their families. Among the most prevalent needs that are being addressed through extensive links with other public agencies and for-profit and non-profit organizations are the following: (1) substance abuse and mental health counseling/treatment; (2) child care; (3) child welfare and other family services (including domestic violence services); (4) housing and homeless services; (5) disability-related services; and (6) transportation-related services. In the sections that follow, we highlight these services and provide some innovative examples of the collaborative arrangements that have evolved in the counties we visited.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. All 18 counties visited have established linkages with other organizations in their communities for provision of substance abuse and mental health services. As part of the assessment process, county TANF staff may inquire about substance abuse and mental health issues that may be an obstacle to transitioning off TANF. In some counties, more formal assessments are made, for example, through use of the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) screening tool. During the TANF intake and enrollment process applicants are often reluctant to reveal substance abuse or mental health problems: often these problems become apparent to TANF staff over time as a result of the interaction with a case manager, or through failure to perform in work activities (e.g., erratic attendance patterns or sub-par performance while involved in activities). A thorny problem that has emerged in some Colorado counties—particularly rural areas—is addiction to crystal methamphetamine, which greatly complicates efforts to place individuals in jobs and can have substantial implications for child welfare.

Because of the extent of substance abuse and mental health problems in the target population and the debilitating nature of these problems when it comes to workforce attachment, some county TANF programs supplement limited in-house capabilities by establishing collaborative arrangements to bring certified mental health/substance abuse counselors on-site. In such instances, arrangements have been made with public health departments or other mental health facilities to bring certified mental health/substance abuse counselors to the DHS office to help with

identification and diagnosis of problems. These counselors also may provide short-term counseling for TANF participants (though they usually refer participants to other facilities for longer-term counseling and treatment). These counselors may also help educate TANF staff about how to detect mental health and substance abuse problems (e.g., through periodic workshops with TANF supervisors and frontline staff). **Box 7** provides an illustration of two counties where such placement of mental health professionals at TANF offices has occurred.

**Box 7: Example of Collaborative Arrangement to Obtain On-site
Mental Health/Substance Abuse Counselors**

El Paso Pike’s Peak Mental Health—a nonprofit organization providing substance abuse treatment and mental health services—outstations a licensed clinical social worker at the TANF office to assist TANF case managers and technicians with assessing need for mental health services and connecting those in need with mental health services. If a TANF caseworker thinks there is a need for mental health services, he or she refers the individual to the licensed clinical social worker for screening. This worker can provide short-term consultation; in the case of longer-term counseling or treatment, the social worker refers the individual to other treatment services operated by Pike’s Peak Mental Health. This social worker also handles crisis interventions within the local office (e.g., someone crying or threatening suicide). In addition, about once a month, this social worker conducts a support group for grandchildren involved in child-only cases.

Jefferson County DHS has a financial contract and collaborates with Jefferson County Mental Health for the co-location of a therapist on-site to work with TANF clients for mental health and substance abuse services. This therapist provides individual counseling and group sessions. Through this contract, TANF participants can be referred to the Access and Emergency Team and psychiatrists at Jefferson County Mental Health for crisis situations, medication, and off-site groups. A significant amount of TANF staff training is also provided through this contractual agreement.

Once individuals or other family members are identified as having a mental health or substance abuse issue, local TANF agencies are faced with the challenging task of getting the individual to a provider that can provide diagnostic services followed by appropriate short- or long-term counseling and/or treatment. The most common approach is for county TANF programs to establish a formal or informal referral arrangement with a local public health department (sometimes located in the same or a nearby building) or a private non-profit/for-profit substance abuse/mental health facility. Usually the costs of such diagnostic and treatment services are borne by the collaborating provider (though there may be a contract between the agencies that involves using TANF funds to pay for services and for the TANF agency to be able to refer a specified number of clients for services). Several examples of linkages between TANF agencies and mental health/substance abuse service providers are shown in **Box 8**.

Child Day Care. One of the greatest needs of Colorado Works clients—and one that has to be met prior to engaging participants in work and other TANF activities—is child care. During the intake and eligibility determination process, TANF staff establishes the client’s need for child care. Once the need for child care is established, though, counties approach the solution differently. Some county programs have their own staff devoted to working with clients to identify appropriate child care facilities.

Other county TANF programs look to private organizations, such as Child Care Connections, to identify suitable child care within a reasonable commuting distance of the TANF client’s home or work. **Box 8: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Refer Colorado Works Participants**

for Mental Health or Substance Abuse Counseling and Treatment

La Plata County. The Success Program operates out of Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center. This program, which is based on the Dialectic Behavior Therapy model, requires a six-month commitment from clients to attend weekly sessions that last two hours. Clients who are referred to Success have not been successful meeting their work requirements and often have some history of trauma (e.g., domestic violence). The target population is individuals with serious mental health issues, suicidal thoughts, or chronic problems in maintaining relationships. Two staff lead the weekly group sessions. The curriculum covers mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance. The cycle of classes is repeated three times, with the last 8-week cycle focused on moving the client into employment.

Denver County. Project Wise is an organization that provides women with various mental health-related services, including individual counseling, support groups, individual development services, mentoring, and leadership programs. PW is under contract with TANF to serve 50 TANF families with intake assistance, crisis intervention, individual counseling, and support and therapy groups. The program serves women whose problems are not chronic or severe, but who face issues such as anxiety, personal or family crisis, depression, or behavioral issues. The initiative bases its services on an “empowerment model” instead of a mental health model, with the goal of helping women make their own choices and recognize their own power.

Box 9 provides several examples of county TANF programs that look to outside organizations to help TANF participants with their child care needs or to improve the provision of child care services in the county. Using automated information and referral systems, partnering organizations are able to match clients to vacant child care slots within reasonable commuting distances, and clients then visit the facilities and are able to make a decision on the facility that best meets their needs.

Box 9: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Refer Colorado Works Participants for Child Care Services

El Paso County. Child Care Connections, a nonprofit organization, serves as a child care resource and referral agency for the TANF program, screening child care applications and assisting clients in finding child care. Child Care Connections co-locates 2.75 full-time equivalent staff at the main TANF office. Child Care Connections maintains a database of licensed child care or preschool services in the county. They maintain demographic information for every family that calls and requests child care services. The system matches families with child care that meets their needs. A family calls and makes a specific request regarding their child care needs. It takes about 15 minutes to gather the needed information and enter it into the database. Staff then match each family with available child care providers and provide each family with no fewer than three choices

Rio Grande County. Since October 2004, Rio Grande DSS has had a consultation agreement with the local public health department aimed at enhancing the quality of child care services provided throughout the county. The technical assistance and services provided are intended to increase awareness and knowledge of child care providers and parents concerning the provision of safe and healthy child care services to promote the development of youth. Public health staff (nurses) provide workshops and training to staff at the 14 center and family child care providers in the county. For example, several workshops (e.g. administering medications) are provided each year for child care providers/staff to meet state licensing requirements. In addition, the public health department serves as a clearinghouse for information to providers and parents, particularly on health care concerns, child safety, and provision of high quality child care services that promote healthy development of children. For example, under this consultation agreement, the public health department distributes written materials to providers and parents concerning topics such as parenting skills, how to discipline children, emotional health, and safety. Child care providers or parents can call the department any time to obtain consultation and background materials on specific health or safety matters—for example, to receive consultation on how to respond to an outbreak of chicken pox at a center.

Child Welfare and Family Services. Individuals applying for TANF not only need help for themselves, but also need assistance for other family members, particularly children. A major focus both statewide and in local offices is on breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and welfare receipt by bringing to bear the full range of child welfare and family services that are available through other public agencies (such as Child Protective Services and the local public schools) and many non-profit community-based organizations that specialize in providing services to families. For example, a major recent initiative backed strongly at the state level by DHS, has been for county programs to expand and strengthen linkages between the TANF program and child welfare services.

This section highlights some of the major developments and initiatives undertaken by county TANF programs to forge linkages with the child welfare system and other family services. Additionally, the topic report entitled *Family and Preventative Services* provides more information. All 18 county TANF programs collaborate with child welfare to some degree and provide other family services through collaboration with other entities, either by informal referrals or official contracts. In many counties, a wide variety of other public and private organizations specialize in providing specific services tailored to meet family needs—including parenting education, youth services (such as recreational activities, tutoring services, mentoring, and services for youth leaving foster care), domestic violence services, non-custodial parent services (sometimes referred to as fatherhood programs), abstinence education, and kinship support. In addition, these other partnering organizations often provide case management services and are able to link TANF participants and other family members with other support

services, such as substance abuse and mental health services, job placement and other employment services, referral for basic skills and occupational skills training, and housing services. The companion topic report identifies three broad areas of child welfare and family-related services that have emerged in recent years, and all three involve extensive collaboration with other organizations:

- Collaboration with child welfare agencies and other efforts to prevent out-of-home placements. These programs feature multi-disciplinary teams that serve joint TANF/child welfare cases, and that help to align program requirements, streamline resources, and provide a broad base of support. Other counties have created a designated position within the Colorado Works program to specifically work with jointly-involved families, or families deemed “at-risk.” Some programs serve a broadly-defined low-income population to prevent the need for TANF and child welfare involvement. Finally, some counties have expanded the funds and services available to the relative caretakers on child-only cases, to keep these children in the care of relatives rather than in foster care.
- Programs designed to increase parental involvement from education and home-based programs, to fatherhood and family formation initiatives.
- A broad array of youth programs including pregnancy prevention programs, summer employment and training initiatives, and in-school services for high-risk youth.

Agencies have also placed strong emphasis on building local partnering initiatives to counter domestic violence. **Box 10** provides several examples, but only scratches the surface of the many intensive and innovative collaborative efforts underway in the state to extend services beyond adult TANF recipients to assist children and other family members.

Box 10: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Refer Colorado Works Participants for Child Welfare and Other Family Services

Mesa County. Colorado Works partially funds two programs, the *Get Real Program* and *Families First Program*, conducted by Hilltop, a community-based organization. *Get Real* is a pregnancy prevention program for youth ages 10 to 19 who are Medicaid approved. DHS provides a match with Medicaid funds for this program. The program provides four services to participants: weekly after-school groups, case management, home visits, and individual sessions. The weekly groups cover topics such as pregnancy prevention, domestic violence, and substance abuse. TANF families with children in the program receive a \$50 incentive payment if the child continues with the program for three months and another \$100 at six months. The *Families First Program* is an early childhood program with the goal of enhancing parent/child relationships. It offers a menu of services including a moms’ weekly group, dads’ weekly group (with a “training camp” for new dads), in-home curriculum, and case management. DHS provides a grant to this program and has a MOU outlining expectations (including no waiting time for TANF participants to enter the program, services for up to 20 TANF participants). TANF parents and those under 18 are given priority. The moms’ group, for example, focuses on self-sufficiency and is intended for younger mothers. General life skills, including bank accounts, cooking, self-esteem, and child care are taught.

El Paso County. El Paso has developed several initiatives involving both TANF and Child Welfare. The county has a TANF Kinship and Family Support Team that includes both TANF and child welfare staff who evaluate, train and support relatives caretakers when the children’s parents are unable to provide for the daily care due to abuse or neglect of the children. The Direct Link Program has a multi-disciplinary team that serves jointly involved parents with substance abuse issues. The team consists of Colorado Works, child welfare, a child and family treatment center, a drug and alcohol treatment facility, and Juvenile Court. Each organization plays a different role in serving families; child welfare conducts the initial investigation and assesses the family, the child and family

treatment center performs home visits to assess ongoing needs and monitor a family's progress, and Colorado Works helps families receive assistance and support services. Parents are also treated and monitored by the substance abuse facility. Families that are already involved with the courts must attend weekly hearings at the Family Treatment Drug Court to monitor progress and compliance. Thus, Direct Link participants receive services to help gain self-sufficiency and keep their children, while undergoing regular and fairly intensive monitoring to ensure the protection of their children.

Denver County. A TANF/Child Welfare Integration Team helps integrate requirements and services between child welfare and Colorado Works. The team, modeled after a similar initiative undertaken in El Paso County, consists of two Primary Case Managers (PCMs), two Family and Children (child welfare) social workers, and the PCM supervisor. The PCMs are on the third floor of the Castro Building with the child welfare staff. The focus is on children under 12. One aim of the program is to prevent children from being removed from the home. Another aim is to make sure that staff from each program consider the services that can be offered through the other, and to reduce duplication of services that both programs provide. Finally, the initiative allows PCMs to follow through with cases even after child welfare has closed the case. In addition, Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings are conducted with representatives from legal services, mental health, law enforcement, family members, TANF, and child welfare. Through this process, the PCM and child welfare caseworker can make decisions about the client's IRC, treatment plan, and child safety plan jointly, so the plans are not at odds with one another.

Yuma. Baby Bear Hugs (BBH) is a nonprofit organization that provides parental support, parental education services, and connection to resources for parents with children up to age 3 and pregnant women. Most services are provided by paraprofessionals through home visits. Services cover anything that reduces "parenting stress," such as assessing family needs, providing resources on parenting; providing resources on domestic violence and substance abuse, post-partum depression, etc. Services are voluntary. BBH uses the "Ages and Stages" developmental screening tool. BBH has an annual contract with DSS and receives TANF funds; most of the families served are on TANF or are TANF eligible. The program's main office (serving all counties) is in Yuma. The Yuma County coordinator also has an office in the DSS building in Wray, and works out of it about two days a week.

Housing Assistance. Some TANF recipients come to TANF homeless, perhaps living in an emergency shelter, living temporarily with relatives or friends, or even living on the street. Others descend into homelessness during their time receiving TANF benefits as a result of inability to pay rent or because they are asked to leave their residence by a landlord, family member, relative, or friend. Still others come to the TANF program living in transitional units, public housing, "Section 8" units, or their own unsubsidized housing, but are living month-to-month in precarious financial circumstances. To compound what is already a difficult situation for many TANF participants, many counties—particularly those in or around major urban areas such as Denver and Colorado Springs—have witnessed rapidly escalating housing costs and growing scarcity of affordable housing units.

Despite serving many individuals in tenuous housing situations, TANF agencies typically lack the resources, knowledge, and the in-house expertise to deliver housing or homeless services. Therefore, most counties have forged close relationships with local public housing authorities, homeless service providers, and other nonprofit agencies specializing in housing assistance for low-income families. Collaborative relationships with local public housing authorities have helped to move Colorado Works participants onto and up the waiting lists for Section 8 and public housing units. Through these linkages, Colorado Works case managers have also been able to work with local housing agencies to help keep TANF participants from being evicted.

Partnerships with nonprofit homeless-serving organizations have helped to pave the way for homeless individuals and their families to first secure space in emergency shelters and then work

their way up the housing chain—from emergency shelters to transitional housing units, and eventually into unsubsidized affordable housing units. In addition, linkages with homeless service providers have brought a range of other services (often referred to as a “continuum of care”) that are typically provided by the homeless service provider or through linkages that the homeless agency has with other human service providers. For example, in addition to housing assistance, the homeless-serving agency may be able to connect individuals with health and dental services, substance abuse and mental health counseling and treatment, education and training, job search assistance, food and clothing assistance, and many other services.

Linkages with housing assistance and homeless-serving agencies have not only brought specialized expertise and services that help to keep participants from being evicted and descending into chronic homelessness, they have also saved TANF agencies funding that can be deployed for other services. For example, instead of the TANF agency picking up the tab, these linked housing assistance agencies often pay for security deposits, subsidize rent over extended periods, pay for emergency shelter slots, and pay for a range of other needed services (e.g., transportation assistance, dental care, work clothing and tools, etc.) Several illustrations of interesting linkages that have evolved between county TANF programs and other housing assistance programs are highlighted in **Box 11**.

Disability and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Some TANF participants come to the program with disabilities that prevent them from working altogether or limit the type of work they can perform or the amount of time they can work each day. These disabilities are not always apparent at intake, but often become apparent as participants engage (or fail to engage) in work and other program activities. County TANF agencies have established linkages with VR and other agencies that provide assistance and supportive work opportunities for individuals with disabilities. At a minimum, county TANF agencies have established referral arrangements with

Box 11: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Refer Colorado Works Participants for Housing Assistance and Homelessness Services

Adams County. The Adams County Public Housing Authority (PHA) is located in the same building as DSS, and as a result, has a close and long-term connection with the TANF program. PHA also serves largely the same population DHS has contracted with the housing authority to provide a one-hour slot each day during which TANF case managers can refer TANF participants for housing counseling and other assistance available through PHA. PHA provides a variety of help and counseling, particularly help with paying rent or utilities. PHA can also place the individual on a waiting list for public housing or a Section 8 unit. For the most recent year, the grant from TANF to the PHA totaled \$100,000: \$55,000 for services for the working poor (referred to as the non-contingency fund, because it can be used to serve non-TANF, working poor); \$25,000 for a contingency fund set aside for services for TANF recipients (which as the year goes on can be released by DSS to pay for services delivered to the working poor); and \$25,000 to cover administration. PHA also provides housing counseling open to all residents of Adams County, including TANF recipients and the working poor. Most of the counseling is one-on-one, but there are also group sessions. Types of individual counseling and group workshops include budgeting, credit counseling, mortgage default, loss mitigation, displacement, reverse mortgages, and homeownership.

Denver County. As part of the Mayor's plan to end homelessness, DHS created a team to do outreach for human service programs in homeless shelters by locating staff at the shelters. The initiative is partly funded by TANF. Staff members perform the full range of intake and processing duties (including assessment, gathering information, documenting case records, collecting pieces needed for eligibility determination, etc.), but do not maintain a caseload; after intake, the case is passed to a Primary Case Manager (PCM) in the main DHS office. The program also offers eviction assistance (funded through Emergency Shelter Grants, TANF, and Community Service Block Grant), which is handled by two staff members in the main office. A second housing initiative in Denver—the Catholic Charities Stable Housing program—is a new initiative to help provide affordable housing to place homeless, job-ready TANF clients nearing the time limit in temporary, affordable rental housing lined up by Catholic Charities. The criteria for participation are: (1) the family must be homeless; (2) the family must be nearing the end of TANF (not necessarily at 60 months but close); and (3) the client must be job-ready, with a primary barrier being homelessness. The aim is to serve 25 families for one year. The client must apply for Section 8 housing and other tax credits and housing programs with the aim of obtaining permanent housing. The client must pay up to 30 percent of his/her income as rent. The program pays the security deposit and first month rent. In addition, the initiative provides a start-up package of home items, including detergent and items for personal hygiene, and helps the family buy furniture. Catholic Charities also works with the clients to help them clear debts to landlords and deal with other factors that might be barriers to permanent Section 8 housing.

La Plata County. Housing Solutions provides housing and energy assistance and other services to low-income families and individuals in the Southwest Colorado area (Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan counties). The program manager of the Transitional Housing Program receives referrals from TANF to help clients who are homeless or facing homelessness. Currently, about 16 people participate in this program and about half of these clients are receiving TANF. As part of this program, the program manager meets with families weekly in their homes, during which he or she helps participants follow their plan (they are required to do something for 20 to 30 hours a week). She confirms that they are paying their bills, that there is food in the house, that the house is clean, and that they are connected with resources. She also works with landlords to avoid eviction. She can provide a variety of supportive services, such as counseling, child care, transportation, alcohol treatment, and employment (TANF may pay for some of these services). If the client needs a loan, she can provide them with assistance up to \$500. She interacts with the TANF case manager to discuss cases. The program manager also helps them get on waiting lists for more permanent housing.

VR agencies so that TANF participants can be sent for in-depth diagnostic services and, if appropriate, rehabilitative services. In some counties, TANF agencies (and TANF participants with disabilities) have benefited from having VR staff located in the same building or in a nearby office building. Where VR agencies have been headquartered at some distance from TANF offices, some county TANF agencies have been successful in negotiating arrangements whereby VR staff are occasionally stationed at the TANF office. These arrangements for stationing of staff have come at little or no cost to the TANF agency (e.g., TANF agencies generally make office space available for VR staff), but have greatly facilitated the referral of TANF recipients to VR services.

TANF agencies have established linkages to Social Security Administration (SSA) offices and other disability-serving organizations to facilitate application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and, in some instances, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The process of qualifying for SSI can be complex and time-consuming, and can be derailed if the TANF participant becomes fully engaged in work or fails to submit the proper paperwork and justifications. Some TANF agencies have developed special initiatives involving disability “navigators” to help TANF participants through the process of properly diagnosing disabilities and obtaining needed assistance, therapy, or treatment. If such disabling conditions cannot be overcome and gainful employment obtained, then the navigator can help the individual complete the SSA application. **Box 12** provides illustrations of partnerships that county TANF agencies have initiated to secure disability-related services for TANF participants.

Box 12: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Refer Colorado Works Participants for Disability-Related Services

Arapahoe Workforce Specialists have created a strong partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). TANF clients fill out forms that are patterned after DVR forms. If they are eligible for DVR services, their initial DVR paperwork has already been filled out. The Workforce Specialist serves them while they are waiting for DVR counselors to determine (1) if they are qualified for DVR and (2) to begin DVR services. For TANF clients who are also served by DVR, the two agencies work to ensure they are not double-paying for a service (e.g., TANF will pay for child care and gas for an individual and DVR will pay for training). For individuals who have been on TANF for 50 months, the Workforce Specialist often checks for a hidden disability that might have gone undetected during an individual’s initial screening and assessment process.

Denver. The TANF agency negotiated a contract with Catholic Charities to fund a Navigator program to provide intensive case management services for hard-to-serve clients. The Navigator Program originally was designed to serve clients with chronic issues that might make them eligible for SSI, but it has been expanded to cover other populations, including the two-parent caseload, referrals from the TANF intake team of cases they suspect may need a navigator, and long-term TANF recipients (42+ months). Navigators are provided to all long-term clients after 48 months. Navigators perform assessments and develop self-sufficiency plans with the clients, provide services and referrals, and help disabled clients apply for SSI. They meet with Primary Case Managers (PCMs) to incorporate the self-sufficiency plan into the client’s Individual Responsibility Contract (IRC). Navigators conduct home visits with clients who cannot come to the office. The policy is for navigators to meet with 75 percent of their caseload face-to-face once a month.

Fremont. A state VR counselor is stationed at the DHS building. About 10 percent of the counselor’s caseload is joint VR/Colorado Works clients. After a client is referred, the VR counselor schedules a 1.5 hour intake interview, which covers medical issues and disabilities. The client also completes a person-centered planning questionnaire (e.g., what do you hope to accomplish, how VR can help you, details about the individual’s current situation and needs). The counselor then develops a plan that describes the client’s functional limitations and how to address them. This could include referrals for adaptive aids, treatment, education or training provided through a community college, and other

services to facilitate employment. The VR counselor also conducts occasional orientation sessions at Workforce Center or Colorado Works to inform TANF staff of the services offered through VR. In addition, the counselor distributes flyers at DHS and to Workforce Center staff that describe VR services and how potential clients can apply for services.

Transportation Assistance. Not surprisingly, transportation problems are among the most frequent barriers to obtaining and keeping a job that TANF recipients cite. In many Colorado counties, particularly outside urban areas, public transportation is limited or non-existent. Where no public transportation is available, TANF participants need access to automobiles. As much as possible, it is important for job seekers to expand their commuting range to increase the number of jobs for which they may be considered.

TANF agencies have provided transportation-related assistance directly to participants, but have also teamed with other community organizations to help participants overcome a variety of transportation-related obstacles to employment. For example, some linkages have brought transportation assistance through collaborating agencies at no cost to the TANF program, such as bus fare, reimbursement for gas, help with auto repairs, help paying car insurance, and help with reinstatement of driver's licenses. Other partnerships have been more complicated and innovative—for example, TANF agencies teaming with other local agencies to obtain federal grants to improve public transportation in their locality, as well as linkages with other organizations to help participants purchase automobiles. **Box 13** provides examples of the partnerships that have evolved between county TANF programs and community agencies to provide transportation-related assistance.

Box 13: Examples of Collaborative Arrangements to Refer Colorado Works Participants for Transportation Assistance

Adams County. Through its Auto Purchase Program, Adams County Social Services Department (ACSSD) partners with an auto wholesaler to assist pre-screened participants with the purchase of an automobile. TANF participants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for this initiative: (1) have discretionary funds equal to or greater than 20% of their gross monthly income; (2) be an Adams County resident for six months prior to applying; (3) have one or more dependent children; (4) provide a current copy of their Motor Vehicle Record which cannot contain a DUI or DWI; (5) be actively involved in case management services; and (6) attend the Money Smart classes offered through the One-Stop or attend budgeting classes offered through Consumer Credit Counseling or a bank/credit union. The participant completes the Auto Purchase Program checklist and an application form. If ACSSD approves the application, participants must complete 40 hours of volunteer/community service prior to the ACSSD contract specialist sending an approved referral form to the Auto Auction. The Auto Auction representative then contacts the TANF client and sets up an appointment for the client to come view available cars. The Auto Auction representative selects a vehicle from a pool of appropriate cars (usually 5 or 6 autos). All cars receive a 20-point safety inspection. The Contract Specialist makes a vendor payment to the Auto Auction for the price of the vehicle. The purchase price of the vehicle cannot exceed \$3,000. During the most recent program year, the Auto Purchase Program expended a total of \$96,000 on 42 vehicles. Participants must pay for insurance and fuel, and they must maintain the vehicle. They own the vehicle, so there is no liability for ACDSS. Each participant signs a pledge that they will not sell the car within the first year of ownership without first discussing the sale with his/her case manager.

Mesa County. In 1997, the county had no public transportation. However, DHS was able to take advantage of a Department of Transportation Matching Grant, to contribute \$200,000 per year (from the TANF block grant) for five years to help with development of a bus system in Grand Junction.

IV. Lessons Learned

PRWORA legislation and the Colorado legislature, as well as the Colorado Department of Human Services, have created a climate conducive to county TANF programs collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide a wide range of human services to TANF participants and their families. For example, DHS has provided strong backing for collaboration between the child welfare and TANF systems. Outside the realm of local DHS offices (and links with child welfare), TANF programs have been strongly encouraged to forge partnerships to offer a wide range of services to meet the varied needs of the TANF-eligible population. The state did not, however, mandate that county TANF programs collaborate in a specific manner; rather, the state allowed coordination to flourish from the “bottom up” and to take on forms that made sense to local agencies (both local TANF programs and the other collaborating agencies). The state also fostered locally-determined collaborative arrangements by emphasizing local flexibility and decision-making with regard to how Colorado Works programs operate in each county. As a result of this conducive climate and encouragement to coordinate, collaboration has flourished across the state in county TANF programs, involving many different partners and taking on many different and interesting forms.

The evidence from the survey of all county TANF programs across the state—backed up from in-depth site visits to 18 of these county programs—indicates that program coordination is extensive and that no two counties are collaborating with the same set of organizations. While there is some cross-fertilization, for example, in the formation of linkages between TANF and child welfare programs, there is not a simple “cookie cutter” approach to program coordination. Even when collaborative efforts have been modeled after initiatives in other counties, it has been necessary for local TANF programs to tailor linkages to the partners available in the locality (and willing to coordinate), the service needs of the local TANF population, resources available, and the existing structure of the TANF program in the locality (e.g., client flow through the Colorado Works initiative).

The county survey suggests that some vital services for TANF clients are primarily being provided in-house, but there are many others being provided through links with other public agencies and community-based organizations. The most common in-house provided services are outreach, case management, child care, and employment-related services (over 90 percent of the counties provide these in-house). Among the services commonly provided through referrals to other human services agencies (over 90 percent of counties report such cross-agency referrals) are: mental health and substance abuse services; public health services and other medical/dental services; child welfare services; child support enforcement; domestic violence services; housing assistance; SSI and other disability-related services (including through VR); education, training, and workforce development services; housing assistance; and legal aid.

The site visits corroborated the general findings of the survey—there is a large range of coordination—and provided many specific examples of partnerships. These collaborative efforts are dynamic—new links form, existing partnering relationships adjust to new circumstances or opportunities, and other existing arrangements come to an end for lack of resources or the will to collaborate among partners. The site visits have successfully highlighted the vast array of partnering arrangements, the specifics of how agencies partner, and the services that result for TANF participants.

However, the visits and early assessment only suggest some of the benefits and costs of linkages for participating agencies. For example, interviews with TANF staff and many partnering agencies provide clear indications that TANF programs and the individuals served have been able to access a far greater range of services than would have been possible had such arrangements not been in place. We also know from discussions that TANF programs are successful in sharing costs with partnering agencies—and hence, in leveraging resources from other programs. From discussions with TANF and partnering agency staff (as well as focus groups with participants) it is clear that there is a common belief that such collaborative efforts are worth their costs, benefit TANF participants, and contribute to better client outcomes.

However, additional data and analysis are needed to test these beliefs, particularly outcome data relating to length of time receiving TANF benefits and employment outcomes (e.g., workforce attachment and earnings for several years after welfare receipt). For example, additional analysis could be undertaken to test whether counties with strong links to Workforce Centers have better participant employment outcomes. It would also be valuable to analyze how county TANF programs with stronger links to the child welfare system do in keeping children from entering the foster care and juvenile justice systems, and whether they keep them from dropping out of school. There are many more questions raised with respect to whether TANF participants and their families benefit in terms of quantifiable outcomes—for example: Do those county programs with close links to fatherhood programs perform better in terms of child support payments? Do county TANF programs closely partnering with GED preparation programs do better in terms of addressing basic skills deficiencies and helping participants to obtain GEDs—and, ultimately, does this make a difference in terms of TANF clients leaving the TANF rolls, securing higher wage employment, and achieving long-term self sufficiency? Do strong links with community colleges and the Workforce Investment Act make a critical difference in participants obtaining post-secondary certifications and/or degrees—and does this impact labor force attachment, long-term earnings, and staying off of the welfare rolls?

More information is also needed on the cost side of the equation: What types of collaborative arrangements are most costly for TANF programs, and why? How can the cost of collaboration be minimized for TANF agencies and the partners? Are there services that are better provided in-house and others that are best provided through arrangements with other organizations? Are some collaborative arrangements simply not worth their costs to the TANF agency?

Overall, this assessment has helped to catalogue the diverse types of collaborative arrangements that exist in TANF programs across Colorado. There are many interesting and innovative arrangements that could serve as models for other county programs seeking to enhance their service delivery systems.

Acronyms

A+	Advancement Plus (Goodwill Industries, Adams County)
ABE	Adult Basic Education
ADHD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
AWEP	Alternative Work Experience Program
BBH	Baby Bear Hugs (Yuma)
BHO	Behavioral Health Organization
CACTIS	Colorado Automated Client Tracking Information System
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocates
CBMS	Colorado Benefits Management System
CBT	Community Based Training (Arapahoe)
CCA	Community College of Aurora
CCD	Community College of Denver
CDHS	Colorado Department of Human Services
CHEERS	Community Household Education & Economic Resource Center (Saguache)
CHOICES	CHOICES Specialized Training Options (Community College of Aurora)
CNA	Certified Nursing Assistant
COPEs	Career Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey
COPS	Career Occupational Preference System
CRC	Capital Research Corporation
CWEE	Center for Work Education and Employment (Denver)
CWEP	Community Work Experience Program
DBT	Dialectical Behavior Therapy
DHHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
DHS	Department of Human Services
DSS	Department of Social Services
DV	Domestic Violence
DVERT	Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (El Paso)
DVR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
DWD	Division of Workforce Development (Denver)
EIPP	Early Intervention and Prevention Program (Adams)
ERS	Employment Readiness Scale

ES	Employment Services
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	Essential Skills Program (Denver)
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
FRCC	Front Range Community College
GATB	General Aptitude Test Battery
GED	General Educational Development (high school equivalency)
HEP	High School Equivalency Program (Buena HEP, Rio Grande)
IRC	Individual Responsibility Contract
JHU	Johns Hopkins University
JOBS	Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training\
LCMH	Larimer County Mental Health
LD	Learning Disability
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
MMPI-2	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (used in Bent County)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSR	Monthly Status Report
MYAT	Multidisciplinary Youth Assessment Team (Weld)
NJCLD	National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities
OJC	Otero Junior College
OJT	On-the-Job Training
PCM	Primary Case Manager (Denver)
PHA	Public Housing Authority
PREP	Personal Responsibility Employment Program (Mesa)
PLATO	PLATO Simulated GED Preparation Package
POP	Parent Opportunity Program (El Paso)
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PW	Project Wise (Denver)
RMBH	Rocky Mountain Behavioral Health (Fremont County)
SASSI	Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory
SSA	Social Security Administration

SSBG	Social Services Block Grant
SSI/SSDI	Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance
SIPP	Survey of Income and Program Participation
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TDM	Team Decision Making (child welfare)
TEP	Transitional Employment Program (Larimer)
TESSA	Trust Education Safety Support Action (El Paso)
TIGHT	Teamwork, Innovation, Growth, Hope, and Training Youth Corps
TPG	Transitional Psychological Group (Weld)
UCHSC	University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
VESL	Vocational English as a Second Language (Community College of Denver)
VESTED	Vocational Enhancements: Services, Training & Education (La Plata)
WAIT	Why Am I Tempted? (Weld)
WE	Work Experience
WFC	Workforce Center
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board
WOW	Work Options for Women (Denver)