



TANF Works!

TANF/WIOA
COLLABORATION SERIES
2019 - 03

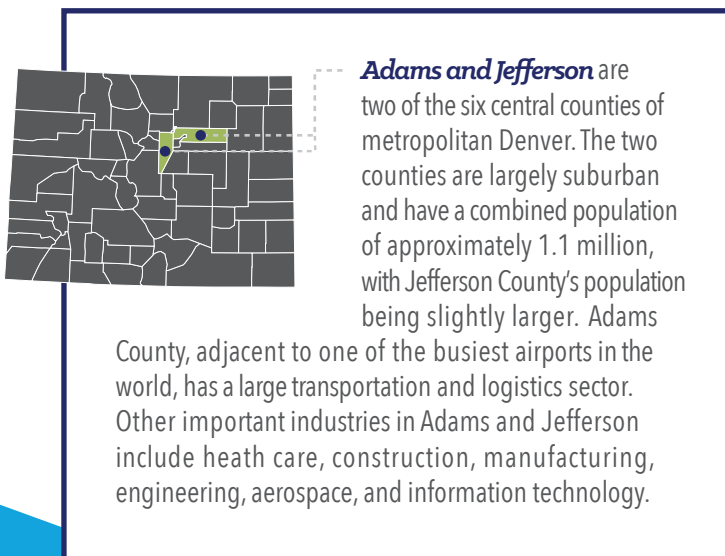
Adams and Jefferson Counties, Colorado

TANF/WIOA COLLABORATION

Since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, many state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and workforce system leaders have focused efforts to coordinate client services serving low-income or vulnerable populations. WIOA makes TANF a mandatory partner unless the Governor opted out. Coordination efforts are meant to improve service delivery and reduce duplication.

This brief highlights examples of collaboration practices among TANF and WIOA programs in Adams and Jefferson Counties, Colorado in the following areas:

FIGURE 1: Adams and Jefferson Counties Geographic Maps



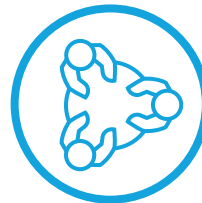
Joint Service Delivery

through co-enrollment in TANF diversion programs and WIOA, cross-program trainings and workshops, and shared documentation tools



Resource Sharing

by distributing staff and facility costs and co-locating



Shared Learning

through cross-program planning and new initiatives



Managing Collaborative Activities

by making collaboration an agency-wide priority, and using organizational development tools to help make changes

Local Services Overview

The Adams County Department of Human Services and Jefferson County Human Services administer TANF and WIOA services in their respective counties. Most of these services are delivered within the counties' Workforce Centers that are part of the American Job Center network authorized by WIOA. Employment services are available to both TANF and non-TANF clients, including job readiness services, skills assessment, access to adult basic education and occupational training, job search assistance, and direct connections to employers. Clients who are enrolled in TANF (known as Colorado Works) and/or WIOA Title I (Youth, Adult, or Dislocated Worker programs) may also receive vouchers or cash incentives to cover work-related or training-related expenses, such as tuition, child care, and transportation.

In addition to pre-employment training, TANF and WIOA program staff can arrange work-based learning opportunities such as paid internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships. Work-based learning strategies have been an important strategy in Colorado

to increase work-participation rates among TANF recipients (Colorado TANF's work participation rate increased between fiscal years 2016 and 2017). Most adults who receive TANF cash assistance must work or take part in work-readiness or other employment-related activities.

Individuals living in Adams or Jefferson County may apply for TANF cash assistance online, by mail, or in person at an office located near the Workforce Center. Once a TANF application is approved, work-eligible applicants attend a TANF orientation at one of the counties' Workforce Centers, where they learn about the education, training, and employment-related services offered by TANF, WIOA, and other programs at the centers. Clients are then assigned a TANF case manager and complete an employability assessment. All TANF case management—including connections to employment and training services—is then conducted with the client at a Workforce Center.



JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY

Each county has reorganized their staff to remove silos and better coordinate the activities of their TANF and WIOA case workers.

Diversion program resources and co-enrollment. Adams County's Jobs Success Program (JSP) works with former TANF cash recipients and with individuals who have never received TANF. This county-administered diversion program is funded with TANF dollars, but separate from Colorado's basic cash assistance programs. JSP helps employed workers with children to access education and supportive services to stabilize their employment, promote their advancement in the labor market, and reduce their likelihood of needing cash assistance in the future. Adams County's WIOA case managers can refer working WIOA clients to enroll in JSP as a source of supports, as needed (or refer unemployed clients to apply for TANF cash assistance on a case-by-case basis). Conversely, JSP case managers sometimes identify clients as candidates to receive education, training, or other services from WIOA Title I. A client can be enrolled in JSP and WIOA sequentially or simultaneously. If the latter, the TANF and WIOA case managers communicate with each other by phone, via email, or in person to plan their work with the shared client.

Training opportunities that cross funding streams. Each county offers short-term occupational training and work-based learning opportunities. These include apprenticeships, paid internships (including community work experience placements), and volunteer opportunities. Workforce Center staff who are partially funded by WIOA Title III or WIOA Title I help identify these opportunities, particularly ones with private-sector employers, for both WIOA and TANF clients. These opportunities are offered as individual training slots or for a cohort of clients.

For example, Jefferson County implemented a 10-week information technology "help desk" training program (combining basic desktop support skills with training modules to prepare for more advanced IT positions). This program included clients from four programs: WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker, plus the Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP), which uses state TANF funds to offer paid work experience to TANF recipients. All participants split their time between classroom training and internships with a local employer, receiving \$12 per hour for each activity. The CW STEP program also allowed Jefferson County to create new staff positions. The internship coordinators work with the Workforce Center's Business Services team to develop and match TANF clients to individual- and project-based paid internships.

Job seeker workshops. Workforce Center classes – on topics such as job readiness, career exploration, and job search techniques – are aligned across TANF and WIOA in Adams County, and combined in Jefferson County.

- **Adams County** – The content of each class, whether offered by TANF or WIOA, is the same. If TANF clients attend a workshop offered by either program, it will count towards their requirements for TANF – and, if clients are co-enrolled in WIOA, it will count for WIOA as well. TANF workshops are in turn open to WIOA clients so they can access topics that are not offered as WIOA workshops, such as life skills. A Workforce Integration team of staff within the county considered combining the two sets of classes, but decided not to because it would require data entry into two separate participation tracking systems, creating duplicative work for case managers.
- **Jefferson County** – A single team of trainers deliver workshops to both TANF and WIOA clients (along with other Workforce Center customers). Despite some duplicative data entry, case managers use an internal database system to share information about clients' participation in workshops and other Workforce Center services across programs. Jefferson County is also developing a more comprehensive participant tracking system that will incorporate data from multiple programs for each Human Services customer, including TANF and Workforce customers.

Referrals of TANF clients to WIOA Title I. In Jefferson County, TANF case managers identify clients for potential co-enrollment in WIOA Adult – for example, to pursue occupational skills training. As a form of less-targeted outreach, TANF and WIOA staff co-create letters for TANF recipients that include information about WIOA services. In Adams County, a TANF case manager assesses whether a client fits the WIOA program's criteria, and then asks the client to attend a WIOA orientation to begin the application process. In both counties, clients are expected to select a career and/or education track before co-enrolling; typically, TANF case managers or Resource Room staff (Title III in Adams, and Titles I and III in Jefferson) help clients to make these decisions.

For clients under age 25 in both counties, TANF case managers might refer them directly to WIOA Youth, typically to work on career readiness and education. Much like the WIOA Adult referral process, TANF and WIOA case managers discuss the case prior to co-enrollment and work in tandem to manage the client's progress.

Documenting criteria for job placement referrals. Jefferson County's Workforce Center has developed an internal roster of job seekers, called Talent Pool. Staff across programs use this tool – which acts as a supplement to the statewide Connecting Colorado labor exchange database – to document whether a client is prepared to receive job placement services by the Center's Business Services team. It records when case managers, internship coordinators, or

Resource Room staff have interacted with clients and assessed their resume, occupational/career focus, interviewing skills, and availability to begin work. The Business Services staff uses this vetting process to make job referrals that are suitable for both the job seeker and the employer (thereby protecting the Workforce Center's reputation among employers).

Originally, the roster was maintained primarily by Resource Room and Business Services staff. The Workforce Center increasingly relies on TANF staff to learn and use the Talent Pool criteria as an internal checklist: a case manager focuses on preparing the job candidate, while Business Services staff focus on contacting employers. This approach reduces hand-offs from one staff person to another, allowing the client to continue working with a single Workforce Center staff person. Yet Business Services staff are also available to provide individual job search advice during "strategy meetings" (typically offered twice per week). The client's case manager (TANF or WIOA) usually attends these meetings as well.



RESOURCE SHARING

In both counties, local Workforce Centers create efficiencies across TANF and WIOA programs.

Distributing staff and other direct costs across programs.

Both counties' human services departments directly administer – and to a great extent, directly provide – both TANF and WIOA services, allowing for staff and resources to be easily deployed across programs. For example, although the Business Services team is mostly funded by WIOA Title I or Title III, individual staff may charge blocks of time to TANF funding streams (CW STEP in Jefferson County) when they work with TANF staff or clients on work-based learning assignments or job placements. Similarly, WIOA and TANF programs might use co-enrollment or sequential enrollment to leverage resources that are only offered by a particular program, or to cover additional services once one program's resources have been exhausted.

Efficiencies through co-location.

Cost Sharing. As with staffing costs, Workforce Center facility costs are charged to funding streams based on staff labor hours.

Making service delivery more efficient. The two counties' experiences illustrate how seemingly small details can influence the results of a co-location effort.

- **Adams County** – Public assistance benefits and workforce services had long been available together on a government center campus. However, many of these services were underutilized because the office location was inconvenient for many residents, particularly those using public transportation. In 2017, most benefit-eligibility, case management, and employment services (along with others, including family services, child support enforcement, and veteran services) were relocated to a new human services building near public transportation options. A check-in area has staffed windows and computerized self-service kiosks that are connected to Colorado’s online benefits application and customer service system. The new facility provides an inviting space for cross-program activities such as “opportunity fair” events that bundle job leads, case support, training, and other resources.

During this relocation process, supervisors and managers sought ways to make cross-program collaboration activities more convenient for front-line staff as well. For example, although TANF and WIOA case managers work on the same floor, they initially were separated by a door that required a key card for entry. Staff expressed frustration because the locked door placed a literal barrier between the two teams. As a low-tech solution, they determined that it would not pose a security risk to disable this lock so that staff could move freely between the rooms.

- **Jefferson County** – Located on the same floor, TANF and WIOA case managers can easily meet to conduct formal joint case management and informal exchanges of information about clients and services. The Workforce Center is also located on the same campus as the eligibility section of Department of Human Services (DHS), where TANF clients can apply for benefits, submit required documentation, and complete periodic eligibility re-determination. New TANF enrollees can walk directly from the eligibility office to the Workforce Center for orientation and employment services. To reduce clients’ transit between the two buildings, DHS also arranged for an eligibility worker to be stationed at the Workforce Center and to work with a limited number of TANF clients who are currently receiving case management services there. In addition, the Workforce Center began to offer both sets of services on one regular weekday evening – a rare practice among Workforce Centers, since it requires additional staff coverage and security and facility costs.

“It doesn’t matter where the idea starts. Once we have a conversation as a team, it becomes a collaborative effort. The idea of having an eligibility worker stationed at the Workforce Center

“ started with the eligibility staff. But then as soon as the TANF and WIOA case managers heard about the idea, their response was: “Yes, we’re in on this—let’s do this together.”

- TANF TEAM MEMBER



SHARED LEARNING

Staff at all levels participate in joint planning efforts.

TANF and WIOA program directors and program managers meet regularly to plan day-to-day joint services, cross-program referrals, and more ambitious joint efforts such as Adams County’s opportunity fairs and Jefferson County’s mixed-cohort IT training program. Managers and supervisors also use new initiatives to build expertise and relationships among front-line staff across programs, such as Jefferson County’s CW STEP program and Adams County’s co-location of TANF and WIOA staff to a new facility. For the latter, the move sparked efforts by front-line staff and supervisors to better understand when – and the detailed logistics of how – to co-enroll clients in the two programs. During a trial-and-error period, staff learned the nuances of each program’s requirements and the resources each had to offer.



MANAGING COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Because TANF is administered by each county in Colorado, county administrators set the tone for how TANF services are integrated with WIOA services.

Leaders shifted agency priorities. In both counties, agency-level leaders spearheaded efforts to reduce barriers between the programs. In Adams County, despite several years of operating both programs from a single county agency, the programs remained largely siloed until a new agency director signaled that cross-program referrals would be a priority. In Jefferson County, the agency director removed internal barriers to cross-program efforts and frequently communicated the importance of collaboration to staff at all levels. For example, in working with clients, staff were asked to focus less on program affiliation, and more on actual services offered and outcomes desired.



The two sets of rules and regulations do not align well... but our program directors have done amazing work through the complexities of WIOA and TANF. We do not have patience to watch people not get jobs, not move out of poverty. We define success together with the people we serve.

- HUMAN SERVICES LEADERSHIP

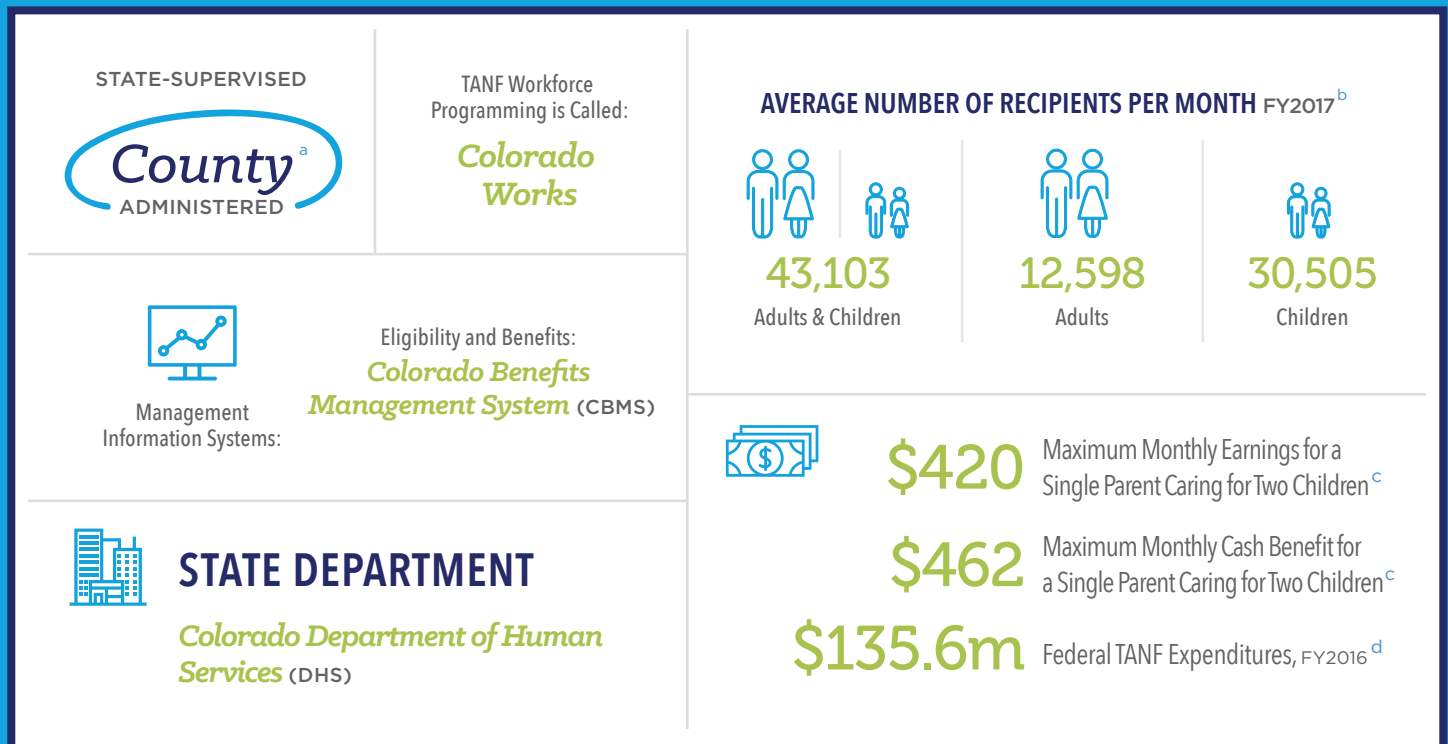
Organizational development tools increase staff expertise and engagement. Agency and program directors have introduced leadership training curricula for cohorts of supervisors, managers, and division directors; shared reading and planning activities focused on organizational development; and planning analyses to strengthen customer engagement. For example, Adams County analyzed new outreach strategies to reduce drop-off among TANF participants between the application phase and the TANF orientation. In Jefferson County, multiple levels of staff (and Workforce Center stakeholders) undertook a customer flow mapping exercise based on "lean process" techniques. The goal was to reduce duplication of activities for Workforce Center staff and customers, including TANF and WIOA clients.

TANF and WIOA Eligibility and Services in Colorado

TANF. Nearly 13,000 of Colorado's low-income adults are enrolled in Colorado's TANF program, called Colorado Works, which provides temporary financial assistance to households with children. Colorado Works Financial payments vary according to the size of the family and the income of the

parents. The maximum monthly income threshold is \$420 for a single parent with two children (SEE TABLE S.1). TANF clients can access a variety of employment, work support, training, and education programs, depending on the type of services they need to become self-sufficient.

TABLE S.1: Colorado TANF Snapshot



SOURCES: (a) A Descriptive Study of County- versus State-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/county_tanf_final_report_submitted_to_acf_b508.pdf); (b) TANF Caseload Data 2017 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-caseload-data-2017>); (c) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Eligibility and Benefit Amounts in State TANF Cash Assistance Programs (<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43634.pdf>); (d) TANF Financial Data in FY 2016 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-financial-data-fy-2016>)

WIOA. Most WIOA-funded services are available to individuals in Colorado regardless of income, but many programs prioritize serving low-income individuals or those having one or more barriers to employment. The principal WIOA services offered to job seekers statewide include labor-exchange/job search assistance, individualized career services, work readiness preparation, adult

basic education, and occupational skills training. Some WIOA-funded programs also offer supportive services such as child care, transportation, tools and equipment, and uniforms. **TABLE S.2** provides a snapshot of WIOA in Colorado.

TABLE S.2: Colorado WIOA Snapshot

	<p>American Job Center: Workforce Center</p>		<p>Management Information System: Connecting Colorado</p>
 <p>STATE DEPARTMENTS^a</p>		 <p>2017 ALLOTMENTS^c</p>	
<p>Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker (Title I); Employment Service (Job Service) /Wagner-Peyser (Title III); and Vocational Rehabilitation Services & State Services for the Blind (Title IV):</p> <p>Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Adult Education & Family Literacy (Title II):</p>		<p>\$10.5m Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation</p>	<p>\$9.3m WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation</p>
<p>GOVERNOR-APPOINTED BOARD OVERSEEING WIOA^b Colorado Workforce Development Council</p>		<p>\$10m WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation</p>	<p>\$11m WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation</p>

SOURCES: (a) WIOA State Plan for the State of Colorado (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0125_WIOA_State_Plan_Final_112016.pdf); (b) The Colorado Workforce Development Council (<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cwfdc/council-0>); (c) Program Year (PY) 2017 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Allotments; PY 2017 Wagner-Peyser Act Final Allotments and PY 2017 Workforce Information Grants (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/15/2017-12336/program-year-py-2017-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-wioa-allotments-py-2017-wagner-peyser>)

Resources

- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Overview:** <https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>
- **USDHHS OFA PeerTA TANF/WIOA Resource Hub:** <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/ofa-initiative/426>
- **USDOL TA Hub:** <https://ion.workforcegps.org/>

This brief is based primarily on conversations conducted in spring and summer 2018 with WIOA and TANF program staff in Adams and Jefferson Counties, Colorado. For more information about the content in this brief, contact Laura Barribo (lbarribo@adcogov.org) for Adams County and Kat Douglas (kdouglas@co.jefferson.co.us) for Jefferson County. Marissa Strassberger (MDRC), Jack Myrick (Public Strategies), and Caroline Schultz (MDRC) were the IIEESS site visit team members.

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The Integrating Innovative Employment and Economic Stability Strategies (IIEESS) initiative of the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), under contract number HHSP23337005T, publishes briefs and materials that document the collaboration between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and public workforce systems under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This material is intended to encourage peer learning among state and local actors so that low-income individuals can effectively access employment and family support services.