



| | |
|--|---|
| POLICY TITLE Workforce Requirements & Employment Outcomes | REFERENCE C.R.S. 26-2-703(21); 26-2-714(5.5) CHDS Volume 3.608.8; 3.608.1; 3.608.2; 3.608.3; 3.608.4 |
| POLICY NO. 15.1000.5.17 – CWP | EFFECTIVE DATE February 01, 2017 |
| DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL | BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ADOPTION DATE |

BACKGROUND / PHILOSOPHY

The goal of Adams County Colorado Works Program is to promote the long-term economic well-being of our community, through preparation for and attachment to employment for those who are able to work. Adams County prioritizes attachment to jobs that offer a family sustaining wage and/or the opportunity for career advancement within our county. We have designed our Colorado Works program to engage individual participants with the services, opportunities, resources and tools they need to successfully find and maintain employment, and advance in their career.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to identify the mechanisms by which Adams County ensures participants are provided with the opportunity to engage in the programs and services they need to successfully find and maintain employment, and advance in their careers. This policy explains how participants are assessed and supported on their progression to economic well-being through Colorado Works, and what criteria the county has established for exemptions from or accommodations to standard program elements, including locally defined services offered through the Colorado Works program in Adams County.

POLICY

Adams County takes an individualized approach to service delivery, beginning with assessment and throughout our program delivery. In the development of an individualized plan, we emphasize goal-setting structured around attainable objectives. Because our ultimate goal is to assist participants to obtain and maintain the best possible job, we structure our program with this aim in mind. Adams County uses work activities offered under the Colorado Works program to support participants in their progress toward economic well-being. We work with participants to combine work activities to the full extent allowable under the Colorado Works program. We recognize that some participants

may be unable to successfully engage in employment services at times, particularly initially. We created county-defined activities designed to support the full spectrum of participants in our program. These activities, and the criteria for determining suitability for them, are included in this policy.

Adults and youth over 16 are determined at application to be either eligible or ineligible for assistance. Cases that are without eligible adults are considered to be “child only” and are not required to participate in employment activities. Adults who are considered work-eligible are provided with individualized services and supports to promote their family’s economic well-being. Adams County Case Managers assess work-eligible participants to determine which services and supports available in the program are the best fit for the participant, and working together, an individualized plan is developed.

Assessment

Adams County conducts assessments for all work-eligible members of the household within 30 days of application. These assessments consider education, employment, household circumstances impacting economic well-being, and other relevant factors. Assessment tools are used to support the assessment interactions as needed, and documentation is retained and case noted. Based upon the assessment, an individualized plan is jointly developed.

Job Readiness

Adams County recognizes that even those adults who have been identified as “work-eligible” may need to pursue strategies other than employment in order to attain economic well-being. Similarly, some families may be experiencing a crisis that needs to be dealt with before employment can be pursued. Examples may include families who are living in a shelter, those newly involved in child welfare, or those addressing other immediate safety issues.

Adams County may determine which individuals in these circumstances are not ready to focus on obtaining employment. This is determined through assessment and addressed through the individualized plan. Domestic Violence issues are addressed in the Domestic Violence policy and substance abuse issues are addressed in the Substance Abuse policy. Adams County considers the presence of these circumstances as not ready to focus on employment:

- Resolving medical or mental health issues
- Actively seeking SSI/SSDI
- Primary care-taker for an infant younger than 8-weeks
- Primary care-taker for a disabled family member
- Child welfare involvement requiring immediate attention
- Homelessness
- Other family emergency on case-by-case basis

Adams County does require participants to document or verify their involvement in activities when not focused on employment, and will work closely with participants to schedule regular check-ins to document progress.

Job readiness in Adams County is when an individual is able to participate in and benefit from a variety of employment and training services or activities to assist participants in identifying their goals.

Adams County supports these individuals by applying a variety of work-centered support mechanisms, including but not limited to:

- Assessing individual and family circumstances on a continuing basis through case management interactions, in addition to using appropriate tools based on unique participant situations
- Effective motivational interviewing techniques
- Development of individualized plans centered on participant needs and goal setting
- Continued skill development by Adams County Job Transition Specialist to assist participants in identifying their goals for program participation.

Individualized Plan

Utilizing the assessment results, Adams County will collaborate with all work-eligible participants to develop an individualized plan. Plans will be tailored to each participant's strengths, desires, and goals, in addition to proactively addressing challenges that may arise in the pursuit of economic security.

Case managers must collaborate with work-eligible participants to develop an individualized plan within 30 calendar days of the completion of the assessment. Adams County uses the "My Roadmap" individualized plan in CBMS. Because the duties and responsibilities of both parties must be clearly outlined in the plan, the plans must be completed in their entirety, and agreed upon by both the participant and the county worker. Plans may draw upon the full array of work activity opportunities, and/or include county-defined hold activities (see below), supportive services, and referrals, as warranted. Individual plans will be revisited at least every four weeks no more than eight weeks to ensure objectives are still relevant and support individuals in meeting their goals. Referrals will be made as needed to aid in progression, as the plan also guides necessary follow up with others providing support in the plan.

Adams County may utilize Non-TANF MOE funding under the following circumstances:

- Resolving medical or mental health issues
- Actively seeking SSI/SSDI
- Primary care-taker for an infant younger than 8-weeks
- Primary care-taker for a disabled family member
- Child welfare involvement requiring immediate attention
- Homelessness

- Other family emergency on case-by-case basis

Child Care Availability

The following criteria will be used to determine if a participant is eligible to have their TANF work requirements waived due to unavailable childcare. Due to specific and verified special needs of the child there are no arrangements available with a child care provider currently licensed in Colorado and willing to contract with Adams County CCAP. For individuals relying on public transportation, the walking distance from public transportation to the provider is in excess of half a mile. Combined travel time between the participant's residence and the provider and between the provider and the location of the participant's primary work activity is in excess of two hours. No licensed providers who are willing to contract with Adams County CCAP have space available in the child's age group. A copy of the Participant Childcare Unavailability Policy form will be provided to each participant at orientation and signed by the participant. The participant may request an exemption verbally or in writing from the case manager under the following conditions:

- The participant demonstrates that they have satisfied one of the above criteria.
- The participant demonstrates that they have contacted all appropriate childcare providers.
- The participant demonstrates that they have evaluated family members and friends as potential child care providers and that none who meet the CCAP standards for a family care provider are available.

Should an exemption be granted the participant shall be notified that the work exemption will not exempt them from the 60 month TANF time limit and will be reviewed monthly with their case manager. Requirements for documenting ongoing unavailability of childcare on a monthly basis will be included in the participant's roadmap.

Notification

Adult participants who are exempted due to any of the above (or any other criteria) must be notified that even though they may be exempted from work-related service requirements, they are accumulating TANF months that count toward their 60-month lifetime limit.

Employment-focused Services

Adams County places a high value on the goal of economic well-being of our community, through preparation for and attachment to employment. Adams County focuses on attachment to all jobs, but prioritizes those offering a family-sustaining wage, as defined locally by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, and the opportunity for career advancement within our county. Participants who are determined to be job ready through the assessment process are individually engaged to ensure the most appropriate services and supports are provided to meet their employment goal.

Job ready participants who do not have educational or skills gaps that need to be addressed may benefit from one or more of the following activities:

- Employment
- Subsidized Employment
- Work Experience/Internship
- Community Service
- Job Search
- On-the-job training

These services are always paired with individualized case management, coaching, supportive services, and referrals as needed. Participants in these activities will have child care provided through the Colorado Child Care Assistance program, as available. Participants in these activities will be asked to support their progress through provision of state-required documentation, as specified in the state's Work Verification Plan.

Education-focused Services

Adams County recognizes that for some participants, lack of formal or sufficient education may preclude them from successfully attaching to or sustaining employment. Participants who are lacking necessary educational qualifications and/or skills are individually engaged to ensure the most appropriate services and supports are provided to meet his/her needs.

Adams County makes a concerted effort to provide participants with opportunities to enhance their education, often through resources to community-based organizations that offer adult and basic skills classes, and GED preparation and testing.. Adams County works individually with participants to determine the best combination of offerings to quickly advance their employment goal and maximize their time in the program.

Participants who have identified educational or skills gaps may participate in any of the following activities:

- Basic Education
- Vocational Education
- English as a Second Language
- Job Skills Training
- Work Study
- High School
- GED Prep

These services are always paired with individualized coaching, supportive services, and referrals as needed. Participants in these activities will have child care provided through the Colorado Works program, or the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program. Participants

in these activities will be asked to support their progress through provision of state-required documentation.

Holidays and Absences

To help prepare our participants for employment outside of the Colorado Works program both employment and educational activities are treated like work.

Allowable excused absences may include, but are not limited to the following reasons:

- Domestic Violence
- Emergency family crisis
- Circumstances beyond participant's control
- Court required appearance or incarceration
- Working conditions which present a risk to health or safety
- Unavailability of Child Care for child(ren) under age 6
- Breakdown in transportation arrangements with no accessible alternate means of transportation
- Medical/mental health release form signed by a physician/provider which states participant's condition and releases them from required activities for a certain amount of time

Adams County may approve additional excused absences, with respect to cultural and religious reasons, on an individual or case-by-case basis. The total number of excused absences will be limited to 80 hours per year and no more than 16 hours per month.

10 holidays are recognized by the Colorado Works Program:

- New Year's Day
- Veterans Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- President's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday following Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day

Good Cause: Work Requirements

Adams County makes every reasonable effort to ensure individualized plans are appropriate, achievable, and the most likely strategy to support a participant's long-term economic well-being goals.

Adams County recognizes that there may be instances where a participant is unable to comply with the plan's terms. Good cause in Adams County is defined as follows: unforeseen, unusual or unavoidable circumstances that would prevent most people from being able to engage in their plan as expected. Adams County does require that notice be provided in order to avoid sanction. Notification should explain the reason for disengagement and should demonstrate good cause.

In general, the Prudent Person Principle is used to determine good cause. At minimum, good cause for the county not pursuing a sanction will include:

- Breakdown in child care arrangements or a lack of available and appropriate child care
- Remotely located without transportation and unable to relocate or a breakdown in transportation arrangements with no feasible alternative
- School obligations that frequently necessitate a parent's or specified caretaker's attendance
- Loss of housing, or a housing crisis that might result in homelessness or eviction, which prevents the individual from participating in the requirements of their Roadmap
- Verifiable medical emergencies or crisis involving members of the family
- Short term temporary relapse in a participant's certified drug/alcohol treatment program
- Legal proceedings for the participant or a dependent minor
- Participant's incarceration of less than thirty days
- Jury duty
- Death of a family member or authorized representative
- Other situations, as determined by the Adams County

In the event that a participant does not provide good cause rationale, a participant may be sanctioned or a case closed for demonstrable evidence.

Job Retention and Post-Employment Programming

The Post TANF programs provide two years of follow-up services to former recipients of TANF Basic Cash Assistance. These programs have an employment retention focus and will work with participants on maintaining their employment, providing connections to resources and financial assistance through supportive services. Post TANF participants may receive up to \$3,500 in Supportive Services for each twelve month period from their initial date of supportive service regardless of how many months were on their time clock. There is a lifetime limit of 24 months in the Post-TANF program, unless written permission is authorized by the Program Manager with written approval in the case file. Diversions are also available. Diversion participants may receive up to \$2,000 for the first twelve month period from the date of initial supportive service in the post-TANF program, and \$3,500 in their second twelve months. Exceptions may be requested if circumstances

jeopardize the participant's employment or there is a risk of the participant going back onto BCA.

Outcomes

Adams County uses work engagement strategies to ensure meaningful participant outcomes, while maintaining federal program requirements. Adams County has identified the following outcomes to be meaningful in promoting the long-term economic well-being of our community, through preparation for and attachment to employment for those who are able to work; Adams County tracks this data on a quarterly basis:

- Job Retention
- Job Promotion
- Wage and Benefits
- Wage Increases
- Progress towards established goals
- Goal Achievement

Signed by:

Eva J. Henry, Chair, Board of Adams County Commissioners, Adams County Colorado

Date

Adams County Workforce and Business Center Local Area Director

Date

Adams County Human Services Department Director

Date