



TANF Works!

TANF/WIOA
COLLABORATION SERIES
2019 - 04

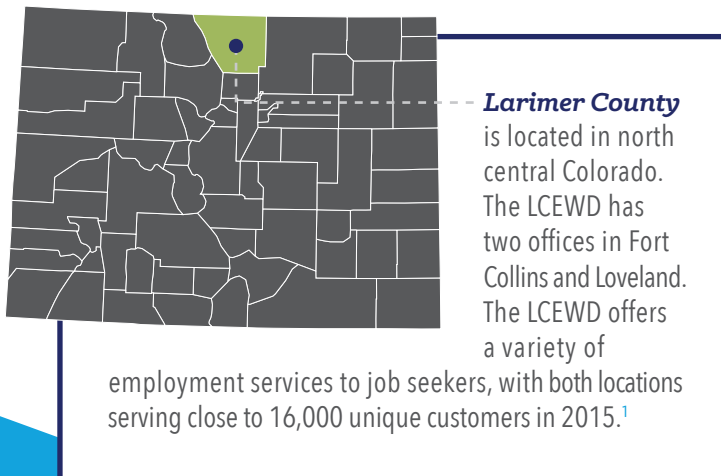
Larimer County, Colorado

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.

This brief highlights emerging TANF and WIOA agency collaboration practices among TANF agencies in Colorado

FIGURE 1: Larimer County Geographic Map



(called Colorado Works) and American Job Centers in Larimer County (called Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development or LCEWD) in the following areas:



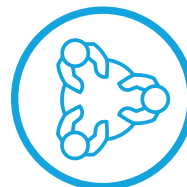
Joint Service Delivery

to reduce the financial costs of program participation and empower customers through strategic co-enrollments, joint customer meetings, and cross-program teams



Resource Sharing

through co-location and shared expectations



Shared Learning

through formal staff meetings and communication channels across TANF and WIOA



Managing Collaborative Activities

through intentional hiring and staff messaging to foster a collaborative culture, a formalized co-case management process, and a platform for leadership to work together

¹ Larimer County Workforce Center 2015 Annual Report: <https://www.larimer.org/sites/default/files/lcwc-annual-report-2015.pdf>

Local Services Overview

TANF customers begin their journey at the Department of Human Services (DHS), where their TANF eligibility is determined. Eligible customers are referred to the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development (LCEWD) and attend an on-site TANF orientation. FIGURE 2 shows common pathways to employment for TANF customers at the LCEWD.

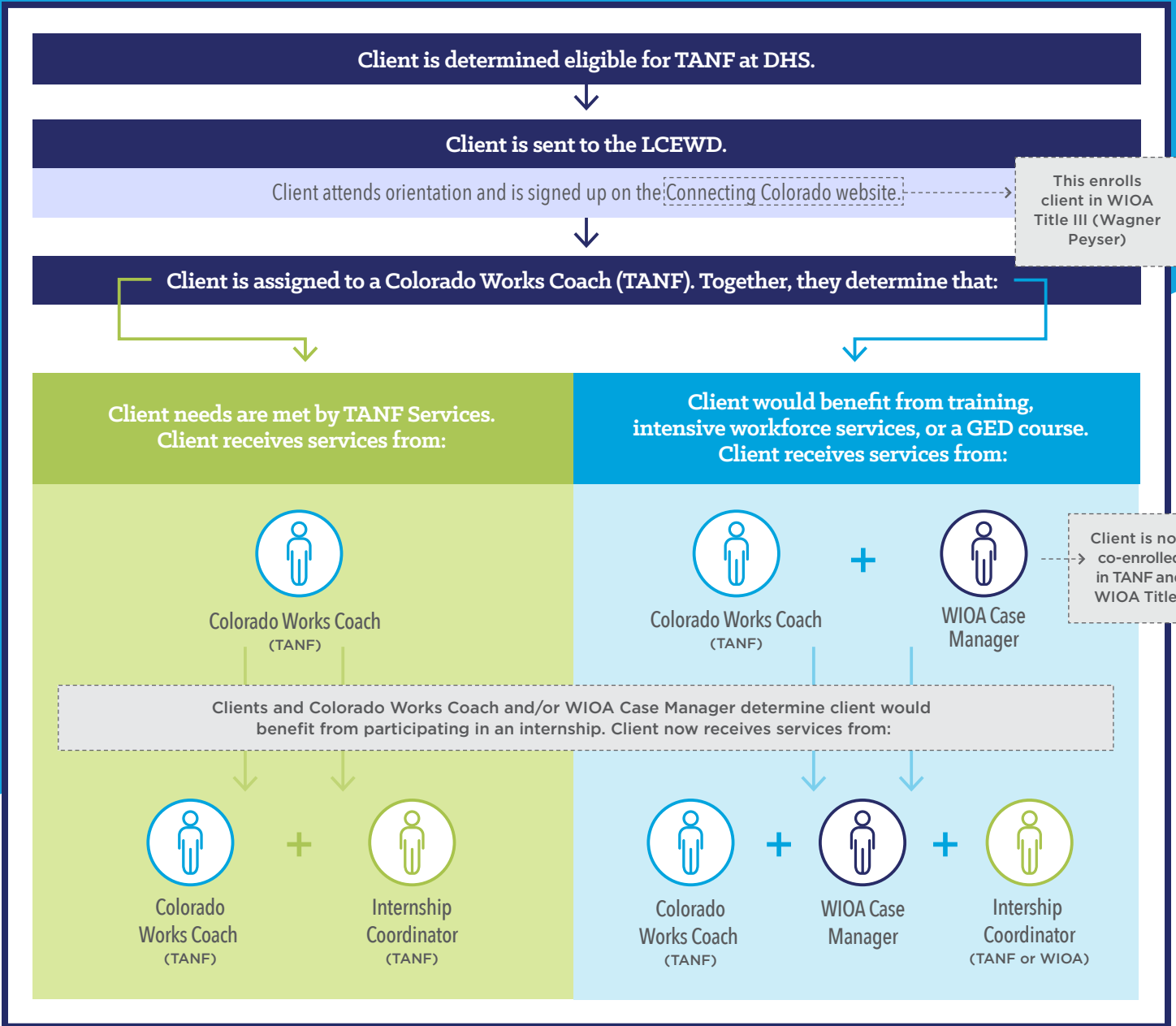


FIGURE 2: Larimer County Workforce Services



JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY

TANF and WIOA staff intentionally align services and case management.

Targeted co-enrollment. The LCEWD is strategic when deciding to co-enroll customers in TANF and WIOA Title I. First, Colorado

Works coaches consider co-enrollment only if participation in a WIOA Title I-funded program (for example, attending a GED course or taking a workforce training) will help customers accomplish their primary goals. Often, the Colorado Works coach will discuss the customer's special circumstances with the WIOA case manager before making a referral to ensure that it will be a good match between customer needs and program offerings. Next, the Colorado Works coach engages the customer to gauge interest and obtain consent to refer the participant for WIOA

services, ensuring that co-enrollment is a decision made not just by the case managers, but also by the customer. Following this targeted approach to co-enrollment, approximately 25 percent of all WIOA Title I adults at the LCEWD are also TANF customers.

Joint coach/case manager/customer communications. When customers are co-enrolled in TANF and WIOA, Colorado Works coaches and WIOA case managers coordinate their communications with clients and schedule joint meetings. The goal is to streamline communications and simplify the process for customers, as coordinated messages reduce the number of emails and ensure that staff and customers have the same information. Customers can visit the LCEWD to meet with both their Colorado Works coach and their WIOA case manager instead of making multiple visits.

Cross-program teams. Multiple cross-program teams at the LCEWD improve the coordination of services for co-enrolled customers.

- The **Work-Based Learning Team** includes staff from both TANF and WIOA. This team provides work-based learning opportunities to LCEWD customers, including internships, apprenticeships, and employment tours.
- Within the Work-Based Learning Team, there is a team of **Internship Coordinators**, with some funded by TANF and others funded by WIOA, who help TANF and WIOA customers secure internships. The team often manages four to six different funding streams associated with various work-based learning opportunities. All Internship Coordinators use the same contracts, evaluation forms, and timesheets to streamline the experience for participants and employers. Further, a shared statewide customer management system (Connecting Colorado) allows the Internship Coordinators to communicate online about internship opportunities and customers' internship applications.
- The **Innovation Team** includes managers from TANF and WIOA, along with Career Services and Economic Development. This team meets weekly to exchange program information and discuss LCEWD strategic directions, intentional integration of services, and daily operations. They also discuss how to structure their operations so that staff understand the alignment between the departments.
- The **Business Services Team** provides services for all LCEWD customers. They engage and recruit employers, post new employment opportunities, and coordinate job fairs.

“

What we have going that's probably different is that the co-enrollment is robust... TANF folks are not forced to co-enroll – it is a conversation, a decision. And so when they go in and are co-enrolled in WIOA, they know why they're there... It's informed consent, it's strategic, we don't co-enroll all people; there has to be an identified benefit. Everyone is geared towards the *customer's* identified needs, not the program's needs.

- LCEWD LEADERSHIP



RESOURCE SHARING

Physical space and time spent meeting with customers are shared across programs to increase cross-program communications, the fluidity of case management across both programs, and the efficiency of service provision.

Co-location. Colorado Works coaches and WIOA case managers are located in both the Fort Collins and Loveland LCEWD offices. Co-locating encourages staff from both programs to build relationships with each other and communicate in-person about shared customers. Common spaces also allow Colorado Works coaches and WIOA case managers to share meeting times with customers and make case management more efficient. In addition, co-location benefits customers as it saves time and financial resources while easing the stress associated with multiple appointments.

Shared expectations. Colorado Works coaches and WIOA case managers work in an organizational culture that expects and rewards collaboration among staff, programs, and teams. The organizational culture firmly believes in a shared philosophy of the customer being the focus of all decisions related to their life and program participation.

“ By having us all in the same room and brainstorming together, [customers being placed in an internship position] are the types of things that happen – that when we meet independently, don’t always happen. That’s an example of the beauty of us being co-located and able to say, let’s all meet at this time. Once the customers know that we’re all on the same page, they’re more apt to request that we all meet together... it increases efficiency in service delivery.

- A WIOA YOUTH CASE MANAGER

Outside of these regularly scheduled meetings, staff from one program occasionally attend the other program’s regular meeting to give updates about their program.

Other cross-team and cross-program communications.

Colorado Works coaches and WIOA case managers communicate informally with each other, whether in-person, by email, or by phone. They discuss potential referrals, shared customers, and the services they can provide to customers. Staff discuss how to use the different programs’ funds to best support the customer in reaching his or her goals. From these informal conversations, Colorado Works coaches learn about new training opportunities offered by WIOA that may be beneficial for their customers.



MANAGING COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative activities between TANF and WIOA are bolstered by leaders who are intentional about fostering a shared mission, staff hiring and management, and promoting co-case management.

Fostering a shared mission through intentional hiring and staff messaging. Team-building and supporting a mission-driven organization starts at the hiring phase. Leaders at the LCEWD conduct multiple rounds of interviews to ensure that potential new hires understand and agree with two key views: (1) TANF customers should be served in the same way as any other customer, and (2) all customers have the potential to change. LCEWD leaders feel that staff who share these core beliefs are more likely to work together and communicate. Further, LCEWD leaders encourage staff to focus on their customers and what they need, with the understanding that if customers are supported in ways that make sense to them, then performance will follow.

Co-Case Management Subgroup. Both TANF and WIOA staff formed a temporary subgroup to establish procedures for co-case management. The subgroup created a **Position Statement** to formalize their agreement to work together, which includes a timeline and steps for keeping the other case managers informed about the shared customer. It also includes certain stipulations; for example, the Colorado Works coach and the WIOA case manager must have a joint meeting with their customer within 30 days of co-enrollment. Quality assurance strategies are currently being developed to formally assess and evaluate the implementation of co-case management strategies.

Innovation Team. This team was created in 2001 as a way to encourage programs to commit to a shared vision and organizational culture, to provide incentives for creative partnership activities,



SHARED LEARNING

LCEWD staff use multiple communication channels to share ideas and information related to customers, services, and the programs.

Meetings. TANF and WIOA staff participate in multiple cross-program meetings, with the goal of increasing communications and shared learning across programs.

- The cross-team Work-Based Learning Team and Internship Coordinators meet regularly to discuss their services and customers.
- Colorado Works coaches and WIOA case managers meet formally with customers to deliver joint case management services. When a customer is enrolled in the internship program, the Internship Coordinator may join these meetings.
- At the leadership level, the Innovation Team meets to discuss the different programs, funding streams, and management of the LCEWD.

and to focus on activities that are most directly useful for customers. The team provides a platform for leaders from all programs to communicate, discuss program coordination and integration, and further work towards their shared mission.



What we care about is that integration and collaboration are going on, so the customer understands what he/she is participating in... It's all about the participants: if we can meet together to help people navigate through it together, to show them that we're on their side, that we're here to help, then that's what we're about.















- LCEWD LEADERSHIP

TANF and WIOA Eligibility and Services in Colorado

TANF. Nearly 13,000 of Colorado's low income adults are enrolled in the state's TANF program, called Colorado Works.

The maximum monthly income threshold is \$420 for a single parent with two children (SEE TABLE S.1). TANF customers 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

	 Management Information System: Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS)	 STATE DEPARTMENTS <i>Department of Human Services (DHS)</i>			
TANF Workforce Programming is called: Colorado Works		 \$420 Maximum Monthly Earnings for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children ^c			
AVERAGE NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS PER MONTH FY2017 ^b <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>  43,103 Adults & Children </td> <td>  12,598 Adults </td> <td>  30,505 Children </td> </tr> </table>		 43,103 Adults & Children	 12,598 Adults	 30,505 Children	 \$462 Maximum Monthly Cash Benefit for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children ^c \$135.6m Federal TANF Expenditures, FY2016 ^d
 43,103 Adults & Children	 12,598 Adults	 30,505 Children			

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. American Jobs Centers in Colorado, called “Workforce Centers,” offer and coordinate WIOA services through multi-partner, multi-service facilities. 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 oversee the implementation of WIOA locally. 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>One-Stop Job Center: Workforce Centers</p>	 <p>Management Information System: Connecting Colorado</p>
 <p>COUNCIL OVERSEEING WIOA^b Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC)</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/cwdc/council-O>); (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 fall 2018 with WIOA and TANF program staff at the Larimer County Department of Human Services and Economic and Workforce Development buildings. For more information about the content in this brief, contact Dena Jardine at jardindr@co.larimer.co.us. Marissa Strassberger (MDRC) and Jack Myrick (Public Strategies) were the IIEESS site visit team members.

Suggested Citation: MDRC and Public Strategies (2019). “Larimer County, Colorado: TANF/WIOA Collaboration.” In TANF Works! TANF/WIOA Collaboration. Washington, DC: Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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.