



Colorado (CO) WIOA Matrix

Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP)

Employment First

Colorado operates its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) and optional Workfare program under the title Employment First. The Colorado Department of Human Services administers the Employment First Program, which is run through local county human service departments in 45 counties statewide. Counties procure their own service providers, and may coordinate activities with local workforce centers. Several examples of integration already exist in Colorado between Employment First and workforce centers. Such local level collaboration provides customers an opportunity to apply for and receive SNAP assistance to help overcome barriers to employment, as well as allowing SNAP participants to access additional resources in their employment search.

The mission of Employment First is to increase employment for food assistance recipients through support, referrals, accountability, and community work. Participants may engage in a variety of employment-oriented activities through the Employment First program, including:

- English Language Acquisition
- Literacy
- Adult Basic Education
- Employability Education
- Working
- WIOA -Funded Programs
- Vocational Training
- Business
- Vocational Rehabilitation, and
- Post-Secondary Education (Page 49)

Colorado was chosen to participate in Transition Grant awarded by the United States Department of Labor and Employment's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), entitled Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP). This grant will provide mentoring, intensive technical assistance and training from a national pool of subject matter experts and peer mentors to core states as they transform existing policies, service delivery systems, and reimbursement structures to reflect an Employment First approach; facilitate virtual training and knowledge translation on effective practices; facilitate dialogue on shared experiences related to effectuating Employment First policies and practice; link participating states with current Federal initiatives that are focused on promoting state-level systems-change conducive to Employment First objectives; and evaluate the impacts of the investments in state Employment First systems change efforts over time to identify common challenges faced by State governments and validate innovative strategies and effective practices that lead to the successful implementation of Employment First objectives. (Page 194)

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Customized Employment

SRC Recommendation 3

Vendors working with Colorado DVR shall receive training so that they will have a clear understanding of the rehabilitation process and will be effective and qualified to work with counselors and their consumers for the consumers' success. Training topics should include specifics on the rehabilitation process, increased cultural competence, clear understanding of disability issues, supported employment, use of interpreter and translation services, and more. Training may also include best practices for implementation of the key elements of WIOA, including customized employment, using "discovery" as part of the assessment process, or person-centered planning practices. Job coaches must be trained in order to provide effective services. (Page 183)

SRC Recommendation 2

All DVR staff will receive ongoing training in order to provide effective and high quality services to their consumers. An inter-disciplinary approach may be employed where counselors and others with expertise work with staff to build skills. Training areas may include development of excellent customer service skills for office staff, counseling and guidance, specific disability trainings with resources available, work incentive training, assessment, cultural competence, or job development. Training may also include best practices for implementation of the key elements of WIOA, including customized employment, using "discovery" as part of the assessment process, or person-centered planning practices. (Page 183)

Additionally, DVR can make available to vendors a variety of resources and education opportunities, including the rehabilitation process, disability awareness, cultural competence and others. Also, DVR commits to explore tiered rates for vendors who provide job coaching and customized employment, based on levels of training and credentials. Finally, DVR intends to make customized employment a topic of education for DVR staff and vendors so all are aware of and educated about this key emphasis within federal act and proposed regulation. (Page 184)

Braiding/Blending Resources

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Section 188/Section 188 Guide

In Fiscal Year 2014, DVR assisted 2,198 Coloradans with disabilities to secure, retain or regain employment. These workers earned an average of \$11.61 an hour working 28.2 hours a week on average. DVR further works with employers and community partners to increase opportunities for employment, career advancement and economic gain for eligible Coloradans with disabilities. In addition to the work of DVR, all Workforce Centers are compliant with Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, ensuring physical and programmatic access to all services and benefits available throughout the workforce development system. Ensuring Physical and programmatic accessibility is also a component of the state's certification policy for one-stop centers, which will help to further ensure that all customers can access services in all parts of the state.(Page 36)

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Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria. (Page 124)

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Other State Programs/Pilots that Support Competitive Integrated Employment

Seven local workforce areas are currently participating in a six month pilot study to determine feasibility of the WRC tool, accompanying learning modules, and the processes associated with administration. Quantitative and qualitative data from the participating regions will be combined in December, 2015, for analysis. Plans for future use of the WRC in 2016 include additional training for case managers and test administrators, and identification of other targeted populations such as youth and young adults, employers, veterans, and increased numbers of Title I-B and Wagner-Peyser clients. The database and qualitative criteria developed for the feasibility study will be expanded and refined to enable increased sophistication in evaluating user groups and allow a variety of comparisons of those groups in the context of soft skills assessment and associated learning modules. The WRC tool will be rolled out to all local areas in Colorado depending on the results of the feasibility pilot. (Page 85)

DVR has a strong commitment to serve Colorado's youth population. DVR's supported employment Coordinator serves on the ASPIRE Oversight Committee, to support and educate ASPIRE staff and partners in the coordination of supported employment services to youth. ASPIRE is working with DVR counselors in the Denver DVR office to pilot services to supported employment youth and students. Public school personnel often refer students with most significant disabilities to DVR prior to their completion of the school transition program. DVR's has counselors with supported employment expertise throughout Colorado. These counselors begin plan development and services so the youth can move to employment as they are completing their education. DVR is also coordinating services with the Mental Health Center of Denver in their newly formed Emerson St. Program for Teens and Young Adults. With the focus on youth within WIOA's proposed regulation, this strong foundation will serve DVR well as it begins a new program year, and focuses 50% of its Title VI B funds on youth with disabilities annually on an ongoing basis. (Page 242)

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

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Benefits

DVR has had a long history of providing services to employers and, in addition to collaboration with the Business Services Team, will adapt its strategies to maximize the benefits of a demand-driven system. Specifically, DVR will update the Disability Awareness Training Tool Kit and make these materials, including DVR staff subject matter expertise, available to core and combined plan partners to meet the needs of Colorado employers and promote a diverse workforce. DVR will use the resources and tools that are available through the local business services programs and through local sector partnerships to train local DVR staff. That training will encompass the adoption of common terminology among one-stop partners, how to use labor market information to educate individuals with disabilities about opportunities, and the language and culture of business and the private sector. Finally, pre-employment transition services will be provided to students with disabilities, including work experiences, to assure that youth and young adults are better-prepared for the services they will receive through other core and partner programs. (Page 87)

For the past several years, DVR has supported the on-going and statewide availability of work incentives and benefits consultation. DVR, through an annual purchase order, assures that Ability Connection Colorado (ACC) - the grant recipient of the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) - has adequate funding to provide personnel necessary to cover all parts of Colorado. DVR works with ACC program management to assure that DVR applicants and eligible individuals, as appropriate, receive work incentives consultation and that an effective and efficient statewide referral process is in place. (Page 189)

For 70 years, Ability Connection Colorado (ACCO) has been providing innovative and exceptional services, helping individuals and families thrive. Building on the legacy established in 1946 by nine mothers who were determined to help their children with disabilities lead productive lives, ACCO today serves 40,000 Coloradans a year by providing inclusive early childhood and charter school education for children of all abilities, pathways to employment for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and family support programs that include guardianship and conservatorship services. Additionally, ACCO operates the Colorado Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program and the Colorado Benefit Offset National Demonstration Project (BOND). The WIPA program receives funding from Social Security to provide Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries with no-cost access to work incentives planning and assistance. BOND is a project created to help SSDI beneficiaries return to work through the use of a benefit offset. ACCO is the only nonprofit approved to provide benefit counseling services through the Social Security Administration Program. DVR collaborates extensively with ACCO to implement both the WIPA and BOND programs. DVR partners with ACCO to contractually support the WIPA program's ongoing and statewide availability of workforce incentive and benefits counseling. DVR is in the fourth year of a seven year partnership with ACCO implementing the BOND project in Colorado and Wyoming and receives funds from BOND and ACCO to provide work incentives counseling, service coordination and information and referral services to SSDI beneficiaries who are randomly selected and enrolled into BOND. (Page 199)

Including policy and procedural training. Such training efforts focus on helping clients develop skills necessary to analyze their strengths, resources, capacities, concerns, priorities, abilities, and interests, as well as a thorough understanding of the benefits and challenges inherent in various options available to them, allowing informed decisions to be made related to the development of

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their rehabilitation programs. DVR believes that these efforts help counselors become better facilitators and help clients develop the skills needed to be more independent and self-directed, as they go through the rehabilitation process and enter the workforce. (Page 213)

- Key Informant interviews with four statewide advisory groups; the Colorado Behavioral Health Council, the Colorado ASPIRE Advisory Group, the Colorado Transition Community of Practice and the Colorado Disability Support Benefits Support Program Board of Directors
- Results from the most recent quarterly DVR/SRC Client Satisfaction Surveys
- Results from the 2015 Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council five-year planning survey
- Results from the Statewide Independent Living Council's 2015 needs assessment
- The SRC and DVR current annual reports (Page 217)

Specifically, DVR gathered information pertaining to: implementation of a supervisory review process that assures staff are implementing the vocational rehabilitation program of services effectively and efficiently; creation of policy and procedures for documenting the comprehensive assessment; the effective use of comparable benefits; and the development of a highly accurate process for determining significance of disability. DVR used information gathered from entities outside of Colorado to develop policy, procedures and rules that both responded to audit findings and improved the delivery of services to client. (Page 237)

Referred people who are in need, specifically minority populations and people with disabilities. Advertisements are placed in the local newspapers to market the program, provide eligibility requirements, identify benefits, and promote the emphasis on recruiting minority populations and persons with disabilities. (Page 295)

School to Work Transition

SWAP: Youth participating in the School to Work Alliance Program, who are no longer enrolled in secondary school, would be considered out-of-school. These individuals may have dropped out, aged out at 21, or obtained their diploma or certificate of completion.

- c. **High School Equivalency Preparation Classes:** Youth enrolled in high school equivalency preparation classes outside of the K-12 system would be considered out-of-school. (Page 143)

DVR currently has 36 School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) sites. These sites involve approximately 130 of Colorado's 178 school districts. SWAP serves over 2,500 youth annually, and is a collaborative initiative between DVR and local school districts, supported by CDE. The purpose of SWAP is to provide new patterns of service, increased community linkages and successful employment outcomes for youth with disabilities who are applicants and eligible VR clients. (Page 193)

Department of Education (CDE) resources associated with the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) and are fully compliant with the 15% set-aside mandated in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We expect this alignment to include a restructuring of the Youth Services and Transition Unit, which will report to the DVR Director. (Page 194)

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DVR continues to monitor and implement the state-level agreement between DVR and CDE. This agreement promotes flexible and collaborative planning and service delivery among DVR, local education agencies, local school districts, and other state and community agencies for youth who are transitioning from school to work and/or post-school activities which lead to employment. The agreement promotes accessible, timely and uniform vocational rehabilitation services for all Colorado students who have a disability and require vocational rehabilitation services. Additionally, the agreement encourages education agencies to develop, implement and promote pre-vocational services and career exploration for students with disabilities prior to their referral to DVR for services. (Page 195)

As part of its implementation of transition services, including pre-employment transition services and Colorado's School-to-Work Alliance Program (SWAP), DVR has a formal cooperative agreement with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). This agreement describes how each agency will provide cross-training and technical assistance to local DVR and education staff to enable them to work more effectively with students as they partner to ensure a seamless transition from school to post-school activities. DVR and CDE regularly partner to develop, sponsor and provide comprehensive training and build effective partnerships at the local level. (Page 215)

Data Collection

Connecting Colorado Data/Reporting System: This is the case management, data collection, and reporting system that Colorado developed for statewide use in all of the Workforce Centers. The system provides the ability for Workforce Centers and their partners to track all WIOA Title I-B, TAA, Veteran, Wagner-Peyser, state and local programs (approximately 100), plus discretionary grants in one common database. All reports generated from this system are "up to the minute," thus allowing better management of day-to-day activity and performance. Along with the federally-mandated reports, Colorado has developed a variety of locally requested reports that allow staff to track their caseloads, correct data entry errors, and analyze performance at the state, local, and case manager level. In addition, the system is agile enough to allow the as-needed addition of reports, and program and service codes that will track new statewide initiatives supporting the state's workforce strategies. Workforce partners may make use of this system through data sharing agreements with the state or the local workforce areas. This system will be updated to reflect all WIOA changes and requirements over the life of this four-year combined plan. (Page92)

SCSEP has operational reporting requirements set by the US Department of Labor (DOL). The SPARQ (SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly Progress Report) system is used for data collection and data reporting. The SPARQ system includes the Web Data Collection System (WDCS), which is an application that allows users to enter, store and manage SCSEP participant data. (Page 105)

DVR will work closely and collaboratively with the electronic case management vendor to produce necessary reports. Resources will be committed to support upgrades and maintenance of data collection and reporting—including the addition of new data tables, data fields and reports—to collect data on and assess new WIOA data requirements and performance standards. DVR will participate with the agency's vendor as part of a multi-state test environment to determine the functionality of the data collection and reporting applications and will provide feedback to the vendor. (Page 115)

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Small Business/Entrepreneurship

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Career Pathways

Further, CDE will use no more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the state grant that must be allotted to local programs for activities under Section 225. Colorado adult education and family literacy sub-grant recipients use funds, as allowable, to provide educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals. Further, eligible providers will be asked to document collaborative efforts with talent development system partner programs in the local workforce development area, including but not limited to postsecondary training and education, vocational rehabilitation, and/or workforce in order to establish career pathways for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. As part of the competition rating criteria, specific consideration will be given to programs serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Local activities include adult basic education, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, and/or English language acquisition. (Page 172)

Strategies:

1. Expand the involvement of DVR staff in regionally-focused sector partnerships to champion career pathways within business and industry for individuals with disabilities. (Page 222)

DVR Goal 4 Strategies:

- Expand the involvement of DVR staff in regionally-focused sector partnerships to champion career pathways within business and industry for individuals with disabilities.
- Align business outreach efforts with partner agencies to leverage the identification of employment opportunities and expand awareness of disability employment competency within the business sector.
- Explore the provision of technical assistance to businesses that are seeking to employ individuals with disabilities and as feasible, develop policies and processes to provide these services. (Page 232)

Employment Networks

Section identified but no detailed information specifically addressing disability focused implementation. (Page 251)

* All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of February 23, 2017

Find your local state plans here: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html>