



<b>POLICY TITLE</b> <b>Diversion (State and County)</b> <b>Program</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b> <b>C.R.S. 26-2-706.6</b> <b>CDHS Volume 3.606.8</b>
<b>POLICY NO.</b> <b>15.1000.1.16-CWP</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> <b>December 5, 2016</b>
<b>DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL</b>	<b>BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS</b> <b>ADOPTION DATE</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

Adams County recognizes that families may have immediate and short-term needs for financial assistance that, if met, can quickly stabilize the household, thereby diverting a need for ongoing cash assistance (BCA). In order to meet these needs in the community, Adams County provides a diversion cash assistance program for qualified families.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to identify the eligibility and suitability criteria for diversion payments, outline programmatic components associated with such payments, and establish a period of ineligibility for receiving ongoing cash assistance, barring hardship, once diversion has been issued. Maximum dollar thresholds are also established in this policy.

A diversion payment is a needs-based, cash or cash-equivalent payment designed to meet short-term needs. Payments are designed to address specific crisis situations or episodes of need and are not designed to meet basic ongoing needs.

Families who meet eligibility criteria for basic cash assistance may be eligible for a state diversion payment. Families who otherwise meet the eligibility criteria for basic cash assistance, but are over the income guidelines (needs standard) and whose income is less than \$75,000 annually may be eligible for a county diversion payment.

In Adams County, both state and county diversion are available. They are only to be made when there is no need for ongoing support or more extensive case management or services, and the payment is expected to substantially promote or maintain a family's economic well-being through attachment to employment or another steady source of income. Prior to issuing a diversion payment, Adams County will determine that ongoing need is not anticipated.

## **POLICY**

Adams County provides cash or cash-equivalent payments not to exceed \$ 3,000 total per family to eligible and suitable families based upon established need, in conjunction with the determination that need is not expected to be ongoing.

### Eligibility

To receive a state diversion payment, applicants must be found eligible for basic cash assistance (BCA) by Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS). Payments will be made through CBMS. Those who are otherwise eligible for BCA but are over the income guidelines (needs standard) and whose income is less than \$75,000 annually may be eligible for county diversion.

### Need

The applicant must demonstrate a need for a specific item or type of assistance that will promote or help maintain permanent employment, and/or economically stabilize the family, and is likely to ensure long-term economic well-being. The following criteria must be established:

- 1) The applicant (or participant) does not need long-term cash assistance as determined by an assessment;
- 2) The applicant or participant demonstrates a need for a specific item or type of assistance.

This assistance may not extend beyond four (4) months, and those who receive a diversion payment must agree to a 12-month period of ineligibility (POI) for Colorado Works (both basic cash assistance and diversion), barring hardship. The POI begins on the first day of the month following the payment month. Hardship for this purpose is defined as an unforeseen, unexpected and otherwise unmanageable event or crisis. The period of ineligibility may be waived if there is an identified hardship.

### Suitability

In order to be eligible for a diversion payment in Adams County, one adult member of the household must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be employed or have a verified offer of employment
- Demonstrate the ability to maintain employment during the POI
- Have another reliable source of steady income

### Assessment

Adams County conducts in-depth assessments of family members who have been determined to be a part of the assistance unit at application. An Adams County worker will assess the family to develop the most appropriate plan for them to meet their long-term

economic security goals. Diversions will be issued based upon assessed need. Adams County workers engage in prospective budgeting and progressive wage employment with

applicants to ensure needs can be met after the diversion grant is issued throughout the duration of the POI.

In addition to diversion payments, eligible participants may receive supportive services based on the assessed needs of the family.

#### Payment

A County Diversion grant may not exceed \$3,000 per twelve-month period per household; a family may not receive more than four diversion payments in a ten-year time span. However, the County Director or designee has the discretion to override the number and amount of county diversions if an extreme hardship exists. A diversion payment may not be made in the same month that basic cash assistance is received.

Payments will be issued on an EBT card (via direct deposit) or paid directly to vendors.

#### Allowable Use of Funds

Diversion assistance may be used for, but is not limited to, the following types of short-term assistance:

- work-related expenses such as uniforms, dues, or supplies
- transportation costs including car repair, car insurance, etc.
- housing including utilities
- training or education
- any other identified barrier to employment or family needs
- referral to the Job Success Program

#### Post-Employment Program

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. 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. There is a lifetime limit of 24 months in the Post-TANF program, unless written permission is authorized by the Program Manager. This written approval will be added to the case file.

Terms

Those receiving a diversion payment in Adams County develop a plan to establish the following:

- 1) Document the reason why ongoing cash assistance is not a need;
- 2) Define the expectations and the terms of diversion payment;
- 3) Specify the need(s) for and the specific type(s) of non-recurring cash payment; and
- 4) Specify the possible impacts on other assistance including Medicaid, SNAP and child care.

Payment will be based on the participant's actual estimated need.

Diversion payments will be made at the discretion of Adams County, and as budgets allow. No applicant is entitled to a diversion payment. When necessary, recoveries may be pursued.

Signed by:

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

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Adams County Workforce and Business Center Local Area Director Date

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Adams County Human Services Department Director Date