



TANF Works!

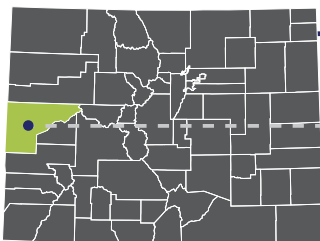
TANF/WIOA
COLLABORATION SERIES
2019 - 05

Mesa County, 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.

FIGURE 1: Mesa County Geographic Map



Mesa County, located on the western border of Colorado, has a population of approximately 147,000 and encompasses over 3,000 square miles of land.

The county has one Workforce Center located in Grand Junction (the largest city in Mesa County and western Colorado), next door to the Department of Health and Human Services.

This brief highlights emerging TANF and WIOA agency collaboration practices between TANF and the American Job Center in Mesa County, Colorado:



Joint Service Delivery

by aligning the TANF workforce program with WIOA, co-enrolling clients, and adopting a service-oriented approach



Resource Sharing

through co-location and integrated funding



Shared Learning

through joint staff training and goal-setting, a cross-program Collaboration Room, and meetings



Managing Collaborative Activities

through accountability tools to track cross-program collaboration

Local Services Overview

The Mesa County Workforce Center provides workforce services for both TANF and non-TANF clients. As shown in **FIGURE 2**, these services are operated and funded by different organizations and funding streams. Job seekers are first directed to the Resource Room, where they can use computers, enroll in Connecting Colorado (a job search platform), and receive job search assistance from staff members.

FIGURE 2: Workforce Center Staffing and Funding

| ROLE | <i>Services Provided to Clients at the Workforce Center</i> | <i>Available for</i> | <i>Employer</i> | <i>Main Funding Source</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Employment Specialist | Employer engagement/services and general job search support services | All visitors to Workforce Center | Department of Human Services | WIOA Title III - Wagner-Peyser |
| Resource Coordinator | One-on-one job search services (help with writing a resume, referrals to disability services, etc.) | All visitors to Workforce Center Resource Room | Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. | Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. |
| WIOA Case Manager | WIOA Title I case management, access to employment and training services; also takes part in employer engagement/services | Clients enrolled in WIOA Title I | Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. | WIOA Title I |
| TANF Eligibility Specialist | TANF eligibility consultation and determination | All clients applying for TANF | Department of Human Services | TANF |
| TANF Case Manager | Standard TANF case management (benefits and eligibility monitoring, support for addressing barriers to employment, self-sufficiency planning, etc.) | TANF clients | Department of Human Services | TANF |
| CW STEP Case Manager | Employment planning, work-based learning, and employment services | TANF clients who are participating in CW STEP | Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. | TANF |

Resource Coordinators, who are trained to be familiar with all programs offered at the Workforce Center, can then refer visitors to TANF or WIOA. TANF eligibility specialists and case managers are located at the Workforce Center to review eligibility applications, provide a TANF orientation, and meet with clients to begin case management and employment services.

Once TANF clients are deemed ready to pursue employment, they are usually referred to a case manager from the Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP), a work services program funded by TANF dollars that are competitively awarded to select Colorado counties. In Mesa County, the program is operated by Hilltop Community Resources, Inc.

CW STEP provides WIOA-like employment services specifically to TANF clients. It connects clients to supportive services and work-based learning, including on-the-job training and paid internships, and helps them transition to permanent unsubsidized employment. Clients in CW STEP can continue receiving standard TANF case management services from their TANF case manager (e.g., support with benefits and monitoring eligibility). TANF clients typically continue to work with their TANF and CW STEP case managers until they are employed and no longer eligible for basic cash assistance.



JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY

The Workforce Center has structured its programs and staffing to coordinate TANF and WIOA services.

Structurally aligning CW STEP with WIOA. The program design of CW STEP, which mirrors WIOA Title I, allows Mesa to increase its employment services without drawing funds away from WIOA. Staff can also provide employment-focused case management that is tailored to TANF clients.

Staff collaboration. CW STEP coordinates services with both WIOA and TANF case managers at the Workforce Center. Although CW STEP case managers exclusively serve TANF clients, they function as part of the WIOA team and meet monthly with WIOA case managers to align their work. Because CW STEP and TANF case managers jointly serve TANF clients, they meet twice a week when new clients are first assigned to a TANF case manager, and then as needed to coordinate services for individual clients. They may also meet jointly with shared clients to plan activities.

Co-enrollment. Co-enrollment in Mesa is usually between TANF and CW STEP. However, TANF case managers may refer TANF clients to WIOA, typically when the client would benefit from training (e.g. pre-employment occupational skills training) that are funded by WIOA Title I but not by CW STEP. If co-enrollment in WIOA Title I is successful, TANF and WIOA case managers introduce clients to the CW STEP case manager and indicate the clients' interest in CW STEP work-based learning opportunities.

Service-oriented approach. Mesa staff intentionally changed the terminology they use to describe programs. In particular, staff use the term "Career Development Program" to refer to both WIOA and CW STEP case management and training services. This term conveys alignment of the different programs and makes it easier for clients to navigate the system, since clients can refer to one specific program.



We've brought on other [TANF employment] programs in the past, such as TANF Work experience, but WIOA had more requirements. Since we knew we were doing something well [in WIOA], we braided them into a bigger [combined] Career Development program; the customer doesn't care what funding pot the services come from.

- WIOA TEAM MEMBER



RESOURCE SHARING

Integrated case management spaces and funding make teamwork and service delivery more efficient.

Co-location. Mesa's TANF and WIOA Titles I and III are located at the Mesa County Workforce Center, on the same campus as the Department of Human Services (DHS). Co-location makes navigating services easier for clients, and makes communicating and coordinating easier for staff.

When the Workforce Center moved to the DHS campus, staff designed the new space with serving clients and facilitating teamwork in mind. Two pathways extend from the front desk: one for visitors (leading to the Resource Room, drop-off child care center, unemployment hearing officer, training rooms, etc.) and another for employees and one-on-one case management. Staff are located sequentially, based on when they typically become involved in supporting clients on their path to unsubsidized employment. Staff also designed the case management space considering Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic human needs to self-actualization.



SHARED LEARNING

Mesa staff take a goal-oriented, team-based approach to staff training and cross-program collaboration.

Joint staff training and goal-setting. Mesa adopted the 4 Disciplines of Execution model (4DX), restructuring their management system to be more goal-oriented. All Department of Human Services (DHS) staff, including Workforce Center staff, received training from external consultants on how to set and work toward team and individual goals, called "Wildly Important Goals" (WIGs). The staff created an overarching WIG for DHS, and then came up with WIGs for each division, team, and individual.

Cross-program Collaboration Room. The Workforce Center's division-level WIG for the year is "cross collaboration." Aligning with this theme, Mesa designated a small conference room to be used specifically for teamwork between cross-program staff.

Cross-program meetings. Mesa has a series of formal meetings, at different levels and in different programs, to facilitate communications and collaboration across teams.

- **WIG huddles:** Teams (consisting of colleagues working on the same program) meet weekly to review their progress toward meeting their WIG and to plan individual team members' goals for the upcoming week. Once a month, a staff member from a different

team who is designated as an impartial coach reviews their progress and coaches them on how to move towards their WIG.

- **Leadership meetings:** Leaders from all teams at the Workforce Center – including the Workforce Center Director, the supervisor of WIOA and CW STEP case managers, and the supervisor of TANF case managers – meet on a weekly basis. They start with their WIG huddle, followed by updates from each program and planning for their next division meeting.
- **Co-staffing meetings:** Once a month, WIOA case managers, CW STEP case managers, Resource Room staff, and employment specialists meet together. These meetings and agendas are driven by staff and are not attended by supervisors. Staff give program updates, discuss employment opportunities for clients, and brainstorm about matches between job seekers and potential employers.
- **CW STEP and TANF case manager meetings:** CW STEP and TANF case managers meet twice a week to discuss new clients, potential enrollment of a TANF client in CW STEP, and updates on their program.
- **Cross-collaboration meetings:** On an ad hoc basis, case managers from different programs set up joint meetings with shared clients. They discuss the services provided by different case managers, review the employment search plan, and make sure all case managers are on the same page. These meetings seek to avoid miscommunication by ensuring that both case managers and the client are hearing the same information.



MANAGING COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Program oversight and a management tool hold the Workforce Center accountable for cross-program collaboration.

Workforce Development Board program oversight. The Mesa County Workforce Center's program and policy design is managed by the local Workforce Development Board (WDB). In addition, the Mesa County Department of Human Services (DHS) oversees the contracting and day-to-day operations, helping the WDB to coordinate partnerships at the Workforce Center.

As a stand-alone division of DHS, the Workforce Center gives DHS the opportunity to provide input on its WIOA implementation. The Center's director attends WDB meetings and contributes to the WDB's agenda. With help from DHS contract managers, the director also works with each Workforce Center partner to create Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to formally govern the partnerships.

Accountability tools to track collaboration. The 4DX framework includes a system for tracking the Workforce Center's progress toward its WIG (i.e., cross-program coordination) and encourages individual teams to accomplish their WIGs in two ways:

- **Coach:** Each WIG team is assigned a neutral coach (a staff member from a different team) to oversee the team's progress. Once a month, the coach joins the WIG huddles to review the team's progress: How many individual WIGs have been accomplished? In what timeframe? Are they meeting their pre-determined benchmarks? If they are falling behind, they will discuss strategies to increase progress. They may even decide to change their WIGs, if the original goal was too ambitious.
- **Poster:** A large-format bar chart in the Workforce Center displays each team's WIG and progress. Colors signify whether the team is on target (in green) or behind schedule (in red).



Every team has their own coach and every team has their own scoreboard... Coaches review: this team's in the red, why are they in the red and what are their commitments, and how can we help them get into the green? This team is in the green, they're excelling, they're about to hit their WIG, what are they doing that other teams aren't? We're trying to learn from each other in that way.

- MESA COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER LEADERSHIP














Both the coach and the scoreboard encourage accountability. The coach keeps teams on schedule and brings an outsider's viewpoint, which can help with brainstorming ways to address challenges. The poster broadcasts the team's progress and encourages healthy competition, as staff can see which teams are furthest along in reaching their WIGs. These strategies help build support for cross-program collaboration and highlight the responsibilities of individual staff for working toward the overall goal.

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,

where 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. Services are managed by different agencies, with funding from a variety of sources, including TANF and WIOA.

TABLE S.1: Colorado TANF Snapshot

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  |  <p>Management Information System: Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS)</p> |  <p>STATE DEPARTMENTS <i>Department of Human Services</i> (DHS)</p> | | |
| <p>TANF Workforce Programming is called: Colorado Works</p> | |  <p>\$420 Maximum Monthly Earnings for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children ^c</p> <p>\$462 Maximum Monthly Cash Benefit for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children ^c</p> <p>\$135.6m Federal TANF Expenditures, FY2016 ^d</p> | | |
| <p>AVERAGE NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS PER MONTH FY2017 ^b</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>  <p>43,103 Adults & Children</p> </td> <td>  <p>12,598 Adults</p> </td> <td>  <p>30,505 Children</p> </td> </tr> </table> | |  <p>43,103 Adults & Children</p> |  <p>12,598 Adults</p> |  <p>30,505 Children</p> |
|  <p>43,103 Adults & Children</p> |  <p>12,598 Adults</p> |  <p>30,505 Children</p> | | |

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. In Colorado, WIOA services are coordinated through multi-partner, multi-service one-stop centers called “Workforce Centers” (SEE TABLE S.2). 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 federally designated Workforce Development Council in the state is responsible for oversight

of the WIOA system. Voluntary Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) oversee the implementation of WIOA at the local level. The main 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: Colorado WIOA Snapshot

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | <p>Name of One-Stop Job Centers: Workforce Center</p> |  | <p>Management Information System: Connecting Colorado</p> |
|  <p>GOVERNOR-APPOINTED BOARD OVERSEEING WIOA^b Colorado Workforce Development Council</p> | |  <p>2017 ALLOTMENTS^c</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10.5m Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation \$9.3m WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation \$10m WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation \$11m WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation | |

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 summary is based primarily on conversations conducted in summer 2018 with WIOA and TANF program staff at the Mesa County Workforce Center. For more information about the content in this brief, contact Curtis Englehart, Mesa County Workforce Center Director (curtis.englehart@mesacounty.us). Marissa Strassberger (MDRC), Caroline Schultz (MDRC), and Jack Myrick (Public Strategies) 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.