CDHS's Efforts to Investigate and Promote the Measurement of Family Well-Being in Colorado

Work Support Strategies (WSS)

Family Well-Being Work Group

September 4, 2013

Overview



- Background on Work Support Strategies (WSS)
- The WSS Family Well-Being Work Group
- Common Indicators/Domains of Well-Being
- Definitions
- Next Steps for WSS

Current Environment



What We Are Facing

- Rising cases
- Affordable Care Act implementation
- Staff turnover and ongoing training needs
- Continuing pressures to improve timeliness and accuracy
- Changing demographics of the caseload
- Balancing available resources to meet ever-changing needs





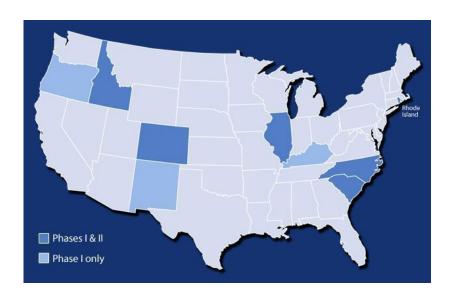
Work Support Strategies

- Partners: Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, Ford Foundation, Urban Institute
- Participating States: CO, ID, IL, NC, RI, SC
- **Scope**: Following a one-year planning period, 6 states received three-year WSS implementation grants to put their plans to streamline and integrate key work supports into action



National Goals

- Improve the health and well-being of low-income families.
- Deliver benefits more effectively and efficiently.
- Share promising practices nationwide.
- Design, test, and implement 21st century service delivery systems for public benefits.







Colorado's WSS vision and goals were developed through a collaborative process, vetted through a variety of stakeholders:

- Executive leadership at CDHS, HCPF, & OIT
- County leaders
- Frontline workers
- Community stakeholders









Colorado will better support struggling families by making assistance programs readily available to eligible recipients, while supporting those families to secure and maintain employment.



Leadership Team Statement

Colorado will be recognized as a national leader for

- 1. Establishing an effective, efficient, and elegant benefits delivery system that enables all eligible Coloradans to access medical, food, cash, and other assistance through multiple entry points (including online) and to move seamlessly among programs; and
- 2. Strengthening the relationship with and enhancing the capacity of county and community partners to improve timeliness and accuracy in processing cases, promote innovation, and develop promising practices for benefits delivery.

WSS Initiatives



- Increase job satisfaction among county employees
- Decrease processing time for applications
- ★Goal = 90% of all applications are processed in 7 days
- Reduce administrative cost per case
- Improve access to benefits and information
- ★Goal = 10% more eligible families are receiving benefits by March 2015
- Improve Well-Being for Families



Early Successes

- More cohesive working relationships among county and state partners
- Supported upgrades to PEAK
- Provided targeted assistance to counties to revamp their redetermination processes via Business Process Reengineering
- Supported the reduction of the single purpose application to 8 pages
- Surveyed 530 county workers on needed tools and other administrative efficiencies
- Mapped poverty and benefits across the state to identify areas in need of outreach
- Facilitated a series of WSS Regional Forums

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WSS Organization

WSS Coordinating Committee

Family Well-Being Work Group

Access to Benefits & Information Work Group

Administrative Efficiencies Work Group

Communication & Outreach Work Group



Improve Family Well-Being

- Identify common indicators of family well-being
- Complete the Workforce Development system change in CBMS
- Support the roll-out of the Childcare pilot
- Pilot the EITC Periodic Payment Simulation Project in Colorado
- Study and analyze how a Child Support pass-through would work in Colorado

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How do other organizations measure family well-being?



Community-based Organizations

- Mile High United Way
- WorkLife Partnership
- Community Action Agency Association
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Family Resource Center Association
- Project Self-Sufficiency*

Counties

Boulder County

State Entities

- CDPHE, Strengthening Families
- CDHS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- DOLA, Division of Housing

^{*}Project Self-Sufficiency did not official present before the WSS Family Well-Being Work Group; however, we received their self-sufficiency matrix through another WSS project and included that information here.

How do other organizations measure family well-being?



- We asked each organization to briefly discuss the following three questions:
 - 1. How does your organization define family well-being?
 - 2. How is family well-being measured? Please describe any evaluation/assessment tools used.
 - 3. What is done with the information on family well-being? Please describe the outcomes of any evaluation/assessment performed.
- The purpose was to use the information collected as a proxy for the vast array of ways that well-being is defined and measured.

Summary & Common Themes



- The organizations surveyed used a wide array of tools and collected a lot of data to assess well-being.
- The choice of data and tools could be related to the organization's purpose and resources available.
- Despite differences in the choice of data and tools, we were able to identify some common types of data (i.e., indicators/domains) that organizations tend to track.

Indicator-Organization Matrix Handout



Common Themes

- Many community-based organizations and Boulder County use a similar set of assessment scales known either as the 'Self-Sufficiency Matrix' or the 'E-Logic Model'
 - Scales are designed to assess where a person or family is in terms of stability within a particular indicator/domain
 - A caseworker, along with the client, periodically update or "rescale" the information in order to track and evaluate the individual's progress as services are provided
 - The purpose is both to track client progress and assess the effectiveness of the services provided

Self-Sufficiency Scales



5 point scales

- 1. In-Crisis
- 2. Vulnerable
- 3. Stable
- 4. Safe
- 5. Thriving

Prevention Line

Progress is tracked as the client progresses from levels below the prevention line to levels above the prevention line.

Not all persons are expected to obtain the highest levels and progress is likely to vary, per client, among indicators/domains tracked.

Example Self-Sufficiency Scale



Adult Education

- 1. In-Crisis: No GED or high school diploma and/or has not learned to read or write.
- Vulnerable: Enrolled in literacy and/or high school or GED program and has basic reading, writing, and math skills.
- 3. Stable: Has high school diploma or GED.
- 4. Safe: Enrolled or completed post high school vocational education, technical or professional training, or some college credits.
- 5. Thriving: Pursuing or obtained a professional certification, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctorate degree.

Prevention Line

Example Self-Sufficiency Scale Differences



Adult Education

Boulder County

- 1. No GED or high school diploma and/or has not learned to read or write.
- 2. Enrolled in literacy and/or high school or GED program and has basic reading, writing, and <u>math skills.</u>
- 3. Has high school diploma or GED.
- 4. Enrolled or completed post high school vocational education, technical or professional training, or <u>some</u> <u>college credits</u>.
- 5. <u>Pursuing</u> or obtained a professional certification, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctorate degree.

Adult Education

Project Self-Sufficiency

- 1. No HS diploma/GED OR lacks basic literacy/language proficiency; not enrolled in remediation
- 2. Enrolled in GED/<u>ESL</u> remediation
- 3. Has HS/GED and proficient literacy and language; may have <u>some post-secondary educ. credits</u>, but additional training needed to improve employment situation (not currently enrolled)
- 4. Enrolled in additional education/training to improve employment situation.
- 5. Has completed education/training needed to become employable.

Some <u>differences</u> in language may make sharing data across organizations difficult.

Sharing Information Across Organizations



In order to effectively share information across organizations requires the following:

- Common language in scales
- Common databases and possibly common tools
 - In order to share self-sufficiency scale information among counties and community-based organizations, a common database would be helpful
 - Several tools currently exist for tracking progress through the selfsufficiency scales; use of the same tool across organizations does not appear to be necessary, but could be helpful

Boulder County is already using shared information to help better manage their cases and track client progress.

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Next Steps



- Creation of a 'toolkit' to provide information on tools, indicators/domains, and scales
 - Focus toolkit towards counties (at least initially)
 - Use Boulder County's example of collaboration with local community-based organizations
 - Identify a common set of scales already in use by other organizations in Colorado
 - Provide an overview of tools and databases available
- Other projects and/or possible future recommendations
 - Better State capabilities for linking data across programs and agencies
 - Being able to better track and understand a family's interactions with government assistance programs would help inform policy decisions
 - Use U.S. Census Bureau survey data to produce a *Colorado Measure* using the Census Bureau Supplemental Poverty Measure or another methodology