



Colorado Improves Family Economic Security with Workforce Pilot Program by Focusing on Outcomes

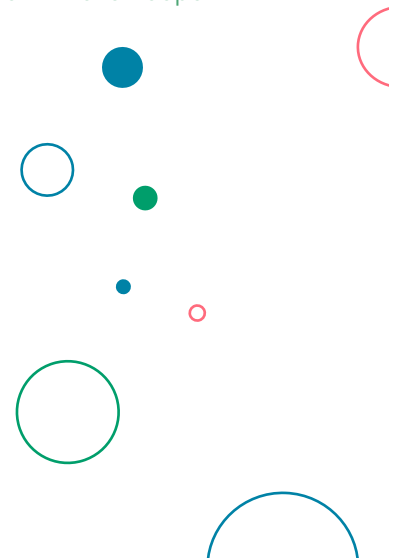
The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) provides leadership and oversight for Colorado's 64 counties in the provision of high-quality health and human services that improve the safety, independence, and well-being of the people of Colorado. A key program is Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP). CW STEP helps connect at-risk populations who are eligible for basic cash assistance from federally-funded Temporary Cash Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with crucial professional work experience. CDHS selected CW STEP program as an opportunity to foster cross-agency collaboration and to become the foundation for their outcomes-oriented contracting strategy.

“Third Sector’s engagement from leadership to program staff was instrumental in identifying the right fit for the project, and that’s the reason we were able to get to a new amended contract.”

– Tara Smith, Two Generation Program Coordinator,
Office of Governor John Hickenlooper

RESULTS

- 1 Connected Resources with Outcomes Achieved:** CDHS amended the CW STEP provider contracts to explicitly focus on outcomes. These contracts include \$4M in annual TANF funding and \$100K set aside for bonus payments tied to a set of short- and long-term employment outcomes.
- 2 Increased Staff Capacity & Skills:** CDHS staff felt empowered and indicated that they learned a new skill set that enabled them to develop outcomes-focused contracts.
- 3 Increased Alignment on Goals & Performance:** Extensively engaged all five CW STEP service providers for input and partnership in co-creating outcome goals and performance levels, which created a shared understanding and replicable frameworks for use in future contract negotiations and program adjustments.



ACTION

CDHS had two primary goals: (i) develop a replicable strategy to drive an enhanced focus on long-term employment outcomes, performance measurement, and provider collaboration within its contracts, and (ii) train and empower staff to lead and implement these efforts within their respective programs and functions. Third Sector supported CDHS by leveraging three areas of core expertise:

Outcomes-Oriented Contracting Implementation:

Used decision-making frameworks to set outcome goals and financial performance incentives tied to long-term employment outcomes within the CW STEP program.

Stakeholder Engagement & Facilitation:

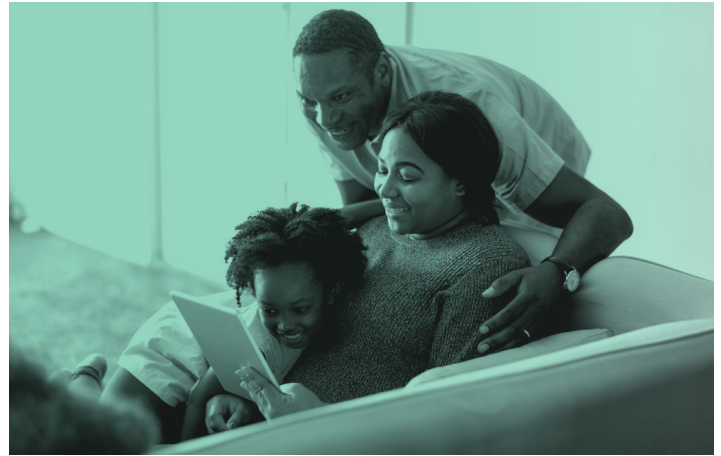
Leveraged Third Sector as an independent third party to facilitate between CDHS and contracted service providers. This led to both parties co-creating outcomes goals and specific performance measures through a collaborative process.

Cross-Agency Sharing:

Following the contract provisions implementation, the program shared relevant frameworks and learnings that emerged during the development process with other CDHS programs and state-wide networks.

“As a government entity we often feel disempowered to do anything outside the mold. I hypothesized that having someone to guide and push us would let us change that culture around contracts.”

– Ki’i Powell, Director of the Office of Economic Security, Colorado Department of Human Services



ABOUT

Colorado Department of Human Services is the state agency that supervises counties’ provision of health and human services across Colorado.

Empowering Families was a national cohort of government agencies that received technical assistance from Third Sector to support improved outcomes for children and families through the use of outcomes-oriented contracting. The initiative was funded by a Social Innovation Fund grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Third Sector is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is transforming the way communities connect people with human services. We partner with governments, providers, and their partners to generate positive, measurable outcomes for the people they serve.

To learn more, please visit thirdsectorcap.org or send an email to info@thirdsectorcap.org.

