



Communication Services Department
5334 South Prince Street
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001
Phone: 303-795-4284
Fax: 303-738-7894
www.co.arapahoe.co.us

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Contact:
NICHOLE PARMELLY
Communication Services Specialist II
Direct: 303-636-1945
Mobile: 303-710-7893
E-mail: nparmelly@co.arapahoe.co.us

Arapahoe County recognized for outstanding service to CO Works clients *County receives the 2008 CO Works Teamwork Award from the State of Colorado*

Aurora, Colo. – Arapahoe County recently received the 2008 CO Works Teamwork Award from the State of Colorado for their creative and innovative business model in delivering CO Works/TANF services. These services work to end the dependence of needy families on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage and provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

Carla Finch, Lorraine Archuleta, Kris Carire, Celeste Roybal and Elizabeth Nelson, a Human Services team that spanned from frontline to upper management staff, were honored for demonstrating excellence through the development of best practices.

“These five employees have worked tirelessly to find unique ways to meet the needs of all those who require government assistance and it’s proving to be successful because our work participation rates continue to rise,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld. “That means more families receiving financial assistance are in the process of finding jobs that will make them self-sustaining and ease their reliance on the system.”

The new business approach is a specialist model that partners with 13 community agencies to provide a greater continuum of services to meet the needs of the wide array of clients. By working with the entire population of clients, not just those who are work ready, the County has been able to increase client participation.

A single father of two teenagers was unable to work due to a serious medical condition. The increasing medical bills and inability to work put him in serious jeopardy of losing his home. Through CO Works! the client completed Goodwill’s Personal Enrichment Training classes, developed his resume, interview and job search skills and in less than six months, he was hired as a contractor, earning more than \$12/hr. This allowed him to successfully transition off financial assistance after his first month of employment.

After completing the RATE supervised job search program another client was placed in a \$14/hr job. She continued to use the workshops and coaching opportunities to move on to a \$55,000/year position shortly thereafter.

The new Arapahoe County CO Works Program also has increased workflow efficiencies, streamlined work processes and increased timely processing. The County also has implemented “Best Practices” for both CO Works intake and on-going teams. These teams are processing together to decrease the number of cases exceeding processing guidelines and process all cases before they become overdue. This new model has been well received by staff and increased morale.

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