
COLORADO PARTNERSHIPS: WORKFORCE, FAITH AND COMMUNITY WORKS INITIATIVE

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Submitted by:

Kathryn Otten
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
1515 Arapahoe Street, Suite 400
Two Park Central
Denver, Colorado 80202



Colorado Department of Labor and Employment



Policy Studies Inc.



Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Chapter I

Introduction

Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) launched an initiative in August 2002 to partner:

- ◆ Colorado workforce centers; Community-Based Organizations (CBOs); and
- ◆ Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs).

Called the *Colorado Partnerships: Workforce, Faith and Community Works Initiative*, the goal of the Initiative is to broaden and expand the service network available to Colorado's workforce. CBOs/FBOs provide services and leadership that could benefit the Colorado Workforce System and its clients.

PURPOSE OF COLORADO PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE

Colorado is one of 12 states that received a USDOL grant to expand the opportunities of community- and faith-based organizations (CBOs/FBOS) in the workforce service delivery system and provide additional points of entry of clients into the workforce system. The premise of the grants is:

The involvement of community-based organizations and faith-based organizations can complement and supplement the efforts of local workforce development systems in providing universal access and serving the training- job- and career-support needs of many of our [workforce] customers.¹

Federal Policy Initiative

The Bush administration has made it a priority to make it possible for more CBOs, and in particular, more FBOs, to participate in human service delivery systems through the White House Faith Based and Community Initiative. The intentions of the White House Initiative are to “level the playing field” and remove barriers that may prevent these organizations from receiving federal funding. On January 29, 2001, President Bush issued an Executive Order directing the Secretaries of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Justice, Education, and Housing and Urban Development to establish within each department a Center for Faith Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI). As a part of the White House Initiative, the USDOL CFBCI initiated innovative partnerships between CBOs/FBOs by educating organizations about local opportunities to collaborate and participate in national grant programs. Specifically, in July 2002, the USDOL awarded 12 states, including Colorado, a grant specifically designed to assist CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers in working together to meet the needs of their communities. Colorado, in turn, answered the President's call to “level the playing field” by offering CBOs/FBOs training, technical assistance, and small capacity building grants through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative.

COLORADO'S APPROACH

The success of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative depended on the vital contributions of each of its components. It was with that in mind that Colorado applied a multi-faceted approach to building

¹ Federal Register 18939, Vol. 67, No. 74 (April 17, 2002)

partnerships among workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs, along with building the capacity of CBOs/FBOs as service providers. This approach is illustrated in Exhibit 1 below.

- ◆ As shown in Exhibit 1, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative started out by developing an understanding of the needs of workforce center clients that could be addressed or served by CBOs/FBOs and initiating opportunities to develop partnerships.
- ◆ Once needs and opportunities were identified, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative built service capacity by teaming community partners and workforce centers through Learning Circles and Community Action Teams, subgrantee awards, Charitable Choice training, outreach activities, and marketing materials.



As mentioned above, the goal of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative was to increase the involvement of CBOs/FBOs in the Colorado Workforce System. CBOs/FBOs have served as effective conduits to both urban and rural communities in the provision of services, and through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative they have been able to expand their scope of services.

In order to achieve a high rate of success, the Colorado Partnerships' approach involved several steps.

- ◆ *Studying and Identifying Promising Practices in Partnerships Between One-Stop Centers and CBOs/FBOs.* The Colorado Partnerships Initiative conducted a literature and best practices review to identify successes and failures in Colorado and in other states, as well as opportunities for improving performance.
- ◆ *Assessing and Surveying Unmet Needs of One-Stop Centers and Their Customers.* One-Stop customer needs were identified by analyzing data currently collected by One-Stops; making site visits to 10 to 15 representative One-Stop Centers; and facilitating focus groups among staff and clients.
- ◆ *Studying Current Participation Levels, Interviewing Stakeholders, and Identifying Barriers to CBO/FBO Participation.* Through focus groups, workforce center director interviews, and Learning Circles needs and services as

well as potential barriers in the local community were identified. Additionally, existing contracts and subcontracts between One-Stop Centers and outside service providers, including CBOs/FBOs, were catalogued.

- ◆ *Creating Marketing Materials.* The Colorado Partnerships Initiative created a brochure specifically designed for workforce clients, CBOs/FBOs, and workforce center staff. The brochure explains the services workforce centers offer, the benefits of partnering with workforce centers, and possible services CBOs/FBOs can provide to workforce center clients.
- ◆ *Designing a Web Site and On-Line Provider Catalogue.* A Colorado Partnerships Initiative Web site was created (www.coworkforcepartners.com), which includes information on best practices, Charitable Choice training materials, outcomes of Learning Circles, and an on-line catalogue of CBO/FBO service providers. Organizations that have chosen to submit their information for the on-line catalogue received a login ID and password in order to update their information on a regular basis. The on-line catalogue also includes features such as upcoming events and announcements.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

Chapter II provides information regarding workforce and community needs, as well as opportunities for partnership. It begins with a discussion of the federal programs that shape the Colorado Workforce System and continues with a more detailed description of the Colorado Workforce System, promising practices, and opportunities for collaboration among CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers.

Chapter III describes building community with workforce centers through Learning Circles and Community Action Teams. The information is based on Learning Circle discussions and community assessments conducted throughout the grant period.

Chapter IV details building service capacity among CBOs/FBOs, including a summary of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative's grantees.

Chapter V illustrates the measures taken by the Colorado Partnerships Initiative to build system capacity. Outreach activities, marketing materials, workforce center grants, and Internet technology are described at length.

The final chapter of this report highlights lessons learned and identifies next steps. Additionally, the following attachments can be found at the end of the report: Promising Practices, individual community assessments, Learning Circle agendas, conference agendas, evaluations from conferences, Request For Proposal, detailed descriptions of grantees, Charitable Choice presentation, and outreach materials.

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Chapter II

Workforce and Community Needs

Colorado workforce centers and many CBOs/FBOs currently provide excellent services, many times in partnership with each other. In this chapter, we discuss workforce and community needs that call for the expansion of partnerships. Integral to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative’s goal was an inclusive and participatory approach to assessing community needs. Both a needs assessment and community assessment were conducted with workforce center directors, staff, clients and CBO/FBO representatives. The geographic area covered by each assessment was based on the Colorado Workforce Investment Areas.

Prior to describing our findings, we provide a short description of the Colorado Workforce System to be used as a framework for the current workforce environment.

THE COLORADO WORKFORCE SYSTEM

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998² (WIA) superseded the Job Training Partnership Act by making sweeping changes in how employment and training services are delivered. A major purpose of the Act was to decentralize decision making about the design and operation of employment and training services offered by workforce centers from the State to regional Workforce Investment Boards (WIB), comprised of local employers, county commissioners, representatives of local colleges and other community leaders. WIA was designed to fully integrate services and facilitate collaboration between employers and providers of employment and training services. Colorado successfully implemented the Workforce Investment Act by program year 2000. Exhibit 2 highlights services offered by the major, required programs under WIA.

Exhibit 2	
Program Services under Workforce Partnerships	
Required Programs	
●	<i>Wagner-Peyser Employment Services.</i> Wagner-Peyser employment services include many services for employers and jobseekers relating to labor exchange and job matching (e.g., arranging Job Fairs, job search workshops).
●	<i>WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers Programs.</i> There are three tiers of service: core; intensive; and training. Core services include: eligibility determination; orientation to available information and services; job search and placement assistance; labor market information; and other services. To receive Intensive and Training services, the adult or displaced workers must meet certain eligibility criteria (e.g., worker could not obtain employment through core services). Intensive services essentially involve more personal and in-depth employment services such as diagnostic testing, individual counseling and career planning; case management; and other services. Training services may include occupational skills training; on-the-job training; training programs operated by the private sector; skills upgrading and retraining; and other education and training activities.
●	<i>WIA Youth Programs</i> provide academic and vocational services to low-income youth between the ages of 14 and 21. Services include: tutoring; study skills training; dropout prevention strategies; alternative education programs; paid and unpaid work experiences; summer employment opportunities linked to education and training; occupational skills training, mentoring; and leadership development.
●	<i>Veterans Employment and Training Program</i> provides veterans with employment and training opportunities and case management.

² Workforce Investment Act (Public Law 105-220)

Exhibit 2	
Program Services under Workforce Partnerships	
●	<i>Vocational Rehabilitation.</i> Vocational Rehabilitation is a state-run program of services that assists individuals with disabilities to attain and/or secure employment.
●	<i>Welfare to Work Program</i> provides job readiness, vocational education, employment activities (e.g., OJT), placement assistance, post employment services (e.g., mentoring), job retention and support.
●	<i>Postsecondary Education Program under Perkins.</i> The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 focuses on preparing students for postsecondary education, advanced learning, careers and advocates for reform, innovation, and continuous improvement in vocational and technical education.
Required Partner when Program is Available in WIB Region	
●	<i>WIA Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers.</i> The National Farmworker Jobs Programs (NFJP) provides assistance to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families to help them achieve self-sufficiency.
●	<i>WIA Adult Education Program.</i> The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, (Title II of WIA) provides funds for local programs to assist individuals to become literate and obtain the skills necessary to gain employment. Programs include completion of high school education, English as a Second Language, and family literacy.
●	<i>Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).</i> Under the Trade Reform Act of 2002, workers whose employment is adversely affected by foreign competition may apply for TAA, which includes training, a job search allowance, a relocation allowance, and other reemployment services.
●	<i>Employment and Training Activities under Community Service Block Grants (CSBG).</i> CSBG provides assistance to States and local communities to help reduce poverty and revitalize low-income communities.
Colorado Specific-Program³	
●	<i>Governor's Summer Job Hunt.</i> The Governor's Summer Job Hunt program provides job search assistance and employment matching services to youth ages 14-21. There are no eligibility requirements for this program and employment services are available at no cost to both employers and youth.

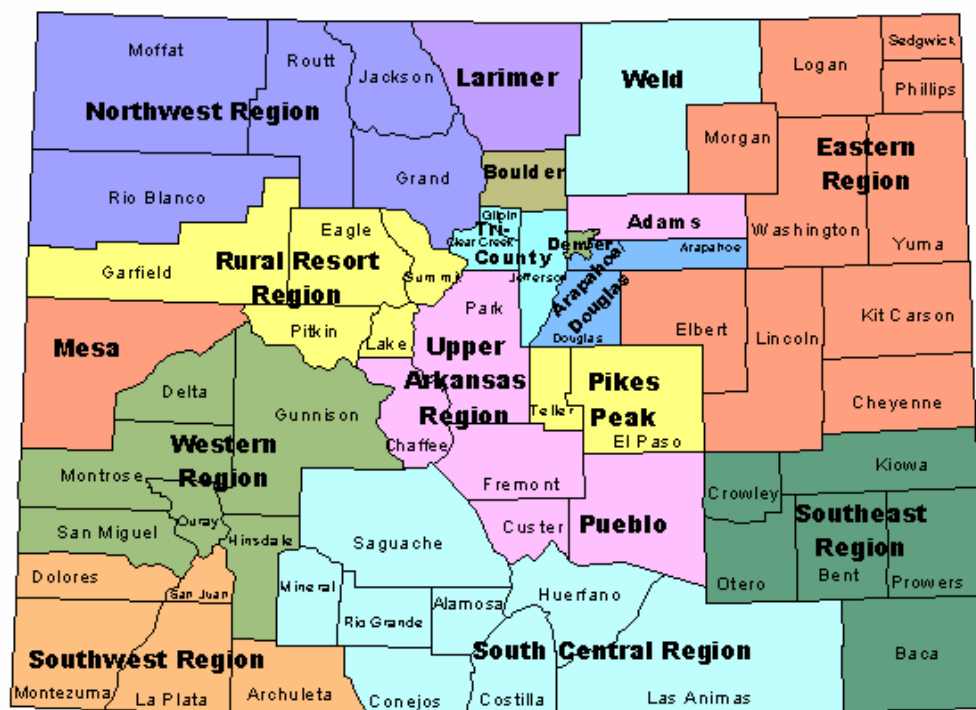
Several WIA programs and services are available at “One-Stop Centers,” which are more commonly called “Workforce Centers” in Colorado.⁴ Nonetheless, it is not necessary to visit a workforce center to receive services. Services may be provided at partnering agencies (e.g., community colleges), temporary locations (e.g., shopping malls), and satellite centers (e.g., CBOs/FBOs); through the Internet and automated telephone notifications; and through other sources. Multiple points of entry into the workforce system are intended to make services more accessible.

Exhibit 3 shows how the Colorado Workforce Investment Areas are organized into nine regions including a Rural Consortium, which is composed of 11 sub-regions. Most of the sub-regions in the Rural Consortium are state-operated. The exceptions are Mesa and Broomfield Counties, which are county-operated. The urban regions are operated by the counties.

³Federal regulation [20 C.F.R. § 664.410(a)] requires Local Boards to offer summer youth employment opportunities that link academic and occupational learning. The Governor’s Summer Job Hunt exceeds this requirement.

⁴Some of the services offered through the workforce system are not necessarily located at the workforce center. For example, vocational training under the Perkins program would most likely occur at a community college.

**Exhibit 3
Colorado Workforce Investment Areas**



The State Workforce Development Council is responsible for overseeing strategic planning and providing policy guidance to the State and the regions. The CDLE is responsible for administering and monitoring the specific WIA programs. CDLE and the Council also coordinate with other State agencies and organizations partnering with workforce services. This includes coordination with:

- ◆ The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System for Vocational Education;
- ◆ The Department of Education for the Adult and Family Literacy Program; and
- ◆ The Department of Human Services for the Adult and Aging Services, Colorado Works (Colorado’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program), Vocational Rehabilitation, and Employment First.

Colorado WIA Programs and Registrants

Programs

Most of the WIA programs can be found in Colorado WIB Regions. This includes Wagner-Peyser Services, the WIA Adult Program, the WIA Dislocated Workers Program, WIA Youth Programs, the Welfare-to-Work Program, Veterans Employment and Training Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, Perkins Postsecondary Education Program and the Governor’s Summer Job Hunt. WIA Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program, WIA Adult Education Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and CSBG Employment Services—all programs that serve specialized populations—are less widespread.

In some regions, WIA services, employment services under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Employment First operations are co-located or administered under the same branch of county

government. The TANF program allows dollars that could only previously be used for cash assistance to be expended for employment and training services, childcare services, transportation assistance, and other assistance to help parents overcome barriers to employment and gain employment skills or experience. Employment First, which operates in 45 Colorado counties, is part of the Food Stamps program designed to increase the employability of able-bodied, food stamp recipients. TANF and Employment First are administered at the State level by the Department of Human Services, and in most counties that have the Employment First program.

Workforce services and TANF are co-located and/or provided through the same administering jurisdiction in the following regions: Adams County; Arapahoe-Douglas Region; Boulder County; Broomfield County; Denver County; Larimer County; Mesa County; Pueblo County; Tri-County; and Weld County. Workforce services and TANF are operated through different administrations in the Eastern Region; Pikes Peak Region; Rural Resort Region; South Central Region; Southeast Region; Southwest Region; the Upper Arkansas Region; and the Western Region. This region-by-region operating plan is unusual in our experience. Most states have a statewide plan that defines how workforce regions partner and operate with TANF, rather than regional variation.

Registrants

A majority of WIA registrants are concentrated along the Front Range Urban Corridor, where the majority of Colorado’s population resides. Yet, WIB regions located in less densely populated areas (Colorado plains and mountains) also serve substantial numbers of registrants. Examples of Colorado registrant numbers are displayed in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4			
Number of Registrants by Selected Workforce Program			
(7/30/01 – 6/30/02)			
Workforce Program	Front Range Urban Corridor^a	Plains^b	Mountains^c
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services	232,718	13,076	53,245
WIA Adult	2,397	137	802
WIA Dislocated Workers	2,739	105	324
WIA Young Youth	1,325	93	506
Welfare-to-Work	2,764	100	416

^aIncludes the following Workforce Regions: Adams County; Arapahoe-Douglas, Boulder County, Broomfield County, Denver County, Pikes Peak, Larimer County, Pueblo County, Tri-County, and Weld County.

^bIncludes the following Workforce Regions: Eastern and Southeastern.

^cIncludes the following Workforce Regions: Mesa County, Northwest, Rural Resort, South -Central, Upper Arkansas, and Western.

In researching the Colorado Workforce System we found several generalizations that may be made about the characteristics of registrants of WIA Adult and Dislocated Services.

- ◆ Both males and females register for services. There is a slightly higher proportion of females registered than males. The programs serve a wide range of ages.
- ◆ Older workers are receiving services. For example, 11 percent of the registrants in the Front Range Urban Corridor are 55 years old or older.

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- ◆ Clients have a wide range of educational backgrounds. The majority have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. The proportion with more than a high school education is less than 50 percent overall.
 - ◆ There are substantial proportions of clients with reading and math skills below the ninth grade level. For example, almost a third (30%) of the clients in mountainous regions were assessed at having math skills below the ninth grade level.
 - ◆ Some clients face other barriers to obtaining or retaining employment. For example, homelessness and limited English proficiency are issues among 2 and 5 percent of the Front Range Urban Corridor clients, respectively.
 - ◆ Youth registrants are almost equally divided by gender.
 - ◆ Most of the youth are 18 years old or younger. This reflects the age criterion used to determine program eligibility.
 - ◆ There are significant proportions of youth that have reading and math skills below a ninth grade level. (These proportions are higher than those among WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers Program participants.) For example, 68 percent of the Front Range Urban Corridor youth have math skills below a ninth grade level. The proportions for the rural areas are similar, but somewhat less.
 - ◆ Some of the youth are employed. Yet, it is more common for them to be unemployed and seeking work. In part, this reflects that the programs typically encourage youth to gain employment experience.
 - ◆ Several youth are ex-offenders. For example, almost one out of five youth (19%) in the Front Range Urban Corridor are ex-offenders. The proportions for the rural areas are similar.

It is important to keep in mind that while examining the characteristics of registrants for specific programs, it is also evident that many workforce clients have obstacles and barriers to obtaining and retaining employment. We will examine these barriers later in this chapter.

IDENTIFYING OPPORUNTITIES

The Colorado Partnerships Initiative's goal was to build the capacity of CBOs/FBOs to provide workforce-related services as well as linkages between workforce regions and CBOs/FBOs. A first step to accomplishing this goal was identifying the opportunities for partnership. Since opportunities present themselves in many different ways, several avenues were explored.

- ◆ Examples of existing, successful partnerships between workforce regions and CBOs/FBOs were identified. These represented promising practices other workforce regions could learn from, replicate, and adapt to fit their particular regional needs. A copy of the Promising Practices Report is shown in Attachment I.
- ◆ Services CBOs/FBOs could offer that would best complement and supplement existing workforce services were identified through interviews, focus groups and surveys of workforce directors, staff, board members, and clients. Some services were expansions of existing programs designed to meet the needs of clients.
- ◆ Additional community needs were identified through community assessments of several Colorado workforce regions. These assessments focused on unmet community needs, barriers to employment, community resources and supports, as well as strategies to build partnerships within the community. Each regional assessment was drawn from representatives of that particular region's CBOs/FBOs,

workforce centers, other public agencies (e.g., social services), employers, community leaders and others. Community assessments are shown in Attachment II.

Promising Practices in Other States

Several states including Texas, California, and New Jersey have been extremely successful in establishing partnerships between public agencies and CBOs/FBOs. Summarized below are some examples of collaborations between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs across the nation.

- ◆ State Laws. A number of states have included Charitable Choice language in their own statutes, thus extending the scope beyond federal funds. Examples include: (1) Wisconsin applied Charitable Choice to the Department of Workforce Development and Department of Health and Family Services, (2) Texas has applied it to all spending and also non-financial collaborations by local workforce development boards and the Texas Department of Human Services, and (3) Arizona has applied it to all state spending on public health and welfare.
- ◆ Notifying CBOs/FBOs of Invitations for Bids. States such as New Jersey, Texas, and Wisconsin advertise requests for proposals. Texas advertises through television, radio, newspapers, and the Texas Register, a database of government documents. Workforce development boards in Texas also post notices on their Web sites and do direct mailings to CBOs/FBOs listed on their bidder lists. Richland County, Wisconsin has placed ads in the local paper requesting proposals addressing a specific identified need such as affordable housing. New Jersey formally notifies CBOs/FBOs of upcoming requests for proposals by mailing out a notice to all contacts on their bidders list as well as informally notifying them in meetings and social gatherings.
- ◆ Contracting. Many states have taken clear steps to implement Charitable Choice provisions in their contracting processes. For example, Texas has added language that emphasizes religious liberty protections for FBOs that choose to contract with the State Human Services Department. In Wisconsin, in addition to the performance standards used to evaluate Wisconsin Works agencies, there is an “optional” standard agencies can meet by maintaining, and providing services under a contract with at least one faith-based organization. Meeting this standard gives agencies more flexibility in how they use grant funds and serves as an added incentive to contract with an FBO.
- ◆ Conferences. Numerous states have held statewide conferences to discuss the advantages of collaborating with CBOs/FBOs and to facilitate networking opportunities among the groups. Virginia, Texas, Ohio, Colorado, New Jersey, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Utah have all held conferences where government officials and staff met with representatives of CBOs/FBOs. For example in Oklahoma, state officials invited local clergy to a meeting to raise awareness of current services and gaps in service delivery and asked FBOs to consider providing services to fill those gaps. At a follow-up meeting, some FBOs offered to provide services and others were referred to the Cornerstone Assistance Network, a state-contracted intermediary, to get further technical assistance. New Jersey also has convened several conferences with FBOs from across the state, introducing clients who benefited from job-readiness welfare programs and providing an opportunity for FBOs to hear about opportunities within their own communities to establish partnerships.

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- ◆ Websites. Various states including California, Indiana, Virginia, New Jersey, Texas, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia have created websites that provide an overview of Charitable Choice, list grant opportunities, provide samples of technical assistance documents, have community bulletin boards, and list social service providers. These websites have been extremely useful for CBO/FBO collaboration.

Promising Practices in Colorado

Examples of successful partnerships with and linkages to CBO/FBO service providers were also found across Colorado's 19 regions and sub-regions. In fact, all of the workforce directors reported from a few to several linkages and partnerships between their center and a CBO/FBO. The varied nature and depth of these linkages among regions provides a diverse set of approaches to partnership.

- ◆ Referrals to CBOs/FBOs for Services. Several workforce directors indicated that their staff are very knowledgeable about organizations in the community who are providing additional services commonly requested by workforce clients. For example, Arapahoe/Douglas Works maintains a list of all local CBOs/FBOs and the services they provide, allowing for a large number of client referrals each month.
- ◆ Tapping CBO/FBO Resources to Serve Special Populations. Many workforce directors reported active collaborations (or successful past collaborations) with CBOs/FBOs that target or serve populations that face multiple or unique barriers to employment. We describe a few examples of these partnerships in more detail below.
 - Several workforce centers partner with the Motherhood Initiative Program, a community-based organization that assists female ex-offenders with job search, employment-matching, and other services.
 - Workforce centers have collaborated with CBOs to prepare clients for skilled occupations and occupations that require professional licenses. For example, Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, Inc. engaged in two occupational training projects recently with workforce centers.
 - Workforce directors also described examples of how FBOs were useful resources in serving clients who were recent immigrants or had limited English proficiency. For example, one workforce center is partnering with a church in their Hmong community to provide translation services and assist in explaining and mediating cultural differences.
- ◆ Networks and Liaisons. Workforce directors also noted the importance of and advantages provided by regional networks aimed at coordinating employment and social services promoting self-sufficiency. The directors illustrated the value of these networks by describing how they help identify previously untapped services provided by CBOs/FBOs and allow workforce center staff to become familiar with the resources by asking questions (e.g., what are the referral processes and the eligibility requirements). Pikes Peak for instance, has on-site staff liaisons that are assigned to 8-10 CBOs/FBOs. The liaisons are the main contact for all questions regarding services and coordination, and they schedule regular meetings and phone calls with their assigned CBOs/FBOs.
- ◆ Presentations and Attendance at Job Fairs. A few workforce directors reported that they or other workforce center staff made presentations to or participated in job fairs hosted by CBOs/FBOs. The purpose of

these presentations and presence at job fairs is to better inform the community of the services workforce centers provide, and to take a proactive approach to building partnerships and promoting the services available to potential clients. In Larimer County, representatives from different CBOs/FBOs have come to the workforce center to conduct trainings and/or workshops. The Lamar Workforce Center has also conducted a workshop at a local church regarding the services the Workforce Center provides.

- ◆ *Informal Outreach.* Various regions have engaged in informal outreach to CBOs/FBOs in their areas. Since becoming a new agency, workforce center staff members have gone out to local churches to talk about programs and services offered at the workforce center. Workforce centers, such as the Brighton Workforce Center in Adams County, have developed informal relationships with area ministers. Currently, the Brighton Workforce Center is looking to cooperate with a local youth minister in order to serve at-risk youth. The youth minister was a former employee at the Workforce Center and has a clear understanding of youth service needs and has kept in touch with workforce staff. The minister and Workforce Center are currently reviewing what type of collaboration they might be able to initiate. El Paso County has also reached out to CBOs/FBOs, inviting representatives to lunch to discuss potential partnerships.
- ◆ *Advertisements.* A number of counties have had success advertising programs that are already in place and upcoming requests for proposals. Tri-County has advertised requests for proposals through public notices, ads in local newspapers, and through their Web site, allowing them to reach out to numerous CBOs/FBOs. Denver County also has advertised upcoming requests for proposals and sent out notices to all organizations on their bidders list.
- ◆ *Regular meetings to discuss how to better provide services in the community.* Several workforce centers attend regular meetings to discuss current programs and resources available. Weld County takes part in Emergency Services meetings held monthly to review human service organizations and the programs they offer, as well as clients' needs. In addition, Weld County's Youth Initiative holds monthly meetings to discuss services for youth. Moreover, counties in the Southeast and South Central Workforce regions are part of the Migrant Coalition, which meets on a regular basis to discuss services that are available in the community. All health and human service organizations, including FBOs, attend these meetings.

Opportunities for Partnerships

Workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs share many common goals and objectives. Yet, CBOs/FBOs that are new to partnerships may not always know where they can best help. In a similar vein, CBOs/FBOs already in partnerships with workforce centers may want to know how they can offer more help. Through the use of surveys, focus groups and interviews conducted with workforce directors, staff, clients and other stakeholders, opportunities for partnerships were identified and are outlined below.

Feedback from Workforce Center Directors

- ◆ *Expansion of existing services.* Many workforce directors supported the idea of CBOs/FBOs that currently provide services to workforce clients, expanding services, and developing service lines to help meet the

needs of clients. Specifically, they favored organizations that provide services that would complement workforce services directed at helping clients obtain and retain employment, earn livable wages, and have opportunities for career growth. Suggestions included childcare, transportation assistance, tutoring, translation services, providing services to youth, and others.

- ◆ *Sustainability.* Workforce directors would prefer to partner with CBOs/FBOs that have the capacity to sustain service delivery. It would be a serious loss if services that a workforce client relied on suddenly ceased to exist. Furthermore, due to the fact that funding is limited, most workforce directors hope to tap into CBOs/FBOs that do not charge for services, but provide services as part of their mission or receive funding from other sources, such as grants.

Feedback from Workforce Staff and Clients

Top service needs identified by both workforce staff and clients can be broken down into three sub-categories: Services Supplementing Workforce Services, Transitional Services, and Family and Individual Supportive Services.

Supplementary Employment and Educational Services

Workforce centers provide clients with core services (e.g., access to Job Banks, labor market information, and resume writing assistance) and offer more intensive and training services to clients who cannot find employment through core services or have other special needs or barriers (e.g., those transitioning off public assistance). These more intensive services may include vocational and/or educational assistance. Focus group participants suggested that CBOs/FBOs could supplement these direct employment and training services by providing:

- ◆ *Job training and re-training opportunities.* Feeling as though their skills and education had become obsolete overnight with the downturn in the economy, job seekers were most interested in having immediate vocational training and on-the-job training options. Many had little confidence that they could find a job with their current skill set and education in the immediate job market.
- ◆ *Networking opportunities.* Individuals who still felt that their current skill set and education was suitable for obtaining employment sought increased opportunities to network to identify job leads. Specific suggestions included forming support groups with other professionals searching for work, organizing more job fairs with more employers participating, and creating opportunities to make direct contact with employers.
- ◆ *Tutoring and other education assistance.* The workforce center can connect clients with limited English backgrounds to classes that provide basic math, reading, and/or writing skills; GED training; English as a Second Language (ESL) classes; and other educational services. Staff and clients in several focus groups suggested that CBOs/FBOs could supplement these services by offering tutoring, particularly for clients whose first language was not English. Several staff participating in the focus groups also suggested that it would be helpful if organizations provided GED training or prep courses in other languages besides English.
- ◆ *Youth outreach and services.* Several of the staff focus groups suggested that CBOs/FBOs could supplement workforce center youth programs. Staff suggested that CBOs/FBOs could organize more youth activities and help recruit youth for workforce center programs.

Transitional Services

Focus group participants emphasized the need for transitional supportive services to help clients ease the transition from unemployment to working full-time. These transitional services may include childcare, transportation assistance, clothing assistance and other assistance. Workforce centers do not typically provide transitional services directly, while these are some of the more common services provided by CBOs/FBOs. Aware of this, some focus group participants suggested that coordination of transitional services between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers would be a useful outcome from the partnership of workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. Below, are some specific examples of transitional services that are needed and could be provided by CBOs/FBOs.

- ◆ *Transportation.* Job seekers often cited the need for bus tokens and gas vouchers to assist them in getting to work. Furthermore, Welfare-to-Work clients who receive bus passes and gas coupons have repeatedly emphasized the benefit of receiving such services and how it has helped them maintain stability at their jobs. This expressed need, coupled with the impending end of the Welfare-to-Work program and the reallocation of TANF dollars in certain regions, made supplemental transportation assistance top the wish lists of both clients and staff. With many clients also reporting that they are without auto insurance or require assistance with auto repairs, there is a clear opportunity for CBOs/FBOs that provide transportation services to also support clients that have their own vehicles. For those who depend on public transportation, better routes and service or alternatives during non-regular commuting hours are needed.
- ◆ *Healthcare/Medical Assistance.* A vast majority of job seekers lack affordable health insurance. Several dislocated workers reported losing their coverage due to unemployment, while numerous others do not qualify for Medicaid. For those transitioning off of public assistance, transitional Medicaid coverage is only available to mothers with children for up to 12 months, and does not cover single adults. Furthermore, focus group participants stressed the need for vision and dental coverage that are often excluded by affordable insurance programs. For respondents in rural areas especially, healthcare was repeatedly mentioned as an obstacle to employment.
- ◆ *Clothing.* Several job seekers mentioned they were in need of interview-appropriate clothing as well as regular work-appropriate clothing. Though certain programs such as Welfare-to-Work can provide eligible clients with clothing vouchers, clothing banks are something that many CBOs/FBOs can provide efficiently and effectively, hence freeing up dollars for other assistance. Furthermore, CBOs/FBOs often have access to large congregations or memberships that can donate suitable clothing. They may also run thrift stores that could serve as excellent sources of interview-appropriate clothing.

Family and Personal Services

Several jobseekers face a combination of obstacles to employment that require resolution before stable living conditions can be achieved. Stabilization is essential for clients to be reliable and productive employees, and—as importantly—to be confident that the personal investment they are making in starting over will not be seriously undermined by the demands of other responsibilities. Among the top service needs mentioned by focus group participants and survey respondents were childcare, housing, food assistance, personal hygiene items, and interim/emergency financial assistance.

- ◆ *Childcare* Both staff and job seeker respondents expressed the need for affordable childcare. For many, the lack of affordable and available daycare limits the number of hours and restricts the locations in

which they are able to work. Specifically, there is a lack of childcare for infants and sick children, causing parents to stay home from work. Further, there are no evening or weekend childcare services available from childcare centers, a serious service gap for those who work non-standard hours (e.g., swing or night shifts). Employers also emphasized the need for supplemental childcare services.

- ◆ *Housing.* Housing was raised as a key need in almost all the focus groups conducted in both urban and rural areas. It is very difficult to maintain a steady job when an individual's living conditions are unstable. Unfortunately, most regions do not have sufficient homeless shelters and the shelters that do exist are usually not located close to major job centers and have poor transportation links. Furthermore, employers are less likely to interview or hire prospective workers who lack a permanent address or contact number. Workforce center staff, in particular, stressed that there is a great demand for affordable housing.
- ◆ *Food Assistance.* Though food banks are available, for practical reasons they often carry non-perishable goods. Job seekers mentioned that they would also welcome fresh fruit and vegetables.
- ◆ *Personal Hygiene Items.* Workforce center staff and job seekers mentioned the ongoing need for personal hygiene items, such as laundry detergent, shampoo, and soap. Without these items, many job seekers are not able to wash their work clothes and are embarrassed to come to work. CBOs/FBOs could supplement these supplies and offer an increased network of access points for personal hygiene items for workforce clients.
- ◆ *Interim and Emergency Financial Assistance.* Workforce center staff members expressed their concern at the financial difficulties clients often encountered during the interim period between the date of hire and first paycheck. In many instances, workers cannot retain their employment because they do not have the money for transportation or the clothing necessary for the first few weeks of work. Job seekers further explained that during this period they are in desperate need of emergency assistance to help pay for utilities, rent, and auto insurance.

Other Services

Focus group participants and survey respondents mentioned a number of additional beneficial services that could be provided or supplemented by CBOs/FBOs. Although many of these services are only indirectly related to work, they are needed to avoid job loss through lack of punctuality, excessive absenteeism, and a general lack of understanding of workplace norms. Furthermore, disrespect towards authority and a deficiency of soft skills leave many job seekers unprepared for the world of work. Areas identified that are well suited for support from CBOs/FBOs include:

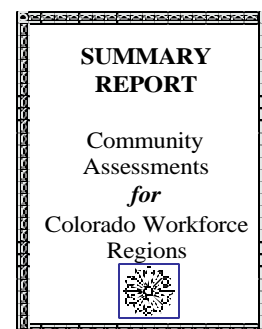
- ◆ *Money Management Training.* Job seekers stated that they would be interested in credit counseling and budgeting workshops. CBOs/FBOs could assist by either hosting presentations given by qualified parishioners or society members, or by providing a central venue and possible transportation to workshops given by outside trainers.
- ◆ *Legal Assistance.* Assistance with legal issues and the need for more information about labor laws, worker's compensation, employment discrimination, and child support were highlighted. CBOs/FBOs may be able to encourage attorneys within their congregation or membership to provide voluntary assistance. They also have the resources to host or organize clinics or workshops that would provide this service.
- ◆ *Child Support Enforcement Liaison.* Child support is critical to those transitioning off public assistance and a need for a liaison to help with enforcement issues was raised. CBOs/FBOs could draw upon their

congregation's/membership's experience to establish buddy programs that offer one-on-one help in completing essential forms, share insights into the child support program, and provide important sympathy and encouragement to workforce clients.

- ◆ *Assistance for Ex-offenders.* Ex-offenders are in need of specialized services to help them reintegrate to the community. Job training programs for ex-offenders were specifically mentioned. Once again, CBOs/FBOs can provide both practical training support (hosting or organizing classes) and fill a leadership role by publicly showing support and faith in ex-offenders.
- ◆ *Financial Aid for College.* Many clients are in need of tuition assistance, particularly to attend the college of their choice. CBOs/FBOs could extend their support for the local community by offering tuition assistance programs.
- ◆ *Parenting or Relationship Classes.* Several clients have problems with their children or significant other that, in some cases, interfere with their employment. They are frequently absent from work or on the telephone to handle issues with their children or significant other. Clients and staff suggested that parenting and relationship classes could better equip clients to deal with these issues. CBOs/FBOs are well positioned to leverage their focus on collaborative achievement by supporting and hosting parenting and relationship classes.
- ◆ *Communication and Socialization Skills.* Several staff indicated that clients with no or little job experience need opportunities to enhance their communication and social skills. They thought just belonging to a group or organization where there was normal communication and healthy relationships would have an impact on these clients. Other group and organizational members could set an example and mentor the clients to develop better communication and interpersonal skills and other desirable skills. Members of CBOs/FBOs have a great opportunity to support workforce clients by becoming role models, supporters, and friends.
- ◆ *Identification.* Many clients do not have driver's licenses, social security cards and other forms of legal identification. CBOs/FBOs could develop programs or volunteer lists to assist workforce clients in completing applications and attaining these crucial materials.
- ◆ *Assistance for the Disabled.* Several staff would like to see more programs for the mentally disabled and handicapped including assessments, services and equipment.

Community Assessments

In order to ensure an inclusive and participatory approach to identify community needs and resources, 16 regional community assessments were conducted with over 500 CBO/FBO representatives. The data collection process was incorporated as part of the two Learning Circles convened in each region (discussed in depth in the next chapter). Specifically, the assessments were designed to address the greatest barriers in finding and retaining employment in the community and what resources and services are available in the community. Information regarding these questions was collected in the first Learning Circle through group sessions, focus groups, and written surveys. Findings were then reviewed and discussed at the second Learning Circle. Though each workforce region had unique perspectives, there were four consistent community needs expressed in each assessment: education/training; jobs/employment; transportation; and childcare.



Education/Training. The top barrier identified in finding employment focused on a lack of education, training, and job skills. Specific issues related to a mismatch between employer needs and job skills, lack of basic education, low educational attainment, and a need for job training in addition to higher education.

Jobs/Employment. The lack of job opportunities was expressed in a majority of the Learning Circles. Groups emphasized barriers associated with seasonal employment and economic decline. Other job-related obstacles included the absence of jobs that pay a livable wage and/or have benefits.

Transportation. Several participants stated that restricted availability and limited access to public transportation precluded many job seekers from taking positions located in outlying areas and/or positions requiring evening hours/rotating shifts. For those living in rural areas, the lack of public transportation posed a significant difficulty. Additionally, those with vehicles explained that the high cost associated with owning and maintaining a car creates a hardship and is dependent on employment that pays a livable wage.

Childcare. Several participants identified a lack of affordable and dependable quality childcare for infants, sick children and children of workers on evening shifts. The need for sick care and evening care also resonated among CBOs/FBOs across the state.

Additional community needs tended to be stronger in some communities based on geographic location (urban vs. rural) and population demographics. These service needs clustered around the following areas:

- Housing;
- Economic development;
- Healthcare;
- Support services;
- Immigrant needs;
- Youth services; and,
- Resources and funding.

As a final component to the assessment, CBOs/FBOs were asked to list the programs and services they currently provide. A wide range of assistance services were listed, including job-readiness, job-skills training programs; literacy, General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs; food, shelter, and clothing; social services and referral; child care and transportation; and counseling services among many others.

By and large, each community assessment stressed the need to foster and encourage more partnerships between CBOs/FBOs. Moreover, it was noted that the collaborative relationships formed with CBOs/FBOs will have far-reaching results that will benefit all communities across the State.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The first steps toward increasing the involvement of CBOs/FBOs in the Colorado Workforce System are to:

- ◆ understand the Colorado workforce investment system;
- ◆ review existing, successful partnerships between workforce regions and CBOs/FBOs; and,

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- ◆ identify the unmet needs of Colorado workforce clients that could be filled by CBOs/FBOs.

To accomplish this goal, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative conducted regional community assessments and a needs assessment of workforce center directors, staff and clients. Both the needs assessment and community assessments highlighted several collaborative service area possibilities for successful partnerships between workforce and CBOs/FBOs. It was agreed that the strong foundation of service delivery, which already exists in workforce centers could benefit greatly from such collaborations. Workforce directors, staff, and clients all identified building alliances with CBOs/FBOs as key opportunities for the workforce programs to expand their reach and further promote their missions. Overall, both workforce and community stakeholders were excited by the opportunity to build upon and increase services by involving CBOs/FBOs in the service delivery arena.

Chapter III

Building Community with Workforce

LEARNING CIRCLES AND COMMUNITY ACTION TEAMS

Grant support from the USDOL provided a tremendous opportunity in Colorado to create and support on-going opportunities to convene and mobilize community stakeholders to respond to workforce development. A fundamental objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative has been to engage workforce center directors and their staff, in the formation of Regional Networks, known as *Learning Circles*. As a community-building strategy, Learning Circles serve as an established mechanism to bring workforce centers, CBOs/FBOs, other public agencies and community stakeholders together to share information and resources, and to define and respond to community needs and opportunities. Learning Circles have proven to be an effective method of learning and social change based on common resources and action outcomes.

PURPOSE OF LEARNING CIRCLES

As a strategy for community building and mobilization, Learning Circles bring community stakeholders together to:

- ◆ Engage in peer-to-peer learning;
- ◆ Network and share information and resources; and,
- ◆ Define and respond to on-going community needs and opportunities.

Learning Circles provide an opportunity for stakeholders to communicate their own ideas, goals, practices, and honest experiences in their respective fields. The environment created by Learning Circles helps to empower individuals and stimulate enthusiasm. Notably, Learning Circles also afford individuals a sense of achievement, which they gain by taking responsibility for tasks.

A fundamental objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative was to engage local workforce centers, CBOs/FBOs, public agencies and other stakeholders in their respective Learning Circles and Community Action Teams. Seventeen regional Learning Circles occurred in a collaborative and enriching environment, bringing community stakeholders together, and in turn, building community. Over 300 CBOs, FBOs, and public agencies received invitations to attend quarterly Learning Circle/Regional Network meetings and monthly Community Action Team meetings across the state. Sample Learning Circle agendas can be found in Attachment III.

In most instances, Learning Circles were implemented in two phases. The objectives of the first Learning Circle were to provide opportunities for stakeholders to:

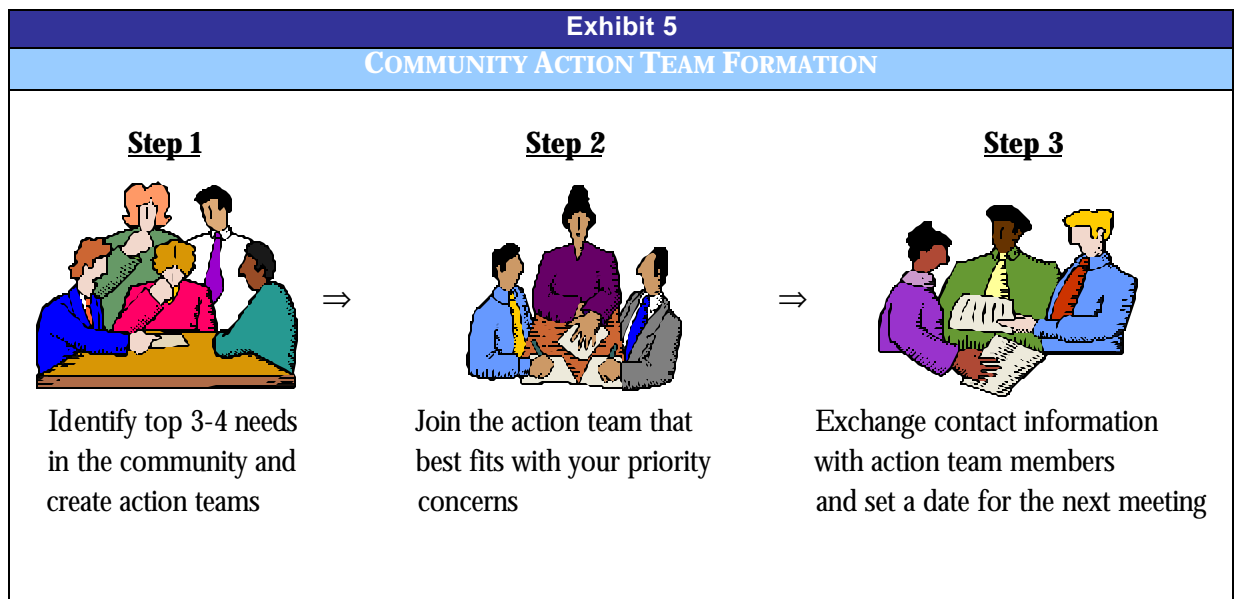
- ◆ *Gain knowledge of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative.* A majority of the CBOs/FBOs that attended the Learning Circles were not familiar with the Colorado Partnerships Initiative or the federal legislation which helped to shape policy in this arena. A brief introduction of the Initiative, as well as background information concerning the White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, was presented.
- ◆ *Become familiar with federal and state “Charitable Choice” rules and regulations.* Several attendees had prior misconceptions regarding the role of faith-based organizations and separation between church and

state. In response, a brief Charitable Choice training was given to highlight the activities that are allowed under the provision.

- ◆ *Participate in community assessments.* Community assessments were used as tools to help build awareness among CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers regarding the services they offer, as well as the support needed to address the growing and unmet needs of their clients and customers. Furthermore, the assessments also provided a vehicle for networking and community planning. A Demographic Survey was also distributed to all participants as part of the data gathering process in Learning Circle one.

Activities in the second Learning Circle were intended to build upon the community assessment completed in the first Learning Circle, including the formation of Action Teams. It should be noted that upon completion of the second Learning Circle, some workforce regions decided to organize additional Learning Circles as a way of continuing to raise awareness in the community. Specific objectives of Learning Circle Two included the following.

- ◆ *Review purpose and intended goals of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative.* Quite a few participants attended Learning Circle Two without having attended Learning Circle One. In order to establish a level knowledge base among the attendees, an overview of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative was presented a second time.
- ◆ *Review community assessments produced in Learning Circle One.* Participants who were not able to attend Learning Circle One were given an opportunity to review the community assessment developed in Learning Circle One and offer additional suggestions or comments.
- ◆ *Form Community Action Teams.* Participants, in conjunction with workforce center directors and their staff, formed community action teams to implement responses to the unmet needs defined in the assessment process. Exhibit 5 outlines the process for action team formation.



REGIONAL COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Community assessments, as shown in the previous section, were the focal point of each Learning Circle, in which participants were asked to discuss and respond to questions regarding: community support and challenges; awareness of employment and training resources; building capacity of CBOs/FBOs; and, community demographics. Community scans pertinent to each county, including information from the U.S. Census Bureau, CDLE, and County Business Data were distributed to all participants. This provided a framework for participants to refer to when discussing needs for their individual community. The information collected at each community assessment was subsequently analyzed, sorted, and presented at the Second Learning Circle and used for Community Action Team Planning.

As part of each assessment, participants were asked to identify service needs in the region and gaps in service delivery. The following illustrates some examples of specific questions presented to each group.

1. *What do you see as the greatest need of low-income people who are in search of employment?*
2. *What are the biggest obstacles to finding employment in your community?*
3. *Given the obstacles and challenges, what can be done to increase employment in your community?*
4. *What support mechanisms are available in the areas of employment and training?*

Participant answers were recorded, and then ranked in terms of priority. The priorities that emerged serve as the basis for the work of the Community Action Teams. Participants were also asked to organize into smaller focus groups to discuss the challenges, barriers, support mechanisms and resources in the area of employment and training. A focus group tool was developed and used for this exercise.

Regional assessments of needs and available services have been completed for 16 workforce regions. The assessments, which include current demographic information and a list of resources, have been disseminated in their respective regions.

COMMUNITY ACTION TEAMS

Community Action Teams were formed as sub-committees of the Learning Circles to respond to the priority needs and service gaps defined by stakeholders during the community assessment phase. Regional coordinators were hired to facilitate the formation and continuation of Learning Circles and their Community Action Teams. Each of the 17 Regional Learning Circles that took place, have launched two to four Community Action Teams that are responding to community needs that were defined and prioritized by stakeholders through the community assessment process. Exhibit 6 highlights some of the action teams that were formed.

Exhibit 6 Action Teams	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic and Advanced Education and Training• Child Care• Economic Development/Job Creation• Employer Awareness and Support for Employee Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Care (mental and physical)• Livable Wage• Transportation• Youth Leadership and Workforce Development

Several community stakeholders across the state are continuing to meet regularly to plan and respond to workforce center and community needs through their respective Community Action Teams. Responsibility for outreach is being shared among the members. Exhibit 7 highlights current Learning Circle and Community Action Team accomplishments.

Exhibit 7

Examples of Learning Circle and Community Action Team Accomplishments

- Arapahoe-Douglas Region – Creation of CBO/FBO database
- Boulder Region - Monthly brown bags
- Denver Region – Mini job fair held with Safeway employers
- Mesa Region – Over \$75,000 raised to support transportation route
- Pikes Peak Region – CEI Action Team created to develop employment opportunities for the “hard to employ” population
- Southeast Region – Survey created to assess services and training needed
- Tri-County Workforce Region – Action team program matches teams of local volunteers with families to help them prepare for job interviews, find transportation, arrange childcare, etc.

Regional Community Action Teams

As mentioned previously, information gathered in the first Learning Circle was analyzed and presented at the second Learning Circle for use in action team planning. The priority needs that emerged differed noticeably by region although several common themes were found among the diverse community action teams across the state. The subsequent section takes a closer look at the activities within each workforce region.

Mesa Workforce Region

Transportation Community Action Team members are working toward the development of a transportation system that would help low-income families with transportation to and from work, daycare and school. As Mesa is mostly a rural region with only one major city, transportation is a fundamental necessity in the area. They have garnered the support from city officials and are pursuing the needed funding to begin operations. The Workforce Region Director, Sue Tuffin, and her staff at the Montrose County Workforce Center are leading these efforts.

Pikes Peak Region

Two initial Community Action Teams in the Pikes Peak Workforce Region, Employment and Livable Wage came together to form the Colorado Employment Initiative (CEI) Action Team. The CEI named Jackie Jaramillo, Executive Director of Faith Partners, one of the CBO/FBO sub-grantees, as its Chair. The goal of the CEI is to provide work experience, counseling, and life skills training for the “hard to employ” population of the region. The CEI is planning a not-for-profit business venture modeled after the Denver Women’s Bean Project, who presented at the June 2003 Learning Circle. The Region’s three CBOs/FBOs that received grant and training support as sub-grantees of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative - Faith Partners, Pikes Peak Community Action Agency, and Greccio Housing Opportunity Center are actively involved with the CEI.

Denver Region

One of the employment and training needs that was identified by the participants of the Denver Workforce Region Learning Circles was the lack of jobs and job development efforts by CBOs/FBOs. A Community Action Team was formed to address this need. Members met monthly following the second Learning Circle in February. Team members expressed their frustration with large 'job fairs' and wanted to do something unique for their community. The result was a *Job Development Event* where team members targeted specific employers willing to collaborate with the Community Action Team to screen and prepare candidates for interviews with the intended outcome of immediate hire. Action Team members include representatives from the following CBOs/FBOs: Urban Peak, Jewish Family Services, Work Options for Woman, Arrupe Jesuit High School, Native American Multi-Cultural Education School, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, African Community Center, St. Cajetan's Church and Community Center and Mi Casa Resource Center for Women.

The first Job Development Event was held on September 9, 2003. The employer identified was Safeway, a large grocery store chain in Colorado. Several preparatory meetings between Safeway representatives and Action Team members were planned to discuss the proposed approach for the event. As a result, it was decided that Action Team members would identify, pre-screen and prepare candidates from their individual organization and/or congregation to be interviewed by Safeway. Candidates from six organizations attended the event and were interviewed by Safeway. Thus far, five have been hired.

Following the Job Development Event, a debrief meeting was held with Safeway to identify a more efficient way to prepare for the next event, scheduled for the end of October. Expert job development specialists from the Action Team have identified this process as 'doing things differently' and are planning to submit this model as a best practice for job development. The Denver Action Team is currently contacting other employers to plan similar events. Safeway has also offered to help in this process by contacting employers with whom they have existing relationships.

Tri-County Region

Two initial Community Action Teams merged into the Education, Employment and Training Action Team that is developing a mentoring program modeled after Faith Partners in Colorado Springs and the Boulder County Faith Communities Initiative, both of which are Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grantees. Additionally, they have been in contact with Family Pathfinders, a Texas-based mentoring program, whose best practice is nationally known. The Family Pathfinders program gives sponsoring groups the opportunity to help a family on public assistance take their first steps toward becoming self-sufficient. Local teams are matched with a public assistance family in their community. Through mentoring efforts, these team members guide family members in developing a family budget, provide assistance in resolving transportation and childcare problems, offer educational tutoring and job coaching.

In August, the Action Team, now known as Family BUDDY, received a grant totaling up to \$12,000 in technical assistance from JVA consulting, a Denver-based organization, as well as \$7,000 in start-up money to begin developing the program. Most recently, family Buddy received an additional \$7,000 CSBG grant bringing the total operating budget to \$14,000. The fiscal agent responsible for the implementation of this program is Harvest Christian Community, a church in Jefferson County.

Southwest Workforce Region

Members of the Southwest Affordable Housing Action Team are developing a community response plan for homeless families with local CBOs/FBOs. Collaborating partners include the Montezuma Housing Authority, Pinon Project, the Methodist Church and several faith-based organizations.

Pueblo Workforce Region

Five Pueblo Region sub-grantees continue to convene and support on-going Job Development and Training Community Action Teams with increased involvement from youth, parents, local schools, recreation center officials, and CBOs/FBOs. Supportive service needs, defined during Action Team Meetings, are currently being provided by the Pueblo sub-grantees with an emphasis on youth employment. The particular response to youth employment needs is based on the demographic and striking statistics on teen pregnancy and increased delinquent activity in the region realized through the community scan and discussion, which took place at the Learning Circles. Workforce Region Director, John Martinez, and his staff meet regularly with community stakeholders and sub-grantees to plan community driven responses. Local School District 60's Project Respect Community advocates work directly with middle and high school students, parents and CBOs/FBOs to support positive alternatives for children and youth.

Youth that have been involved with the Action Teams have requested lessons in team sports and training for young women. In response, training is being offered out of Pueblo's only public recreation center, El Centro Del Quinto Sol, and is being funded by the Cesar Chavez Academy.

Weld County

Over 20 Learning Circle and Community Action Team members attended the Weld County "Philanthropy Day" event that was sponsored by the Community Resource Center (CRC) in Loveland in August. CRC sponsors numerous "Philanthropy Days", also known as "Funder Fairs", across the state with the intent of bringing funders from the front range out to selected rural regions in order to share success stories and information on current developments in various fields. Approximately 30 – 40 funders usually attend each event. Action team members were encouraged by the information gained at the event and several relationships were established with participating foundations. Additionally, Colorado Partnerships Initiative Partners contracted with the CRC to provide individualized technical assistance, training conferences and workshops, in the area of organization sustainability and funding opportunities.

Northwest and Rural Resort Workforce Regions

Learning Circle and Community Action Team members in the Northwest and Rural Resort Regions continue to meet regularly to discuss information on new grant opportunities gathered by the Craig/Moffat County Sustainability Community Action Team. Action Team members also attended the CRC "Philanthropy Days" event held in Vail at the end of September to learn about additional opportunities. In Steamboat Springs, the Action Team is also continuing to meet every other month as a part of the Human Resources Coalition.

Southeast Region

The Employment Community Action Team is developing a mentoring program modeled after Faith Partners, a Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grantee, and the Education Community Action Team is developing a collaborative partnership to respond to the priority education needs within the region. As part of their

ongoing activities, Action Team members also assisted with the planning and implementation of the Lamar Public Library Open House that was held in September 2003.

Boulder Workforce Region

Learning Circle members continue to meet monthly to discuss several issues related to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative. Specifically, meetings have focused on the following topics: funding opportunities for FBO/agency partnerships, creating a culture of community engagement in faith communities, and the economic facts of life for working people in Boulder County.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

In addition to the Learning Circles, Regional Conferences were organized to provide statewide networking opportunities, training, and resource information. Four regional conferences were offered with the goal of strengthening the ability of CBOs and FBOs to partner with workforce centers to provide workforce development services and supports to youth and adults. Members of local Learning Circles and Community Action Teams planned and coordinated each of the conferences in conjunction with regional coordinators based on the priority needs defined by community stakeholders during the assessment phase. Several workshops were offered at each conference including: Community Economic Development Strategies; Colorado Workforce Center Services; Family Support and Father Involvement; Strategies for Sustaining Non-profits; Building and Supporting Youth Leadership; Charitable Choice: Access for FBOs to Government Grants; Education and Training for Youth and Adults; Recruiting and Managing Volunteers; Partnering with Government Agencies for Service Delivery; Coalition Building and Meaningful Collaboration; and Innovations in Job Development. Exhibit 8 provides a brief summary of several conference workshop objectives.

Exhibit 8
Conference Workshop Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Bone Deep 101” – Introduces participants to core concepts of family support and advocacy and explores strategies to work collaboratively with systems to provide services to families. “Bone Deep 102” explores the distinctions between community building, community development, and community organizing• Charitable Choice – Training on Charitable Choice provisions• Coalition Building – Exploration of blueprint for building a successful coalition in order to maximize resources and avoid duplication of services• Economic Development – Presentation on regional economic development activities• Faith-Based Services Panel – Updates on current service provided by faith-based organizations• Strategic Volunteer Recruitment – Review trends and tactics to help attract and retain volunteers• Sustainable Planning, Building for the Future - How to develop a mission-driven business plan and apply strategic thinking• Sustainable Planning, Grant Seeking -How to research grant opportunities and write grant proposals• The Blending of Two Systems, “What to do After You Win the Grant” – Examine performance measures, acts, regulations and policies, and reporting requirements• The Job Developing Dilemma – Learn how to connect and build relationships within the community• The Ups and Downs of Building a Mentoring Program – Outlines challenges and successes of managing mentoring programs• Workforce Services Panel – Overview of workforce center operations and the clients they serve



Conference Series

The primary goal of the free conference series was to provide statewide networking and training opportunities, and to share resource information to strengthen and support the ability of CBOs/FBOs to partner with workforce centers and other public agencies to provide needed supports and services. Four conferences in total were held around the state. Conference agendas can be found in Attachment IV.

1. *“Linking Resources for Stronger Communities”* was held in the rural Southwest area in the city of Durango at the Double Tree Hotel on April 30th, and was attended by over 100 CBOs/FBOs, public agencies, and workforce center staff.
2. Over 230 CBOs, FBOs, WFCs, public agencies, schools, workforce centers, and youth groups attended the *“Strengthening Communities Summit”* in Pueblo on May 27, which featured Jerry Tello, internationally acclaimed author and trainer, and Executive Director of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute.
3. The third conference, held on August 21st at the Fort Morgan Events Center, *“Strengthening Communities Through Collaboration”* was attended by over 80 individuals. Executive Director Jackie Jaramillo of Faith Partners, an FBO mentoring program based in Colorado Springs, was a featured presenter.
4. The last conference of the series entitled, *“Celebrating Community Strengths Summit”* took place on August 28th in Vail. The keynote speaker was John VanDenBerg, a national advocate of Systems of Care, The Wraparound Process, and CBO/FBO organization partnerships.

Conference Evaluations

At the end of each conference, attendees were given an opportunity to complete an evaluation form and share their comments/feedback. A sample evaluation form can be found in Attachment V. In order to ensure a high response rate, several announcements regarding the evaluations were made at the opening session, during the conference workshops, and at the final plenary session.

The completed evaluation instruments were used to evaluate the appropriateness of the workshops and keynote speakers in order to prepare for the next conference. Respondents were asked to describe what they found to be most/least useful, and recommendations for future conferences. Overall, respondents affirmed that the conference provided an opportunity for CBOs/FBOs and workforce representatives to engage in discussion and develop partnerships to address workforce issues. Specific conference highlights that were noted included: networking opportunities, coalition building, funding information, Charitable Choice training, sustainable planning, and awareness of community resources.

Chapter IV

Building Service Capacity

INTRODUCTION

Building the capacity of small and emerging organizations to become a resource for workforce centers is paramount to building a collaborative system that can offer clients a depth and breadth of services they need to become self-sufficient. This chapter describes the Initiative's processes for building the capacity of CBOs and FBOs to provide services and to act as a resource for workforce centers to expand and respond to the growing needs of workforce center clients. As evident in the previous chapter, capacity building was one of many topics addressed in the regional conferences and was helpful to many CBOs/FBOs. In addition to this assistance, the Initiative awarded sub-grants to CBOs/FBOs to build their capacity as service providers.

Through this sub-grantee process, many CBOs/FBOs were educated about grant writing including those that were not awarded grants. Those awarded the sub-grants received additional technical assistance in the areas of

- ◆ Technology assessment, planning and execution
- ◆ Strategic planning
- ◆ Board development
- ◆ Staff development in small business management
- ◆ Client tracking and grants/contract management

Purpose of Sub-Grant Funds

The purpose of the sub-grant funds was to improve or strengthen the ability of small CBOs/FBOs to partner with local workforce centers and other public agencies, to become a resource to respond effectively to the changing needs of individuals and families, and to increase access to employment and training services and opportunities. Unlike most grants that are designed to aid in the delivery of services, the purpose of this grant was to build the capacity of small and emerging organizations. The secondary purpose was to help establish new relationships and collaborations within communities, offer more coordinated and comprehensive services, provide support for community residents, and reduce duplication. The ultimate goals of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative were to:

- ◆ Increase the number of CBOs and FBOs serving as active partners with workforce centers.
- ◆ Expand the access of resources provided by CBOs/FBOs to workforce centers.
- ◆ Identify, document, showcase and replicate successful instances of CBO/FBO involvement with the USDOL, Employment and Training Administration's system building efforts.

Establishing Eligibility for Sub-Grantees

The federal guidelines outlined in the federal register guided our eligibility requirements. The criteria used were as follows:

1. Small CBOs/FBOs with an annual program services budget of less than \$300,000 (not to include salaries or overhead expenses) or that have six or fewer full-time employees.
2. Small programs within larger organizations that currently offer employment and training related support services and have a separate governance board, such as an advisory committee may be considered.

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3. The organization must partner with a local workforce centers to achieve the goals described in the proposal.

Steps in the Process of Building Capacity

A step-by-step request for proposal (RFP) process for announcing, reviewing, and rewarding grants to build capacity in small and emerging CBOs and FBOs is described below. In every step, it was important to help the CBO/FBO define and distinguish capacity building from direct service. Many of the small organizations had never been involved in an RFP process. Providing clear and distinct definitions, boundaries, and examples were essential to the success of the process.

Step 1: Announce and establish a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the Initiative and the capacity-building opportunities:

Extensive information, guidance and support were provided during the first quarter to potential sub-grant applicants and community stakeholders through a series of individual meetings and regional Learning Circles. A pre-proposal/pre-bidders conference was also offered to discuss the project, define the boundaries, outline the expectations, answer questions, dispel concerns, introduce the partners and provide a comprehensive overview.

Workforce center staff provided assistance in the dissemination of information. Through formal and informal networks, CBOs and FBOs were able to receive information, ask questions, and attain explanation regarding the project. A brief description of the process used to launch the Initiative and announce the availability of the capacity building sub-grants and technical assistance opportunities is described below. This summary also includes some of the critical lessons that were learned in this initial phase.

A meeting with representatives from a multitude of networks of CBOs/FBOs, elected officials, philanthropic organizations, school representatives, state and local public agency officials, regional ministerial alliances, regional Catholic Archdiocese, and the Colorado Council of Churches was used to announce and expand the information network. Eventually, these networks would be helpful for on-going outreach, marketing of activities, opportunities, and to disseminate the RFP. Information explaining the availability of the capacity building sub-grants, individualized technical assistance to be offered, the training and community development strategies, and the development on-line resource directory was discussed. Input from CBOs/FBOs was also requested during this initial information-sharing phase.

A comprehensive search for CBOs/FBOs in every workforce region was conducted to insure a broad representation of all community stakeholders who were interested in being a part of the RFP process. The network expanded quickly from approximately 900 individuals and organizations to over 2,500. Members of the established comprehensive information network helped distribute information, conduct outreach, host Learning Circles, provide communication and coordinate activities for the process.

Regional Learning Circles were established across the State to act as the on-going mechanism for convening community stakeholders, to receive information about the Initiative and the sub-grant application process, to assess local community needs and to establish community action teams. Once this information was documented, the Learning Circles responded to the priority needs within each region. Potential applicants received information regarding the grant-making process, goals and objectives, and the appropriate use of

grant funds to build the capacity within their organization. Information on and the explanation of charitable choice was delivered in all Learning Circles, as well as the criteria for partnering with workforce centers. Since it was a requirement of the RPP that small grantees work with workforce centers in their project, workforce center directors spoke at the Learning Circles and provided information needed to better prepare CBOs/FBOs to link with workforce. Electronic and telecommunication were offered to potential applicants throughout the project to ensure that those who were unable to attend the pre-bidders conference or Learning Circles received information about the project.

Step 2: Draft and Finalize the Request for Proposal

Because most of these potential applicant organizations had little or no experience in writing grants, it was important to develop a simple and jargon free RFP. An internal team (the executive committee of the project) developed a first round draft that could both meet the test of simple and easy with no jargon, but also provide sufficient accountability for grant monitoring and reporting. The draft was reviewed by the steering committee and two workforce directors for input and revision. Unlike most government requests for proposals, the final product was a brief, jargon-free document with an extensive cover letter that described the background, purpose and eligibility in simple terms. The instructions on “how” to prepare the proposal and “what” was needed in the proposal was clearly explained. Another key component of the proposal was that workforce center directors had to approve projects in their respective region. This provided another opportunity to support the development of a proposal that fit local needs to the potential resources of the CBO/FBO applicant. Workforce center directors also acted as a resource and helped the grant applicant understand the RFP when requested. A sample of a notice for requests for proposals can be found in Attachment VI.

Step 3: Announce Grant and Provide Assistance to Grant Applicants

A pre-proposal conference was hosted to:

- ◆ Introduce the Initiative and the Partners
- ◆ Provide additional information and guidance
- ◆ Provide information about Charitable Choice
- ◆ Provide contact information for Workforce Region Representatives
- ◆ Provide Workforce Center Director Contact Information

The conference was held on January 6, 2003 in Denver at the Colorado Trust, the State’s largest Foundation At which time the final RFPs were distributed to approximately eighty representatives of CBOs/FBOs in attendance. Project Directors from the partner organizations gave a powerpoint presentation detailing the Initiative, discussed the definition of capacity building, and were on hand to address questions. Ample time for questions was provided to assure that potential applicants were well informed about the sub-grant, technical assistance opportunities, other strategies, and activities that would be offered through the project. A list of frequently asked questions was also provided. Applicants were encouraged to contact Workforce Region directors to pursue collaborative partnerships and to request support for their respective proposals. We received and responded to questions by telephone and by e-mail through the RFP deadline.

The RFP was sent by direct mail to all network members, which totaled over 2,500 CBOs/FBOs, ministerial alliances, workforce centers, members of the executive and steering committees, the Colorado Council of Churches, individual Catholic Archdiocese, state and local public agencies, and state and local elected officials.

Step 4: Facilitate the Involvement of Workforce Centers

Local workforce centers were heavily involved in all phases of the Initiative. Workforce center directors helped design the RFP, score proposals, and award grants to sub-grantees. Some also became closely involved with Learning Circles and Community Action Teams, and with the implementation of the sub-grantee goals and objectives.

On a continual basis, we requested input from the directors, CDLE and USDOL. The involvement of workforce center directors in the sub-grant process began in the first quarter at a meeting of the directors. We discussed the grant goals and objectives, to welcome their input. Some concern was expressed during this meeting about the limited amount of time they had for providing input into the proposal. Some concern was expressed that this grant was in direct competition with workforce centers, and some concern was expressed that this connection was not needed. We tried to dispel rumors and myths, address concerns, and assure them that they would be involved in the process. Once these concerns had been addressed, workforce center directors listened to a presentation and overview of the Initiative, and while some were still a little concerned about how it would be implemented and a future implications, most agreed that the Initiative was innovative and worth pursuing. Most directors agreed to either host or participate in Learning Circle meetings to convene stakeholders and to begin the process of assessment and responding to local needs and opportunities. Workforce center directors asked to be included in the design and implementation of the project starting with awarding the sub-grants.

Two of the directors agreed to join the steering committee to assist with the development of the RFP. These two members met regularly with members of the steering committee and executive committee to discuss the needs and strategies for partnering with CBOs/FBOs, and to better serve the growing number of clients and the challenges they were facing. Steering committee members agreed that workforce center directors should be involved directly in reviewing and rating proposals from their respective regions. To do this, the proposals that were received, were sorted into the workforce regions and sent with scoring sheets to the respective directors. Workforce center directors spoke directly with potential applicants regarding possible partnership opportunities. Some workforce center directors provided letters of support and recommendations to applicants and steering committee members. All of the proposals that were received were reviewed and scored by a workforce center director. Once the sub-grantees were decided, some workforce center staff became closely involved in helping build the capacity of sub-grantees so the sub-grantee could become a resource for the workforce center and clients.

For example, the Arapahoe Douglas Works workforce center provided African language translation services for the African Community Center and offered classes in languages that are common to African immigrants, which helped these new clients navigate the workforce and attain jobs. The Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development also offered translation support and information in African languages to the African Community Center. In the Upper Arkansas Region, workforce center staff became involved with the program development of the newly formed Caring and Sharing organization to provide workforce services to very low-income residents and homeless populations in Salida.

In Canon City, workforce center staff worked closely with sub-grantees, Loaves and Fishes and the Fremont County Family Center to insure that increased access to workforce center services were available to their clients. The director of the Upper Arkansas, Northwest and Rural Resort Regions provided financial support for conference participation at the regional conferences held in Pueblo and in Vail. The Southeastern Workforce Region offered a portion of their small sub-grant to support an open house planned by the Lamar County Library to launch a lending of library materials that would support the ability of local CBOs/FBOs to offer support services to workforce center clients and local residents.

The Pueblo WorkLink workforce center director and his staff formed new relationships with sub-grantees and other organizations that formerly had had no role in workforce development activities. Project Pueblo was funded as a new community collaboration that extended beyond this small grant program into a large youth development and transition programs with the school district, the alternative school and the community college.

These are only a few examples of the involvement of workforce centers staff with sub-grantees. A more complete description of the final sub-grant making process is provided in subsequent paragraphs of this section.

Most workforce center directors and their staff were also closely involved with planning and implementing Learning Circle and Action Team activities. Although some directors became more involved than others, workforce center directors and their staff participated in the initial assessment phase of the Learning Circles and contributed to the discussions, and helped define priority, needs, and strategies for addressing the community needs. Community Action Teams were formed in every Workforce Region to address their respective priority needs. In the Southeast Workforce Region, workforce center staff became involved with the Education Community Action team and provided financial support for team members to hear from a Pikes Peak Workforce Region sub-grantee to present on a mentoring program that involved faith-based organizations and the El Paso County Department of Human Services. Pueblo WorkLink staff attended all Learning Circle and Community Action Team Meetings, provided financial support for on-going meetings and engaged themselves in deciding strategies for address community needs.

Workforce center directors served as keynote speakers during conference plenary sessions, and as members of panel presentations during workshops. The regional conferences provided opportunities for workforce center directors and their staff to network with representatives of faith- and community-based organizations and to inform community stakeholders of the services and supports they offer.

Step 5: Develop and Implement a Grant Process and Follow-Through

The grant proposal review process occurred in three tiers:

1. Local Workforce directors reviewed them and scored the proposals from their respective regions
2. The project steering committee reviewed all proposals and scored them
3. The executive committee reviewed, scored, and made final funding allocations based on the recommendations of the tier one and two reviews

A total of 61 proposals were received. Workforce center directors and their designated staff received by mail the proposals that were submitted from their respective regions. They reviewed, scored and returned the proposals with comments, and sometimes letters of recommendation to the steering committee for final review and recommended approval or rejection to the executive committee. A scoring rubric developed by members of the steering committee served as one of the primary tools for approving or rejecting the sub-grantees. Steering committee members reviewed and scored all of the proposals. Requests ranged from \$1,000 to \$20,000 to be utilized for the purchase of computer equipment, office furniture, building supplies, books, materials, training, computer educational software, supplies and meeting costs for strategic planning, board development, and organizational team building. The executive committee reviewed the recommendations from the steering committee and then either approved or rejected (with cause) the sub-grantee and awarded the amount of the grant. (A list of steering and executive committee members is included in a subsequent paragraph of this section).

In addition to the cash awards, funding was set aside to respond to the individualized technical assistance that was requested by some of the applicants. In many cases, computer equipment was provided in lieu of some cash, because the committee was able to negotiate a very favorable group purchase price on equipment. Technology and IT support was provided to most sub-grantees to assure training and integration of the hardware and software they had received or purchased.

Governance of Project Activities

The process for guiding the and selecting the sub-grantees began with the formation of two work groups as follows:

Steering Committee – Steering committee members were selected carefully to insure a broad and diverse geographic, demographic and service domain representation. The primary role of the Steering Committee was to seek input and guide the process for implementation including federal, state and local agency officials, state contractors and workforce center directors. The group included representatives from the:

- ◆ CDLE
- ◆ Governor’s Office of Workforce Development
- ◆ USDOL, Employment and Training Administration
- ◆ Three County Workforce Region Directors
- ◆ A local non-profit Mi Casa Resource Center for Women
- ◆ Colorado Works Program, Colorado Department of Human Service
- ◆ A Colorado State Representative/legislator
- ◆ Urban League of Pikes Peak Region, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Executive Committee – The role of the Executive Committee was to seek input from Steering Committee members and to define and execute policies and procedures. The committee included:

- ◆ State Project Officer, CDLE
- ◆ Employment/Labor Services Liaison, USDOL, Employment and Training Administration
- ◆ Project director and staff from the two partnering contractors

Committee members met regularly to develop and execute the sub-grant selection and distribution process and to insure involvement from all Workforce Region Directors and their staff. Following is a brief summary of the purpose of sub-grant funds and eligibility:

Executive Committee Policies to Assure Federal Compliance – With guidance from the Federal Project Office, the following sub-grant funds policy and plan was decided to assure that we were complying with federal requirements.

Policy # 1: Some funds need to be withheld from all sub-grantees to insure the receipt of final reports.

Plan: \$300.00 will be withheld and provided to all sub-grantees in exchange for their final reports.

Policy # 2: Awards will be made on a case-by-case basis with the general operating principle of providing needed start-up funds plus one month's draw to cover the first month's operating expense.

Plan: Funds will be distributed for the purchase of equipment, furniture, and materials as start-up expenses plus the first month of operating expenses or draw.

Policy # 3: In some cases greater allocations closer to 100% of the sub-grant can be made if the proposal justifies immediate needs to purchase approved items or if the grant is less than \$200 total.

Plan: Funds will be distributed upfront to sub-grantees whose total sub-grant is below \$2,000.

Sub-Grantee Proposal

All materials were developed with a focus on clarity, simplicity, brevity, and a minimum of jargon. Phone consultation was available to any recipient and printed materials were sent to those who requested it. The following documents were included in the RFP to support the ability of applicants to prepare successful application for consideration by the Steering Committee:

- ◆ Proposal Guidelines
- ◆ Grant Application and Process
- ◆ Application Scoring Rubric and Criteria
- ◆ Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- ◆ Budget Template
- ◆ Summary of Appropriate Federal and State Legal Requirements for Service Delivery

The Proposal Guidelines included the following master time schedule:

Exhibit 9 Master Time Schedule	
Events/Activity	Key Dates
Issue RFP	Week of December 18, 2002
Pre-proposal conference	January 6, 2003
Proposal due date	January 15, 2003
Award date	January 31, 2003
Contract start date	February 1, 2003
Progress report due date	June 15, 2003

**Exhibit 9
Master Time Schedule**

Events/Activity	Key Dates
Grant end date	June 30, 2003
Close out report due date (financial status report)	July 31, 2003

Responses to RFP and Grants Given

A total of 61 (39 CBOs and 22 FBOs) applicants responded to the RFP. Proposals were reviewed for completeness and eligibility, sorted and sent to the appropriate workforce center Region director to provide to score and recommend for final selection. Steering Committee members met soon after to review the recommendations from the Workforce Region directors and to score each applicant in order to submit their final recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Sub-grants were made to thirty-six (36) CBOs/FBOs to build and support their ability to collaborate, provide services and support to Colorado Workforce clients and customers. Following is a breakdown of the distribution:

- ◆ CBOs - 22 grants
- ◆ FBOs – 14 grants

The following is a profile followed by a description of each of the CBO and FBO sub-grantees organizations. Detailed descriptions of grantees can be found in Attachment VII and a sample final sub-grant form in Attachment VIII.

**Exhibit 10
Community-Based and Faith-Based Sub-Grantees**

Organization	Type	Workforce Region	City	Subgrant Amount
Inter-faith Advancement Ministries: Horseback Miracles	FBO	Arapahoe/Douglas	Larkspur	\$ 14,309.00
Boulder County Faith Community Initiative	FBO	Boulder	Boulder	\$6,600.00
St. Francis Center	FBO	Denver	Denver	\$9,300.00
African Community Center	CBO	Denver	Denver	\$6,050.00
Cross Community Coalition	CBO	Denver	Denver	\$6,450.00
Hands Connections, Inc.	FBO	Denver	Denver	\$2,250.00
Arrupe Jesuit High School	FBO	Denver	Denver	\$5,500.00
St. Cajetan's Skill Center	FBO	Denver	Denver	\$7,550.00
Victory Outreach Denver East	FBO	Denver	Denver	\$14,750.00
Native American Multi-Cultural Education	FBO	Denver	Denver	\$5,500.00
Phillips County Family Education Services	CBO	Eastern	Holyoke	\$1,400.00
Prairie Family Center	CBO	Eastern	Burlington	\$6,000.00
Rural Communities Resource Center	CBO	Eastern	Yuma	\$15,700.00
Project Self-Sufficiency of Loveland	CBO	Larimer	Loveland	\$684.00
Grand Valley Catholic Outreach	FBO	Mesa	Grand Junction	\$13,500.00
Homeward Bound of the Grand Valley	FBO	Mesa	Grand Junction	\$1,000.00

Exhibit 10 Community-Based and Faith-Based Sub-Grantees				
Faith Partners	FBO	Pikes Peak	CO Springs	\$10,000.00
Greccio Housing Opportunity Center	FBO	Pikes Peak	CO Springs	\$3,280.00
Pikes Peak Community Action Agency	CBO	Pikes Peak	CO Springs	\$9,495.00
Bethel United Methodist Church	FBO	Pueblo	Pueblo	\$15,000.00
Cesar Chavez Academy	CBO	Pueblo	Pueblo	\$10,216.00
Gaia Institute Wellness Center	CBO	Pueblo	Pueblo	\$8,242.00
Peace, Harmony and Dignity (P.H.D.)	CBO	Pueblo	Pueblo	\$10,300.00
Project Pueblo	CBO	Pueblo	Pueblo	\$14,250.00
San Luis Valley Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Center	CBO	Southcentral	Alamosa	\$9,750.00
Lamar Public Library	CBO	Southeast	Lamar	\$13,103.27
Women's Resource Center	CBO	Southwest	Durango	\$6,000.00
Helping Hands House	FBO	Southwest	Dolores	\$3,250.00
Graces Kitchen	FBO	Southwest	Cortez	\$10,814.28
Jeffco Action Center, Inc.	CBO	Tri-County	Lakewood	\$4,500.00
Caring and Sharing	FBO	Upper Arkansas	Salida	\$9,500.00
Fremont County Family Center	CBO	Upper Arkansas	Canon City	\$13,300.00
Loaves and Fishes Ministries	FBO	Upper Arkansas	Canon City	\$12,040.00
Alliance Against Domestic Violence	CBO	Upper Arkansas	Salida	\$8,800.04
Lake City Hinsdale County Chamber	CBO	Western	Lake City	\$4,750.00
Family Ties West/Family Resource Center	CBO	Western	Olathe	\$3,950.00

GROUP AND INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to financial support, Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grantees received training and individualized technical assistance in the areas of:

- ◆ Organization sustainability and grant writing,
- ◆ Database development and management,
- ◆ Management information system,
- ◆ Network management and computer technology
- ◆ Non-profit accounting,
- ◆ Documenting and promoting best practices,
- ◆ Family support practice,
- ◆ Cultural competency,
- ◆ Community economic development,
- ◆ Family and community advocacy,
- ◆ Organizational and community assessment
- ◆ Group and meeting facilitation,
- ◆ Effective communication and conflict resolution
- ◆ Team building
- ◆ Board roles and responsibilities,
- ◆ Budgeting

The following are few examples of the training and individualized technical assistance that was provided during this reporting period.

1. Two full-day workshops in organization sustainability grant seeking and grant writing was held in Pueblo on July 22 and in Denver on August 20.
2. A four-day comprehensive training on family and community advocacy training, titled Bone Deep Family Support Through Family Advocacy was offered for sub-grantees and members of Learning Circles in the following communities during the reporting period:
 - o Cripple Creek Workforce Center on July 10-11 and on October 9-10
 - o Montrose County Department of Human Services on July 24-25 and on August 6-7
 - o Colorado Springs, Springs Church on October 16-17. The second two-day module is planned for November 13-14.
3. A full-day training on organization and program evaluation, titled “How Are We Doing”? was offered on October 20th in Akron. The training was attended by 12 representatives from CBOs/FBOs and members of Learning Circles.
4. Technology and networking support was provided to the African Community Center, who was having difficulty installing and networking their new computers.
5. Research and evaluation and accounting staff assisted Gaia Institute Wellness Center with the development of a database and client tracking system, financial management reporting and operating systems and development of an individualized sustainability/business plan.
6. Individualized sustainability planning and grant writing, team building and board development training was provided to the Native American Multi-Cultural Education Center.
7. Strategies in community based economic development, team building, and community mobilization was provided to the Rural Communities Resource Center and Prairie Family Center was provided.
8. Initiative partners offered financial management and reporting and consulting on how to document and promote the Horseback Miracles program as a best practice.
9. Initiative partners collaborated with a professor from the University of Colorado at Denver and former community organizer to provide a one-day student and community leadership training session that was provided for staff and students of the Cesar Chavez Academy and Peace Harmony and Dignity organization.

SUB-GRANTEE DESCRIPTIONS

The following are brief descriptions of the thirty-six sub-grantees.

Horseback Miracles

Horseback Miracles is a program of Interfaith Advancement Ministries, Inc. Its mission is to foster internal emotional, behavioral and social development skills and to encourage a healthy body, mind and spirit among children and teenagers, especially girls. Horseback Miracles is offered at the Perry Park, an established equine facility. The Horseback Miracles Program develops partnerships with community organizations to inspire, motivate and rehabilitate teenage girls who have experienced violence or have suffered from childhood neglect and abuse and may be demonstrating poor or delayed emotional bonding, poor self-confidence and poor social skills. The program utilizes horses and riding instruction as therapeutic aids to assist young girls in becoming functioning and productive members of their communities by helping them to build trust, self confidence, emotional self management, focus, concentration, body awareness and boundaries, communication and listening skills, and social interaction and behavior skills. The program hosts twelve girls per day, four days per week, for 48 week per year in order to serve 288 girls per year. Typically each girl attends one day per week for 8 weeks. At the end of each eight-week session girls demonstrate improved self-esteem, trust for authority and peers, perseverance, confidence, and the ability to express themselves and to care for others. The ultimate goal of the program is for every child and teenager who leaves the ranch to believe that they are the most important and successful humans alive.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The goal of the Horseback Miracles Program was to improve and expand their facility to provide equine therapy for troubled teenage girls and to document and promote the program as a best practice. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant funds were utilized to purchase computer and other equipment, building and ranch renovation materials, and to initiate a grant-seeking program. The program has identified six profit centers, which will create enough annual income to sustain the program. Two of the profit centers, which involve horse boarding and rehabilitation cannot begin until a permanent indoor arena is built. The other four strategies can start as soon as the marketing capability is achieved through the use of the new computers. Initiative partners offered financial management and reporting and consulting on how to document and promote the program as a best practice.

Boulder County Faith Community Initiative

Initiated in 2001, the purpose of the Boulder County Faith Community Initiative (BCFCI) is to encourage and support effective, sustainable partnerships between faith communities and human services organizations in order to respond effectively to the changing needs of Boulder residents by: 1) Engaging the faith community in serving the community; 2) Creating and supporting sustainable and effective partnerships; and 3) Creating and supporting a continuum of engagement.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The ultimate goal of the Boulder County Faith Community Initiative was to develop a networking mechanism that would sustain partnerships among FBOs/CBOs and local human services organizations and public agencies to respond more effectively to the needs of residents and to support on-going community engagement. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was utilized to convene CBO/FBO partners to conduct an assessment, collect and analyze data on the 193 existing congregations in Boulder County to plan and support partnerships with human services agencies. Nearly 200 CBOs/FBOs attended a one-day conference on community collaboration in Boulder.

St Francis Center

St. Francis Center was established in June 1983 as a homeless shelter to support the dignity of people who are homeless or in poverty, and to provide resources to help these individuals live comfortably and as self-sufficiently as possible. Since this time, the average number of people on a daily basis visiting the shelter has increased from 50 to 600 plus individuals. As Denver's largest daytime homeless shelter, St. Francis Center provides emergency services, employment and job placement, a health clinic, case management, social services and transitional and permanent housing. The homeless population in Denver faces tremendous obstacles. In 2000 the Colorado Department of Human Services identified 2,700 single homeless adults. Thirty-one percent did not have a high school diploma or GED and 15% identified lack of job skills as a barrier to obtaining permanent housing. More than 26% have received treatment for mental illness, 34% received treatment for chronic substance abuse and alcoholism, and 18% received treatment for physical or medical conditions. An estimated 80% of the homeless are not employed and 20 to 25% have a chronic mental illness. A report from the USDOL identified lack of education, competitive work skills, transportation, childcare and disabling conditions as the primary barriers to employment.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of the St. Frances Center was to increase the number of available jobs for their clients and to build relationships with new funding sources. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was utilized to help increase the number of employers who use the St. Francis job bank from 7 to 12, to support their ability to speak to congregations and to meet with government funding representatives to increase their level of funding from individual donors and public agencies, and to create a data management system to monitor program results. St. Francis shared this story about the project: A pastor at one of the local churches called St. Francis to hire someone to work at his church. St. Francis sent Jim who like most homeless people had some problems. The pastor was decided to stick with Jim despite the problems. Jim kept working and eventually got an apartment and he was finally living life as he had hoped to. A short time later, Jim walked up to the pastor and handed him an envelope. When the pastor looked inside, there was a note that read, "Thanks for saving my life." Along with the note was a check made out to the church for \$1,000.

African Community Center

As a program of the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., the African Community Center's (ACC) mission is to resettle refugees and promote self-sufficiency.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The main objectives of the African Community Center were to:

- ◆ Increase the effectiveness of its employment program by offering improved services to refugees through technology and individualized support and job coaching
- ◆ Increase organizational capacity to track and document, client progress and to analyze agency data
- ◆ Recruit board members and increase their ability to govern and guide the organization
- ◆ Build a working relationship with the Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and the Arapahoe Douglas Works workforce center to better serve their clients.

Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant funds were utilized to purchase three new computer workstations and ESL and GED training software for the employment program. The following outcomes were achieved: Clients are using the computers to search for jobs, write resumes and to practice their English skills and to

prepare for the GED test. ACC provided job services to fifty-eight clients in 2003 and anticipates servicing 120 clients in 2004. Partnerships were developed with the Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and Arapahoe Douglas Works. The two workforce centers are translating training materials into African languages and meeting with clients to offer their services and support. ACC's efforts to develop relationships with Workforce Offices have facilitated its ability to tap into expertise and resources that have improved the agency's employment and training services plan. Five staff members received training in Microsoft Access and two received training in Microsoft Word. Additional funding is being sought to obtain further training for staff. A list of potential advisory board members was compiled. The first meeting of the new advisory board was held on November 15, 2003. A board orientation and job descriptions were finalized were presented.

Cross Community Coalition

Cross Community Coalition was formed in 1987 by residents of the Elyria, Globeville, and Swansea neighborhoods for the purpose of bringing together residents to work to address issues of common concern that cross neighborhood, ethnic and religious boundaries. The neighborhoods served by the Coalition are located north central Denver and have many challenges. They are divided by the city's two major highways, Interstate 70 and 25 and are totally surrounded by industry, which makes the area the most polluted zip codes in Denver. Thirty-six percent of all families, 50% of all youth under 18 and 80% of all children in single parent homes live in poverty. The total population is 10,160. The mission of the Cross Community Coalition is to bring together people of diverse backgrounds and experiences to work together to create positive social and economic change by providing opportunities for individual achievement and improving the quality of life for all residents. The goals of the organization are to:

- ◆ Treat every person with respect and dignity
- ◆ Foster resident participation in decision making related to Coalition activities
- ◆ Support each person and family to move toward self-sufficiency
- ◆ Develop activities which foster and support community cohesion
- ◆ Promote positive, social, economic, environmental and educational change

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The objectives of the organization through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative were to collaborate with Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church to jointly plan and conduct a community needs assessment and to develop and implement a strategic plan based on the findings of the assessment and to strengthen their employment and adult literacy program with the purchase of computers and educational software. Initiative funds were used to 1) purchase two computer work stations, books and materials to expand GED, ESL and computer skills training, and 2) to conduct an assessment of employment and other needs in the community. The following are few outcomes:

- ◆ 15 fifteen people participated in evening GED classes
- ◆ 5 people received their GEDs
- ◆ 20 enrolled in the morning and evening ESL classes
- ◆ 400 hundred residents participated in computer skills training classes
- ◆ The needs assessment that was completed revealed that the primary need in the community is the need for job placement services and supports.

Hands Connection, Inc.

Hands Connection, Inc. is a start-up non-profit organization founded in 2001. Through a cooperative arrangement, Hands Connection, Inc.'s operations are currently housed at the Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church. The mission of Hands Connection, Inc. is to build individual and collective human capacity and to improve the lives of the community's youth and adults through the provision of:

- 1) Educational programs and training for underemployed and unemployed community members
- 2) Social services not accessible through other agencies for community members, including a Man-2-Man self-sufficiency initiative for young men of color
- 3) Assisted-living facility and support for elderly residents

A team of nine volunteers was recruited and trained as job coaches to mentor clients. Team members meet regularly with individual clients to mentor and support their ability to obtain jobs and education opportunities. Resumes for 5 individuals were developed and 10 individuals were assisted with computer job search support. Hands Connection, Inc. plans to serve 100 clients over the next year as residents become aware of the services they now have to offer.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to create an employment outreach center at the Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church to augment the services provided by the Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and Arapahoe Douglas Works to provide computer access, job and resource information, job readiness skills training and placement services through the purchase of two computer workstations and educational software and use of volunteers to mentor and support the ability of program participants to obtain employment. Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant funds enabled Hands Connection to act as a conduit for helping program participants build their confidence during uncertain times, recognize the value that they bring to a potential employer and recognize and list their qualifications. A Collaborative partnership was pursued with the Arapahoe Douglas Works workforce center and the Women's Bureau of the USDOL to mentor and advice Hands Connection, Inc. staff and volunteers on effective workforce development strategies. A board of directors comprised of community leaders and local workforce center executive level staff was formed to guide and govern the organization. A business plan needed to pursue funding and financing for the assisted living project was also developed.

Arrupe Jesuit High School Corporate Work Study Program

The purpose and mission of the Arrupe Jesuit High School Program (ACWSP) is to enable students of Arrupe Jesuit High School to offset a substantial portion of their tuition costs by participating in a work-study program with local businesses whereby students grow in self-confidence, responsibility, human relations skills, and teamwork. Arrupe Jesuit High School is a co-educational, college preparatory, Catholic Jesuit secondary school founded to serve the economically disadvantaged, racially and culturally diverse youth of Denver's inner city neighborhoods. Participation in the four-year Work Study Program is a key component of the educational curriculum of the school and is designed to provide students with exposure to the larger world and business role models. In addition, student's learn to appreciate the future value of continuing their education by being exposed to a wide range of corporate environments including: law firms, medical facilities, banks, accounting firms, marketing companies, etc.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of the ACWSP was to develop a business plan for the Arrupe Corporate Work Study Program and to secure the technology equipment needed for implementation of the business plan to provide on-going student work-study training, and recruitment and business partners. Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant funds were utilized to support the development of business plan, to purchase the computer equipment needed to execute the plan, and to develop the school's website. These efforts have increased the ability of the school to recruit business partners and allow potential students to learn about the program and to obtain application materials in English and Spanish. Linkages to business partners and funding opportunities were also provided. Arrupe Jesuit School opened its doors on August 19, 2003 with 65 students. Each student was matched with a business mentor and work site. Students work one day each week from between Tuesday and Friday and one Monday per month.

St. Cajetan's Skills Center

The St. Cajetan's Skills Center Partnership, which is comprised of representatives from St. Cajetan's Church, Denver Public Schools, Colorado Department of Education, the Mexican Consulate, the Latin American Education Foundation, and Community College of Denver was formed in 2001 to establish the St. Cajetan's Skills Center to provide basic human services, employment and educational opportunities for residents in the Denver's Barnum, Sun Valley, Valverde and Villa Park neighborhoods. Expansion of the Center with financial support from the Colorado Partnerships Initiative and community cooperation enabled the original collaborating partners to pursue the development of the Center as an informal satellite site for the Denver workforce center as an alternate location to provide academic and skills assessments, job search, referral and placements services, labor market information, education and training programs, job referral and job placement services and eventually become a possible site for workforce center registration and orientation. Prior to its expansion, the Skills Center offered a food bank, community health fairs, informal ESL and GED classes, and tax preparation assistance. A highly successful job fair that included a variety of employers within the Denver metro area was also held and attended by 500 community residents, service providers and employers was held in 2001 when the Center first opened.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The goal of the partnership was to expand the St. Cajetan's Skills Center to offer increased employment, training, education and social activities for community residents. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was used to expand the Skills Center with the purchase of furniture and equipment, building renovation materials and communication materials. The following are a few of the outcomes from the Initiative:

- ◆ Thirty people completed three computer classes.
- ◆ Sixty people attended forty-seven ESL sessions.
- ◆ Thirty people are attending GED classes offered by the Community College of Denver at the Center.
- ◆ Twelve residents attended a homebuyer workshop.
- ◆ Over 6,000 people attended a series of job fairs held in partnership with Radio Romantica, a local Spanish language radio station.
- ◆ Thirty residents attended a second job fair held with Palomo Construction. Ten of the thirty residents were hired during the event.
- ◆ The Center served as the site for a third fair with Safeway in partnership with the Denver Colorado Partnerships Initiative Job Development Action Team. Safeway offered employment to several event participants.

Victory Outreach Denver East

Victory Outreach is an International church-oriented Christian Ministry called to the task of evangelizing and disciplining the hurting people of the world with the message of hope and the plan of Jesus Christ. This call involves a commitment to plant and develop church rehabilitation homes and training centers in strategic cities of the world. Victory Outreach inspires and instills within people their potential in life with a sense of dignity. Victory Outreach East is located in the Denver Five Points Community. Among other basic education services, Victory Outreach offers two recovery homes, one for men that currently has 18 residents and one for women with 14 residents. Five Points is located in Central Denver where many families struggle with drug and alcohol addiction, unemployment, poverty, teen pregnancy, and a high drop out rate. An informal collaborative partnership with the Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development community satellite office has been established in order to serve the basic education and recovery needs of workforce clients. Victory Outreach has been working toward the development of a learning center to provide job readiness preparation with basic skills training in English as a Second Language classes, GED preparation, and tutoring for children who are struggling academically and socially as a result of the difficult home environment from which they come.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to support the development of an adult education center that would support the ability of drug and alcohol recovery program clients to re-enter society and pursue self-sufficiency. Sub-grantee funds were utilized for building renovation materials, educational tools and materials and to create a database to track the success of clients. Completion of the Center is planned for the first quarter in 2004. GED classes continue to be offered during the evenings and once completed the education center will offer ESL instruction and job readiness training. Another key outcome of the Initiative was the development of a partnership between Victory Outreach and Hope Communities, a local community development corporation. Hope is allowing Victory Outreach Recovery Program graduates live in their housing units at reduced rental rates and to offer their services and supports as further support for entry back into society and into the workforce. Hope also hires Victory Outreach graduates to help build and renovate their housing stock.

Native American Multi-Cultural Education Center

Native American Multi-Cultural Education School, Inc. (NAMES) serves all cultures by teaching Adult Basic Education, GED, Computer Competencies, Workplace and Family Literacy skills. The intention of NAMES is to serve all who have a need to improve their education, effectively increase career opportunities and build their leadership potential on their "walk" in the world of many cultures. Classroom instruction revolves around the five GED subject areas: reading, writing, math, social studies and science. The heart of the NAMES approach to education is called the Morning Star Medicine Wheel of Learning. This approach blends the principles of traditional Native American philosophy with contemporary adult learning theory, helping students learn how to address the complex needs of modern society. Traditional societies teach their young using stories and practical application of life-skills essential for cooperative living and self-sufficiency. NAMES uses stories from the circle of life, which is the Medicine Wheel, to teach values of personal growth, cooperation, team-work and leadership. For example, NAMES teaches its students that understanding math is a very important tool; math helps ensure truth and honesty among businesses, customers, and themselves, and that understanding math will help them achieve their own financial independence. While NAMES serves all students who seek to learn, it is the only adult education program that targets Native Americans. About

90% of NAMES ' students are from low-income households. NAMES collaborates with local workforce center staff, community-based organizations, and public agencies, including the Denver Indian Center, Community College of Denver, the Mayor's Youth Opportunity Program, and Morrison Road Business Association. In its short 6 years of service, NAMES has served over 1,000 students, preparing many of them for jobs and college.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The objective of the subgrant was to 1) To partner with local workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs to provide more comprehensive workforce development and education advancement services and supports to residents especially Native Americans in the Denver, Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Adams counties. In addition to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant support NAMES received individualized technical assistance in organization sustainability and board development. Collaborative Partnerships were formed and expanded The Denver Indian Center, Catholic Charities, Dress For Success, Southwest Improvement Council, and the Denver Family Indian Resource Center to offer home-buyer education and counseling, mental health counseling, social and spiritual activities, youth services, on-line job search, and computer skills training. NAMES sub-grant funds were also utilized to purchase computer equipment, a camcorder, TV, video and DVD equipment to conduct mock interviews provide teach effective interview techniques and provide feedback. NAMES continue its involvement with the Denver Job Development Action Team. In fact, both of the clients interviewed by Safeway at the September 9th Jobs Fair were hired.

Phillips County Family Education Services

The program seeks to provide an educational service which motivates and prepares family members to read, write, and speak English, solve problems personal as well conceptual and mathematical; to develop personally and as contributing members of a multicultural society. The program has always provided learning sessions in Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language. Computer literacy and educational software are utilized as a part of each of the classes that are provided. Additional offerings have included a pilot Family Literacy program in 1994, which is now a permanent offering, computer instruction, citizenship instruction, GED instruction, and a collaborative intensive immersion English program for parents and children each June. The newest offering is having a representative from the Sterling workforce center visit the facility once a week to provide the workforce center services to Phillip County residents. The Early Childhood Program serves children ages 3 to 14 and their parents. Family Literacy is offered everyday and classes cover English, math, writing and reading. The students enrolled in the programs have had many accomplishments over the past year. Among those are nine participants received their citizenship, six participants received their GED and two participants have become unit managers at Seaboard Farms, a local hog operation.

The current Hispanic population is 11.8%. Acceptance and inclusion of Hispanic residents is a slowly evolving process. The differing cultural values and norms cause the young people in the area to be at-risk and more susceptible to criminal behavior. Racial tension has increased in the past due to Hispanics moving to a primarily White community where the only previous cultural diversity consisted of temporary migrant laborers. The county is dominantly agriculturally based. The economy is centered on production agriculture and agricultural-related businesses. Potential employees often face temporary jobs, due to the different agricultural seasons. Many people with a college degree have a difficult time finding a job in which they are not over-qualified for. Jobs often have a low salary and jobs with a higher salary rarely become available. Many of the low-end jobs continually come open because people find a better job in town or move away.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective and use of the sub-grant was to expand the organization's adult literacy training program that would increase instruction for English As A Second Language and Adult Basic Education students. Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant funds were utilized for the purchase of two Dell computer workstations. Consequently are learning to navigate through computer programs to access additional instruction with less interruption. As an additional benefit, students now have the capacity to work with Sterling workforce center to staff to write resumes, complete applications and search for jobs through the workforce system on-line and in their own community. The Initiative also provided on-going networking opportunities through the Learning Circles and valuable linkages to CBOs/FBOs. Staff attended the Denver Sustainability Training and the Program Evaluation training that was offered in Akron, Colorado. PCFES is currently serving 41 ESL student, 6 GED students and 14 children.

Prairie Family Center

The mission of the Prairie Family Center is "to provide the community with the tools needed to build and support healthy, functional families." The Prairie Family Center serves as a single point of entry for individuals attempting to locate services throughout Kit Carson County in Colorado, with a strong focus in the Burlington, Colorado area. Services currently provided through the Center include the Hope for Youth Mentoring Program, Community Resource and Referral, Child Care Resource and Referral, New Arrivals, and Lending Library. Kit Carson County is located on the I-70 corridor adjacent to the Kansas border. Kit Carson County has a population of 8,011. The main industry is agriculture. Burlington is located in the eastern portion of the County, and located twelve miles from the Kansas border. Programs available through the Center provide individuals with access to resources they were not previously aware of. Many of these contacts result in positive relationships, allowing the Center to look at service delivery and availability through the eyes of the clients and adapt programming to meet these needs. Burlington has several employment training and placement options in place, but there are still needs to be met in order for all services to work together in a seamless and successful way. Burlington is the home of the Kit Carson County workforce center, which provides employment training and placement assistance to qualified individuals. Morgan Community College also has a branch office located in Burlington, offering GED classes and Basic Computer Classes to those who qualify. The Kit Carson County Department of Health and Human Services has in place limited employment training, mostly aimed at those individuals who are enrolled in the Colorado Works program. Although there is an excellent GED program available through the college, many people who are not able to succeed in getting their GED due to the fact that they do not have a background sufficient to enable them to grasp even these basic concepts. A general basic education class is essential in order for the community to be able to offer clients the opportunity to excel in GED classes. Burlington has a significant Hispanic population, many of whom are not able to speak and understand English. ESL classes are needs that are essential to being able to offer employment and life skills this population.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The organization's primary objectives through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative were to analyze and respond to service gaps and to increase collaboration with the Kit Carson County Workforce, Morgan Community College, and the Kit Carson County Department of Human Services to complete a strategic plan outlining the goals and needs of employment and training programs in the area and to develop outcome and evaluation procedures for the organization. This was achieved through the use

of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant. Sub-grant funds were also utilized for staff training to explore best and promising practices in workforce development and to purchase computer software to offer on-line job search and computer skills training. The organization reported that the lines of community between them and the Kit Carson workforce center have been further opened and that they have now a much greater understanding of the services and supports offered by the workforce center.

Rural Communities Resource Center

Founded in 1983 by a group of young women with small children in Yuma and Washington Counties that felt isolated from each other and from human and supportive services in their remote rural communities, the Rural Communities Resource Center (RCRC) is a grassroots, non-profit organization in Northeast Colorado that provides advocacy, education, and support to create systems change and to develop programs that promote the physical, emotional and economic health of the area. The primary goal is economic self-sufficiency and self-determination for the residents of Washington, Yuma and surrounding counties.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The ultimate goal of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to partner with workforce centers, CBOs and FBOs to help workforce center eligible clients secure and maintain jobs that pay a living wage and offer benefits by building the capacity of the RCRC in Yuma and Akron to provide increased and enhanced services and to access future funding to sustain these services. The Objectives of the project were 1) to increase the support services offered to WFC eligible customers so that they may obtain and retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency; and 2) to build the capacity of the Rural Communities Resource Center in Yuma and Akron to provide increased and enhanced support services to WFC eligible consumers, and to access future funding to provide these services and partner with CBOs and other FBOs in our work. The Initiative sub-grant was utilized for the purchase of computer equipment and software, a phone system, library materials, resource racks, building signage, staff training and strategic planning. RCRC also received training and individualized technical assistance in family and community advocacy, program evaluation, and team building, developing mentorship program. RCRC played a critical role with the coordination of the Northeast Regional Conference. A major outcome for the project was increased collaboration between CBOs and local workforce center staff. For example, RCRC and workforce center staff held a six-session workshop for job seekers in Yuma and a business luncheon in Akron.

Project Self-Sufficiency

The mission of Project Self-Sufficiency (PS-S) is to assist low-income, single parents in their efforts to build and maintain strong, healthy families, achieve economic independence; and become free from community and government assistance. Following are descriptions of a few of the programs and supported offered by PS-S. Guidance and Support from a Project Self-Sufficiency Advisors help participants design and implement a Self-Sufficiency Action Plan that includes manageable steps to accomplish career and personal goals. Career Planning Assistance and Job Placement Support is offered to single parents through the use of state-of-the-art career planning software, hands-on assessment tools, and community mentors.

Representatives from the Department of Human Services and the Larimer County workforce center meet regularly to brainstorm ideas for individual job seekers and provide linkages to employers. Twenty families live in Willow Place Housing, an award-winning complex in Loveland, designed especially for single parent families enrolled in PS-S. Participant Assistance Funds provide financial support in the amount of \$200 per

family per year is provided to help participants with special needs such as car insurance, car parts, dental care, childcare, education and other expenses. The Car Repair and Car Donation Program responds to the transportation needs of clients by providing reliable cars donated by individuals needed to travel to work, school, childcare, medical appointments, and other requirements of dialing living

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The organization's primary goal through the Initiative was to increase donations of functioning vehicles for their Car Donation's Program. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was utilized to design and produce new and improved marketing brochure to promote the Car Donation Program with the goal of increasing the number of reliable cars that are donated by individuals. Fifty-four (54) cars were donated during the grant period.

Grand Valley Catholic Church

Grand Valley Catholic Outreach, dedicated to Christian Service, proclaims the dignity and worth of each person, responds to their human needs, and strives to show them the compassion of Christ. Its principal program includes offering service to those with low-income and/or those who are homeless. Financial assistance provides families with payment of utilities, gas for vehicles, medications, transportation and car repairs. Food and clothing assistance including diapers and other household items is offered to families and individuals experience extreme financial difficulty. Persons who are hungry can receive a hot meal, prepared by volunteers and provided every day of the week at noon. Day shelter services include showers, laundry facilities, the use of telephones to call employers and family members, storage, a message center, computer access, haircuts and personal products, preventive medical care, and mental health assistance. The Almost Home Program publishes a weekly listing of available, affordable housing in Mesa County and distributes the listing to more than 45 locations such as public libraries, Chamber of Commerce and Department of Human Services. An emergency housing program offers a respite to families who are homeless but in the process of seeking permanent shelter. A temporary stay in a duplex unit offers time for families to locate affordable housing and save enough money for the deposit and rent. The Catholic Outreach Program seeks to end homelessness for some individuals and families by providing housing for 12 to 24 months during which time the occupants, with the assistance of a case manager, will develop skills to become responsible renters pursue goals that will enable them to secure permanent housing. A Book in Hand Program provides books to children to promote reading skills.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The goal of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to establish two Job Hunt program sites with satellite access to workforce center services and jobs database and to access listings of rental housing units. Once site with two computers was set up in the day center, where up to 100 homeless people congregate daily to take advantage of the amenities and to look for work and affordable housing. The other site with one computer was established in the program's Outreach Intervention Center where 50 to 60 people daily seek financial assistance to meet emergency crises. The computers provided immediate access to job information. Twenty-five volunteers were trained to provide job search support with resume writing, interviewing techniques and completing applications on-line and manually. A database of clients seeking services and available services was also developed. Over 30,000 records were entered into the database during the grant period. A web site was also enhanced that accommodates the listing of affordable rental housing units and other services offered through the Grand Valley Catholic Outreach Program. The program was active in all Learning Circles and participated in the Vail conference.

HomewardBound Of the Grand Valley, Inc.

The mission of HomewardBound of the Grand Valley, Inc. (HBGV) is to meet the critical housing needs of men, women and children in Mesa County who are homeless. HBGV does this through three separate programs, which are described as follows: Grand Junction Community Homeless Shelter, Emergency Program provides men, women and children a warm bed, home-cooked meals and life-changing assistance and support. Warm Weather Transitional Program helps men, women and families transition out of homelessness by providing weekly case management, life skills training, employment and other services during the summer months.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of this project was to bring together staff of HomewardBound of the Grand Valley, Inc. (HBGV) and the Mesa County workforce center (MCWFC) to develop strategies for assisting homeless men and women by increasing their access to existing Mesa County workforce center resources. The time guided forum for the dedicated staff of HBGV and the MCWFC to meet and discuss a topic of great passion for each individual proved constructive and beneficial in many ways. While the project group only numbered seven, the process resulted in small, yet meaningful strategies to achieving the primary objective. Please see the attached meeting summary for a detailed description of strategies. While both HBGV and MCWFC participate as members of the Grand Valley Homeless Coalition, the time spent reflecting on how these two entities work cooperatively to support the homeless was essential, especially given their physical proximity and the crossover of services provided their clients.

Faith Partners

Faith Partners is a faith-based “welfare to work” mentoring program that recruits and trains volunteer mentor teams from local churches to match them with families who are struggling against poverty in their lives. The vision of Faith Partners is to take charity beyond commodity-based benevolence and into relationship with the poor. Its mission is to break the bonds of poverty and to create opportunities to experience a full life. The mentor teams and families make a commitment to work together for at least one year. The three primary objectives of the team over the 12 month that it is together is to: 1) to use every resource and network available to help the family secure employment, 2) to coach the family in life skills (tailored to specific needs of the family) and, 3) to renew hope in the family for a better future. For the past few years Faith Partners has helped families make the transition from Welfare to Work with trained volunteers, who mentor, coach, befriend and restore hope by connecting churches with DHS clients. Over 100 families have been served and over 80% of them have existing the program with permanent employment, housing and a renewed sense of self-assurance and hope.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The objectives of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant were to 1) develop a working partnership with the Pikes Peak workforce center to serve the needs of their clients, 2) develop a management information system (MIS) to monitor, document and report progress and benchmarks, 3) to develop and begin implementation of a sustainability plan, and 4) to produce a video to simplify mentor recruitment. A referral system was established between Faith Partners and the Pikes Peak workforce center and clients are being co-served. Faith Partners assumed leadership for monthly meetings of CBOs/FBOs and workforce center staff to pursue the goals of the Community Employment Initiative Action Team. The MIS is operating as planned and included a cognitive mapping process for the program.

Greccio Housing Opportunity Center

It is Greccio's vision that by 2015, every person with modest means in El Paso County will have a safe comfortable place to live. Greccio preserves, develops and maintains quality housing with affordable rents that promotes a sense of community the Pikes Peak Region. Greccio Housing Opportunity Center is grassroots organization started in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1990 to that provide affordable rental housing to households with limited incomes who cannot afford market rate housing. Greccio has 144 units of housing on 15 sites, serving about 300 people, including 100 children. Eight percent of Greccio's residents are at the bottom 10% of the economic scale of Colorado Springs. Those benefiting from Greccio's below market rental housing include singles, couples, and families with children, including families headed by single parents. Housing units are permanent, not transitional, allowing households to stabilize in neighborhoods, schools, and jobs. From the beginning, Greccio recognized the necessity of supportive services to assist households in becoming self-sufficient. Greccio's Resident Enrichment Coordinator provides referrals to a network of community services, including jobs, education, healthcare, childcare, food, and transportation. The organization works to minimize evictions by crisis intervention and on-going support.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary goal of the sub-grant was to partner with the Pikes Peak workforce center to establish the Greccio Employment "E-Center", an in-house, self-directed job search booth for residents situated in the lobby of the Greccio apartment complex to provide direct access to workforce center services, job information and other technological resources. Colorado Partnerships Initiative funds were utilized for the purchase of two Dell computer work stations, video and E-Center Computer Software which provides direct access to Pikes Peak workforce center services and supports including the ability to register on-line, develop resumes, complete job applications, complete work and education assessments to develop individual development plans, linkages to employers and computer skills training, and printed educational materials. The software also includes client assessment tools to identify barriers to employment success, develop individual employment plans, and conduct career interest surveys. Video education material includes: Employability – Six steps to change your life (VHS), Eight Easy Ways to Lose a Job (DVD), and a 20" color television for viewing of education material. Through the project, Greccio residents now have immediate access to seek employment and educational opportunities and materials, register with the Pikes Peak workforce center and complete orientation on-line and receive job-seeking tips by e-mail. Educational software and tutorials for resume writing, typing, computer skills training, and GED preparation are also available for residents are also included.

Pikes Peak Community Action Agency

The mission of Pikes Peak Community Action Agency (PPCAA) is to increase the capacity of low-income people to be self-sufficient through the provision of emergency financial assistance with rent, mortgage, utility payments, food, medical prescriptions, and transportation and through the provision of family support services and case management support including supporting the ability of individuals to achieve their education and employment goals and aspirations. Following is a brief descriptions of the programs under which these services are offered: Family Stabilization Services, designed to provide for some of the short-term needs of otherwise stable households. Transitions to Independence Program works with families and individuals to attain an independent lifestyle. Save Up to Step Out Individual Development Account (IDA) Program is a matched savings program that rewards the monthly savings of low-income individuals and

families who have savings goals to acquire a first, home, post secondary education, or the start-up or expansion of a small business.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant had two primary objectives with the ultimate goal of strengthening the partnership between the Pikes Peak workforce center and the Pikes Peak Community Action Agency and to increase and improve services for current and future clients of the Pikes Peak workforce center by establishing mini resource centers at two PPCAA locations and training two staff as case managers. Resource rooms for the Pikes Peak workforce center were established at the Eastern El Paso Community Center and at the Calhan and Norvell Simpson Community Center. Two case managers completed a series of four training workshops for their Case Management Certificate, which included 1) The Operational Aspects of Casement Management, 2) Client-Centered Counseling, 3) Holistic Assessment, and 4) Developing the Individual Employment Plan, Placement and Monitoring.

Bethel United Methodist Church

The mission of Bethel United Methodist Church is to promote the educational, economic, and social health of all persons in the Pueblo community. The church has been centrally located on the Eastside of Pueblo for over 100 years, with a long history of civic involvement and community partnerships. In the past Bethel has collaborated with local School District #60, offering space for kindergarten classes, furnishing space for the initial Head Start program, and housing the Risley Middle School Library during building renovations. Bethel sponsors several community outreach programs that provide care and comfort for those that suffer from the effects of poverty, but we realize that the long-term solution is to help these individuals and families' access education and training programs, so they can secure and maintain jobs that pay a livable wage and offer necessary benefits.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The ultimate goal of the sub-grant was to offer needed space for education and job training opportunities for local WorkLink clients, by increasing and up-dating existing classroom space, for Adult Basic Education, GED and ESL classes, installing a computer lab and renovating childcare space to meeting existing state requirement. A DSL line and up-dated electrical was also installed. Bethel United is especially proud of the computer lab, which includes twenty Pentium3, 500 mgz. CPUs complete with operating systems, CD drives and 17" monitors, all networked to the DSL line for instant Internet access. The lab also includes donated furniture and printers from another grant. ESL and GED software was installed by BOCES who is also providing the classroom instruction. During the summer months, 24 individuals received ESL and/or GED instruction through BOCES at the site. Twelve children participated in and Early Childhood Education Program and an additional 18 students are enrolled in ESL classes offered by Catholic Charities.

Cesar Chavez Academy

Cesar Chavez Academy is a public preK-8th grade charter school in its second year of operation. It opened in the fall of 2001 after months of intense planning and negotiations with the Pueblo School District. Currently the academy educates 420 students from all areas of Pueblo County. The mission of Cesar Chavez Academy is to prepare a diverse cross-section of Pueblo's children for success as young scholars, citizens of the world, and community leaders by providing them with ambitious college preparatory academic programs in a supportive and challenging learning environment. At the core of the Academy's philosophy and curriculum,

are such research-based approaches as the Success For All literacy programs (developed at John Hopkins University), the Jon J. Collins Writing System, and Core Knowledge Curriculum. Additionally, Cesar Chavez Academy believes in providing educational advancement opportunities for the surrounding Pueblo community. It also believes that supporting the educational, employment and economic advancement of adult members of the community is essential to its mission and goal and to the success of the Pueblo community as a whole.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The first objective was to establish courses for community members that address the needs of English as Second Language (ESL) learners. The second objective was to develop classes that help community members obtain a General Education Development (GED) degree. The third goal was to develop computer skills classes for community members to increase their knowledge base and marketability. The ESL and computer skills development component goals were met. Classes were established and came to successful completion. There were 10 individuals enrolled in the ESL program. These same individuals were involved in the computer skills development program. The individuals enrolled experienced marked increases in both English fluency and computer skills development. The logistics for establishing the GED classes are still underway due to a key component in our funding for teachers. BOCES, the agency that we utilized to fund teachers, experienced budget cuts, which limited our access to teachers for the GED program. Funding is being pursued to execute the GED classes.

GAIA Institute Wellness Center

The mission of the Gaia Institute Wellness Center (GIWC) is to deliver high quality, uncompromising, personalized direct integrated healthcare and educational services to the underserved. GIWC is also committed to actively creating a new paradigm of medicine, health care and education that promotes transformation and healing at the deepest levels of human existence and experience, thereby enhancing the quality of life, and the ability to contribute to society. GIWC serves the underserved in Pueblo by providing educational programs, direct health care services, rehabilitative programs, networking, advocacy and a broad scope of health-related information. GIWC's philosophy is to remain committed to honoring the diversity, individuality, dignity, and sovereignty of all people and to be an active part of social change in Pueblo, Colorado. GIWC serves Pueblo and surrounding communities by providing educational programs, direct health care services, rehabilitative programs, networking, advocacy and a broad scope of health-related information. ARRP Information Center, Concerned Parents of Pueblo, Parkview Medical Center, Alpine Family Counseling Services, Southern Colorado Aids Project, and Vocational Rehabilitation are among the few area organizations that collaborate with GIWC to service the changing needs of the Pueblo community.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to renovate the GIWC facility, which once served as a neighborhood convenience store to provide classroom instruction in English As A Second Language, reading, effective communication, leadership, self-esteem, symptoms management, nutrition and drug and alcohol counseling services to support the ability of GIWC clients to enter and succeed in the workforce. Renovation of the building required the GIWC to meet ADA (American with Disabilities Act) access requirements, which required a significant level of material and labor costs. Colorado Partnerships Initiative Funds were utilized for the purchase of building materials. Most of the labor costs were donated by local building contractors and/or paid for with funding from other funding sources. The space now supports the provision of ESL and reading classes, communication skills training course,

leadership development training classes, substance abuse and mental health counseling. In addition, 30 health care practitioners to offer free and reduce rate health care services are utilizing the space.

Peace, Harmony and Dignity

Peace, Harmony, and Dignity (P.H.D.) is a community collaborative that builds individual self-esteem, self-expression, leadership and business skills, cultural, and community pride while creating positive alternatives for Pueblo youth. P.H.D. encourages neighborhood beautification and community collaboration among business and community leaders, artists, educators, and Pueblo workforce center programs. These youth and community development goals are achieved through the creation and display of community murals and other works of art. P.H.D. recognizes art as a road of least resistance and as the common denominator when working with youth to develop critical and analytical skills. As a community collaborative, Peace, Harmony, and Dignity (PHD) builds self-esteem, self-expression, leadership and business skills, cultural, and community pride while creating positive alternatives for Pueblo youth. PHD encourages neighborhood beautification and collaboration among business owners, community leaders, artists, educators, and service providers. The goals of PHD are achieved through the creation and display of community murals. PHD recognizes mural art as a tool for developing respectful relationships and building critical thinking and analytical skills among youth.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The specific objectives of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative grant were to:

1. Involve up to ten youth in the creation of four community murals.
2. Provide youth participants with an opportunity to meet and visit with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Rigoberta Menchu Tum during the 2003 PEACEJAM Youth Event.

PHD collaborated with Pueblo School District 60 and Cesar Chavez Academy to involve twelve youth in the creation of four murals. The murals are located at the Cesar Chavez Academy and at the El Centro Del Quinto Sol Recreation Center. PHD Youth participants attended a presentation by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Rigoberta Menchu Tum during the 2003 PEACEJAM Youth Event. PEACEJAM is a youth leadership program that calls on Nobel Peace Prize Winners to guide and mentor youth and that incorporates community service as a strategy for building and supporting youth leadership. PHD youth participants were also involved as planners and presenters at the Strengthening Communities Summit. They received individualized instruction from internationally known artist, Leo Tanguma and participated in a community forum featuring University of Colorado at Denver professor and community activist, Lalo Delgado. Computer equipment and software needed to support the continued development of P.H.D. was purchased with sub-grant funds.

Project Pueblo

Project Pueblo is a collaborative partnership between the Pueblo Work Link Board and Project Pueblo. The mission of Project Pueblo is to assess, build and support the employability of Pueblo youth by convening key stakeholders to offer services and family support in a holistic and comprehensive and coordinated manner for Pueblo families. Pueblo has a large number of youth whose needs for preparation into the workforce are not being met by existing resources. Employers are in agreement that those who are currently in the job seeker pool do not have the technical skills or the work behaviors that meet their needs. Project Pueblo seeks to begin a program of skills based assessment linked to a learning program that supports proficiencies to entry-

level career goals of individual users of the system. The instrument that was selected for the project is the Work Keys Assessment System, which has a large database of profiled jobs. This database allows Project Pueblo job coaches to speak a common language with employers to understand the proficiencies for positions they are trying to fill. The project provides a programmed learning instrument in the form of Key Train, which teaches the required proficiencies and measures progress toward their attainment. While an individual is progressing in the skills proficiency training they also have the opportunity to participate in the work hardening curriculum offered by other participating Work Link agencies.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to create a skill based assessment and learning center and to co-locate other Pueblo services providers to offer more coordinated and comprehensive services. Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant funds were utilized to purchase and make operational the use of the Work Keys Assessment Program and The Key Train Program, two proficiency-based computers that assess and improve skill levels in the areas of reading, mathematics, applied technology, listening, writing, observation and teamwork. Sub-grant funds were also utilized for the purchase of five computer workstations for use at the Pueblo Work Link facility and to train staff on the use of this new technology.

San Luis Valley Comprehensive Community Mental Health Center

The San Luis Valley Comprehensive Community Mental Health Center has been providing mental health services for over 30 years with a mission to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the San Luis Valley. The Center currently serves approximately 2700 persons a year. These services include traditional mental health services as well as prevention, emergency services, case management (includes transportation, housing, emergency financial assistance, life skills) and more recently vocational support and training for consumers in the mental health system. The New Beginnings Wellness and Recovery Center is a small program within the Center, which aims to create an environment where individuals who have been affected by mental illness can acquire the confidence and skills necessary to lead vocationally productive and socially satisfying lives. The Center serves over 2,700 persons a year. With promoting Recovery, self-sufficiency, and with a strong commitment to vocational development, the center has increased the number of participants in the trainings offered as well as referrals to work on the vocational crew. Some clients have also gained the independence and self esteem to gain out side employment and integrate with the community. New Beginnings has collaborative working relationships with other humans service providers around the Valley, including healthcare, law enforcement, courts, social services agencies, and educational institutions.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: This project was specifically designed to enhance and promote the ability of the New Beginnings Wellness and Recovery Center, the local workforce center, CBOs and FBOs to work together on behalf of workforce center customers. Members of each organization attended Vocational Task Force Meetings to provide resources and services for eligible clients to increase universal access to those with a mental health disability. The task force continues to meet to ensure clients have access to job readiness trainings and skill development and supportive wrap-around services to provide the stability needed for those with mental health issues. With each meeting, new resources are identified and invited to participate. These meetings were helpful and we plan to continue meeting with our regional coordinator to plan a local training or workshop. Colorado Partnerships sub-grant funds were utilized to expand the access of individuals served and supported by the *Center* to the services offered by the local workforce center, in collaboration with a community advisory board that will guide the development of employment and training related support

services for workforce center clients and customers with mental illnesses. Specifically the funds supported the establishment of the New Beginnings Wellness and Recovery Center by convening an inter agency task force, launching a vocational training program in culinary arts and food preparation for mentally ill clients, and informing collaborating CBOs/FBOs and the local workforce center on how to work effectively with mentally ill people.

Lamar Public Library

The mission of the Lamar Public Library is to provide basic educational and training opportunities to “everyone while honoring and respecting their dignity”. As the educational branch of the Southeast Colorado Business training Consortium, Lamar Public Library attempts to address the region’s shortage of individuals with the basic education foundations needed for gainful employment by providing workforce development training and support services to the unemployed, underemployed, undereducated and employment-skill deficient citizens of Southeast Colorado. As a partner of the Consortium, the Library provides career assessment and counseling, job seeking skills, basic literacy skills, mentoring, and support services to assist area residents in finding and retaining employment. As the oldest source of educational resources and services in the area, Lamar Public Library has endeavored for over 95 years to work with other agencies to help area residents better their lives. The need for more employment and training opportunities for its patrons is seen everyday. Not only do people check out materials for study on their own or to supplement programs they are enrolled in, the computers are checked out over 265 times a week – often for job hunting or educational activities.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: To address the area’s employment barriers, Lamar Public Library partnered with local workforce center staff, Lamar Community College, Southeast Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Prowers and Baca County Department of Social Services, and Life Center Church to create a resource library by compiling a lending body of material for check out and use by area CBOs/FBOs and others to help them provide classes and training for their clients. The second objective of the sub-grant was to host an open house to showcase the resource lending library. Sub-grant funds supported the purchase of books, materials and an Open House event that presented an additional opportunity for networking and information sharing.

Women’s Resource Center

The mission of the Women’s Resource Center is to help women help themselves by providing education, resource and referral, mentoring, community building and networking opportunities. Women’s Resource Center has more than 400 individuals and corporation members that volunteer as mentors to support program participants. The Center is located in Durango, Colorado and serves residents of the southwestern corner of the state. The community was confronted by many challenges in 2003 including a major drought and wild fires that caused tremendous physical and economic damage in the area. The population served by the Center includes women between 25 and 60, with some higher education; who have low and low to moderate income; and who are single with children. The Center is dedicated to supporting the ability of women to achieve economic self-sufficiency and to make positive decisions for themselves. Many of the women served by the Center are in abusive relationships. Women learn basic work ethic skills and are supported to pursue training and educational opportunities to improve their current life situation, secure stable employment or pursue business ownership. Financially empowered women have the skills and

education typically to make sound life decisions, becoming self-assured, productive, strong women, mothers, partners and active community members. The Center provides the following services

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The primary objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was to create a database that records and tracks individual information and creates aggregate reports. The *Ready>Set>Go!* database tracks program participants' successes, needs and backgrounds, and to increase access to other community resources. The funds were used to pay a database developer, database programmer, a data entry specialist, and an evaluator to make necessary tracking and program adjustments. Development of the database was critical to the ability of the Women's Resource Center to obtain and manage grants and contracts from public agencies and private foundations. All Initiative objectives were met. An existing Women's Resource Center membership database was created to track Ready>Set>Go! participants as stated above. Evaluation and adjustments are an ongoing process.

Helping Hands House

The Helping Hands House is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of youth and families in Southwest Colorado. Youth Quest, a program of Helping Hands House is dedicated to providing safe, positive and inspiring activities for youth in Dolores, Colorado. The Helping Hands House was folded due to the economic climate to Montezuma County. There are human services that low-income families need in order to survive that were not offered in Dolores. The Helping Hands House works with these families to provide after-school and summer programs for youth ages 7 and older, assistance with "curbing" the high cost of feeding their families, adult education, early childhood education, limited infant/toddler care and advocacy services.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant supported the ability of the Youth Quest program to improve the provision of employment opportunities for youth between 16 and 21. Together Helping Hands and the Cortez workforce center were able to provide 30 local youth with jobs during the grant period. Sub-grant funds were utilized to develop on-site employment services with the purchase of computer and software equipment, fax machine and office furniture. Youth Quest Program participants utilized the computers and Internet to search for jobs and resources, to write resumes and to complete job applications.

Grace's Kitchen

Grace's Kitchen is an outreach mission of St. Barnabas of the Valley Episcopal Church in Cortez. Its mission is to provide nutritious lunches to hungry families and individuals and to provide food to anyone who asks- with no strings attached they provide this food with respect and dignity. Grace's Kitchen serves the very poor, who are often homeless and have hopes of obtaining and maintaining employment. Grace's Kitchen began in 1998 by serving nutritious sack lunches, which were picked up at the door. With this grant, Grace's Kitchen has had the opportunity to prepare box lunches, deliver them, and feed laborers working in the fields- thus, helping the hungry that are employed and working. This has been and continues to be a viable ministry, serving an average of 5,500 meals per year over the past four years. Grace's Kitchen is entirely managed and staffed by volunteers. St. Barnabas of the Valley Church provides the kitchen and dining room facility. Food and supplies are donated by a variety of area businesses and other churches. The project management, cooks, servers, and clean up is provided by all volunteers. There is no paid staff. Grants have

assisted the purchase of refrigerators, freezers, and upgrades for sinks, countertops in order to meet local health codes. The meals cost Grace's Kitchen approximately \$1.00 each.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The objective was to build the infrastructure of their newly created *Lunches for Work Program* to serve hot sit-down meals to those waiting for employment and for the under-employed who could not afford to buy food. The infrastructure improvements included: construction of a storage room, installation of a new commercial grade stove, and replacement of tables and chairs. Workers at the job service center who were called for employment could request a sack lunch to take with them daily until they had the money to purchase food for their lunches. The lunches are often the only meal for unemployed and under employed people that day. Grace's Kitchen also serves as a waiting place for people waiting to be called for employment, as they typically have no other way to be contacted. Over 5,000 hot sit-down meals 100 sack lunches for the Lunches for Work Program were provided during the grant period.

Jeffco Action Center, Inc. (JAC)

Jeffco Action Center began in 1968 as a cooperative, grassroots effort among community service groups including Church Women United, Jefferson County Human Relations Council, and the churches of Jefferson County who saw a need to provide basic human services to residents of the county who faced emergency problems. Presently, JAC occupies a main office at 14th and Estes in Lakewood, owns a homeless shelter, maintains a food storage building on church grounds and operates a Santa Shop throughout the year on church grounds. Over the years, JAC has provided assistance to tens of thousands of individuals and families in need of food, clothing, limited financial assistance, shelter, medical assistance, home-delivered food and tenant/landlord counseling. JAC began as a community effort, and it continues to be funded by individual donations, community organizations, businesses and churches. The mission of the JAC is to provide an immediate response to basic human needs and to promote self-sufficiency to residents in Jefferson County. The goal is to provide a coordinated, on-going package of care to address homelessness, hunger, health care and basic needs. The objective of its programs is to help families overcome problems remain in their homes so they do not add to the homeless population of Jefferson County. The following continuum of services is offered as prevention and intervention strategies: JAC provides a five-day supply of food to families for up to six times a year. Access to clothing, rent and utility assistance, bus tokens, personal hygiene items, diapers, prescription medications, eye exams, glasses and dental care is also provided. JAC houses the Metro Community Provider Network and Exempla/Lutheran Hospital in order to provide health care services for indigent people. The clinic is often the only medical avenue available for the counties low-income residents. The Emergency Shelter Program provides a refuge for the homeless as one of only two general emergency shelters in Jefferson County. The shelter houses up to 20 people in space designed for individual privacy and group living. At least one member of the family must be working, or find work within a week to stay in the shelter. Churches and other community civic groups provide meals. The Tenant/Landlord Program provides counseling and referrals to help prevent homelessness in the areas of rent deposits, evictions and repairs and has become more active in advocacy with the help of the lawyers who the staff program. The J.-H.E.L.P. Program is a collaborative with the Volunteers of America (VOA) organization to provide meals to needy people under age 60. VOA is also housed within the facility.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: JAC has maintained a mutually beneficial relationship with the Tri-County workforce center for many years on behalf of their clients. Tri-County workforce center staff visits the JAC

regularly to provide information about available jobs and to offer support. JAC's collaboration with the Tri-County workforce center was enhanced with the provision of six computers that were provided through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative in order to develop a computer network that would allow JAC clients to access job information. JAC recently secured the needed funding for the serve and continues to seek needed funding for the technology support, which was not funded through the Initiative. Once the network is fully established, JAC plans to work closely with Tri-County workforce center staff to receive training on how to access workforce center services.

Caring and Sharing

The mission of Caring and Sharing is to provide clothing, food, and household items to people in need in the Salida, CO community. Caring and Sharing has provided these services for more than 26 years. Caring and Sharing currently collaborates with the Salida workforce center to provide clothing for job interviews through a voucher system. The organization also trains people in cleanliness and disease control and disinfections. Upon completion, students are certified to work in restaurants, motels, hotels, home health, hospitals, and nursing homes and as janitors. Continued education is available to motivated students for inventory control jobs and surgical disinfections technician jobs. During the education process, Caring and Sharing helps students with basic clothing and household needs free or at a minimal fee. Caring and Sharing also works with the Granary Ministries to spread out occasional food overages and pick up Safeway, Home Bakery and Bongo Bill's Coffee Shop's day-old breads and pastries. Over 100 people receive food offered by the collaborating partners daily. The organization also works with Neighbor to Neighbor to address transportation needs and with the Salida Pregnancy Center to provide usable baby furniture and clothing. Caring and Sharing is linked with the Upper Arkansas County Department of Human Services and the local police department to respond to crisis situations confronting local citizens.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The ultimate objective was to build a Community Care Center and distribution outlet for clothing, food, furniture and household goods for workforce center clients and any person coming to the organization for help. Sub-grant funds were utilized to purchase building materials to create the Center, which will also house the following CBOs/FBOs to provide more comprehensive and coordinated services and supports: Granary Ministry, Salida Pregnancy Center, and Neighbor to Neighbor. An Adult Day Services Program is also being created to care for adult family members who depend on their children or other family members for their care. Caring and Sharing will continue to collaborate with the Salida workforce center to promote job opportunities, disseminate workforce center brochures and materials, and developing a voucher system that will aid clients going to interviews to be properly attired for the new job.

Fremont County Family Center

The Fremont County Family Center was established in 1992 as one of eight Centers funded under an initiative from the Colorado Governor's Office. Since its inception the Family Center has housed a network of early childhood and family support services through partnerships with Project ECHo (Early Childhood Health and Education Outreach), a 26-year community collaboration effort. The Project ECHO and Family Center Council membership is comprised of all agencies in the Fremont County that serve young children as well as parents, businesses and interested individuals. Developmental Opportunities has been the fiscal agent for many of the Council's community programs including the Fremont County Family Center. The mission of the Fremont County Family Center is to support families through community collaboration. Its mission is

achieved through the provision of the “First Steps Parents as Teach Home Visitation Program and through its Early Head Start Program.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The three objectives of the subgrant were 1) To partner with the Beta Zeta Sorority to create Sharon’s Closet, a clothing outlet for women seeking employment to insure their success during job interviews and on the job. 2) To develop a non-intrusive tracking system to collect and analyze outcome data and to track client services and progress, and 3) to strengthen the partnership with the Fremont County workforce center to better serve county residents. The space at the Family Center was remodeled to suit the purpose of a community-clothing bank. Thirty-two feet of customized closets were purchased and installed. The closets are very attractive hard wood. Decorative latticework was installed to blend *Sharon’s Closet* into the rest of the building area. The pre-existing utility bathroom was also remodeled into a comfortable changing area and bathroom with a new vanity/sink, carpet, paint and furnishings. The Beta Zeta Sorority is the advisory council for *Sharon’s Closet*. A representative from the Beta Zeta Sorority developed a clothing inventory. Colorado Partnerships Initiative funds were also utilized to purchase a lap top computer. It was decided that a small, portable computer was needed to be most efficient with record keeping and inventory. A volunteer from the sorority developed a small database on the laptop to track basic demographics, names and addresses of clients. A Referral Card and Return Invitation Card were created to gather information and to help track use of the closet. The backside of the Referral Card contains a small demographic questionnaire combined with an inventory list of items taken from the closet for both of their visits. The backside of the Return Invitation Card is a brief evaluation/satisfaction survey that is filled out on the final visit and placed in a container by the client. The intention is to encourage true responses by having the client place the card into a container with other survey cards prior to their exit. Questions about the Closet, included in the evaluation/satisfaction survey, ask about their experience, most/least helpful, open comments and suggestions for growth for the Closet. The survey also asks where they are now employed.

Loaves and Fishes Ministries

The mission of the Loaves and Fishes Ministries is to serve those in need in Fremont County by providing food, clothing, temporary shelter, guidance, referrals and other emergency services as a community solution to national problems.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was utilized to create a place with computer equipment and on-line technology to search for jobs and family support services and to provide a space where employers could recruit and hire day labor.

Alliance Against Domestic Violence

The Alliance Against Domestic Abuse provides support counseling, crisis intervention, emergency financial assistance and legal advocacy to adult and child victims of domestic violence and sexual in Chaffee and Western Fremont counties.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The Colorado Partnerships Initiative sub-grant was utilized to purchase computers, cell phones, educational videos, books and client resources, and office furniture. Originally Alliance proposed the creation of a shelter, but was unable to achieve its initial goal due to their inability to secure a site.

Lake City Hinsdale County Chamber of Commerce

Lake City is a former mining town situated in a beautiful valley of 8,600 feet. The town reached its peak in the 1890's with 5,000 residents. The current population is 782. It is the only town in Hinsdale County, which has a total population of 4,000. The wooden boardwalks are well traveled by county residents that support the bustling restaurants, hotels and the local theatre. If you look real close you will notice that the young man that served your breakfast is busing your dishes at dinner and the young year girl that cleaned your room in the morning is washing jeeps late in the afternoon. The tourist season is short, most say only 100 days, and Lake City residents work multiple, low paying jobs. Four months later when the leaves have fallen, its hard to find an open restaurant, only a few cars ride up and down Main Street and 75% of the homes are dark until next June when the tourists return. Residents leave town at the end of the tourist season only to return to the same low-paying jobs. Despite the winter quiet, there are signs that Lake City's vitality is increasing. School attendance has increased and the facility has been expanded, a medical center has been established and there are noticeable signs of increased county marketing activities. Recreational activities, stunning natural beauty, a low crime rate, quality of life and a small school attract people to Lake City.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: Objectives of the sub-grant included partnering with the Gunnison workforce center to establish a local workforce center station, completing an assessment of training and employment needs in the community, and supporting the ability of three local students to secure summer jobs. Grants funds were utilized for the purchase of computer equipment, office furniture and supplies needed to support the station. The computer provided the necessary link to workforce center services, job listings and training opportunities. The Gunnison workforce center agreed to provide staff for the new station and the Chamber agreed to house the station at no cost for the initial six months. In completing the training and employment needs assessment 120 business owners and operators were surveyed.

Family Ties West

Family Ties West (FTW) began serving the public in January of 1996. Two elementary school teachers, the community services director, and three other aware citizens were very concerned about the neediness of some children the teachers had in their classrooms. A planning grant was written that allowed for one staff person who was housing in the old bank building downtown to provide resources and referrals for the local families and migrant families. This newly formed Family Resource Center's mission dedication to unifying and assisting families for a strong community by focusing on education, mental health, and cultural sensitivity in a way that allows the family, through their own achievements and success in the workplace, society, and at home to become self-sufficient and to contribute to the community. They words and successes here are education and job skills that contribute to the promise of employment. FTW believes that families function better as a whole unit and have watched individuals related better, when a holistic approach is used and all components are available for success through self-sufficiency. Over the past six years, FTW has proven successful in living its mission statement in serving over 1,200 clients a year. Clients have access to a variety of services including food, mental health referrals, education, information and resources, parenting classes, nutritional classes, ESL and GED classes, immigration and citizenship information, and responses and referral to employment programs.

Use of Funds and Outcomes: The objective of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative subgrant was to establish a place where clients would have access to information and direct workforce center services, including

employment and training opportunities and linkages. Sub-grant funds were utilized to support a partnership with the Mesa County workforce center to place computer workstation at the FTW facility with one station that offers services and information in Spanish and to have workforce center staff provide on-site services to FTW clients. A strategic plan was also developed to forecast long-range goals, strategies and activities and a database and tracking system with family support planning documents to better support the progress of families in achieving their goals and objectives.

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Chapter V

Building System Capacity

Over the years, workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs have achieved significant success in their respective endeavors. Although their individual achievements have been many, their collective potential is even greater. To that end, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative embarked on a mission to establish a foundation for uniting these entities, in order to maximize their ability to serve workforce clients, as well as expand and enhance services. The foundation that the Colorado Partnerships Initiative has built contains five key components:

- ◆ *Outreach to Workforce Boards, Directors and Staff.* Several presentations were made to workforce boards and directors to inform them on the Colorado Partnerships Initiative and keep them informed on new developments and events. By design, informational interviews and staff focus groups were also used to reach out to workforce directors and staff and build their alliances to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative's goals.
- ◆ *Developing Marketing and Outreach Materials.* Marketing materials were used as a swift and easy mechanism to promote the Colorado Partnerships Initiative. Brochures and flyers are examples of publications that helped to publicize the Initiative's mission.
- ◆ *Workforce Center Sub-Grants.* Grant funds were made available to all workforce regions to promote collaborations with CBOs/FBOs. Workforce center grantees engaged in a variety of activities including open houses, faith-based summits, and trainings.
- ◆ *Charitable Choice Training.* Charitable Choice training was used as a conduit to educate workforce center staff and CBOs/FBOs on the regulations applied to the use of federal funding for services. Trainings were offered at Learning Circles, focus groups and at individual meetings with workforce directors.
- ◆ *Internet Resources.* A Colorado Partnerships Initiative Web site was created to provide comprehensive tools for CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers. A variety of information regarding promising practices, training, and Charitable Choice is available, in addition to an on-line catalogue of service providers.

Each of the above-mentioned components is elaborated in the ensuing sections below.

OUTREACH

In an effort to ensure the success of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, outreach efforts were directed to cultivate relationships and expand the service network available to Colorado's workforce. Through a series of presentations to regional workforce directors and board members, a clear and unequivocal illustration of the Colorado Partnership Initiative's goals was conveyed to the targeted audience. Furthermore, these outreach efforts established a forum for dialogue and information exchange in an atmosphere that facilitated progress among the various partners. The information in the following sections provides a detailed account of the steps taken by the Colorado Partnerships Initiative.

Presentations at Regularly Scheduled Directors' Meetings

As we embarked on this project, the notion of developing a mutual understanding of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative's goals and objectives, with workforce centers around the state, was of paramount importance. To that end, meetings were initiated with a substantial number of regional directors with three objectives in mind.

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- ◆ First, clearly define the scope of the project.
 - ◆ Second, update the directors with respect to the current status of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative.
 - ◆ Third, obtain the directors' commitment to assist in the collection of data for the needs assessment and related analyses.

In Colorado, it is common practice for directors of workforce regions to convene monthly to discuss workforce issues. In addition, directors of the sub-regions that compose the Rural Consortium also meet regularly. Realizing the opportunity to address such an audience, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative staff made several presentations at these regularly scheduled meetings. Early in the Initiative, overviews of the Initiative's goals were presented. As the Colorado Partnerships Initiative progressed, other presentations were made to gain input and cooperation from the directors on capacity-building grants, regional conferences, charitable choice training and other Initiative activities. For example, at one of the regularly scheduled Rural Consortium meetings, the specific Colorado Partnerships Initiative topics were the capacity building grants and the federal outlook for future grants. At another meeting, specific Colorado Partnerships agenda items related to project deliverables and technical assistance (i.e., the status of the Web site, brochures, charitable choice presentations, and opportunities for technical assistance available to the workforce centers) were presented. In general, these regularly scheduled meetings were ideal opportunities to keep directors involved in the project without having to schedule additional meetings.

It should be noted, however, that the true success of these meetings was achieved through the valuable contributions of the regional directors themselves. The constructive exchange of ideas at each meeting was a microcosm of the cooperation needed to achieve the goals of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative.

Colorado Partnerships Initiative-Specific Meeting with Regional Directors

Although the Colorado Partnerships Initiative was frequently an agenda item at regularly scheduled directors' meetings, there was not always enough time to fully illuminate the activities and progress taking place. Consequently, a one-day meeting focusing on the Initiative was scheduled. On December 12, 2002, all workforce regional directors were invited to participate in a forum regarding the Colorado Partnership: Workforce, Faith, and Community Works! Initiative. This meeting had three main objectives:

- ◆ To discuss the strengths and challenges of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative;
- ◆ To address the relevant needs and concerns of the workforce centers as they pertain to the grant's requirements and goals; and
- ◆ To gain a regional perspective regarding the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to fund capacity building activities of small and emerging CBOs/FBOs seeking to partner with Colorado workforce centers.

The meeting commenced with a detailed overview of the grant, which included the history of the grant, federal expectations, anticipated benefits, and the responsibilities and obligations of the CDLE partners. This discussion was supplemented by a description of focus groups and Learning Circles. Finally, it should also be noted, that documentation regarding the project's summary of findings, Promising Practices and Charitable Choice were distributed to all participants.

Presentation to Boards and Board Members

Information about the Colorado Partnerships Initiative was also distributed to boards and board members. For example, a presentation was made to all of the board members of the Rural Consortium, which includes nearly 100 members, at their annual meeting. The central element of this presentation included an extensive overview of the project, with particular emphasis on the purpose and expected outcomes. Presentations at regularly scheduled regional workforce board meetings also provided additional opportunities to inform board members of the Initiative's goals and activities. For example, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative staff presented at the Southeast Regional Board Meeting. This resulted in a productive exchange regarding how the region was working with CBOs/FBOs and what they needed to continue the partnerships and foster additional partnerships.

Meetings with Directors Individually

In the early stages of the project, individual meetings were convened with workforce center directors to crystallize the directors' understanding of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, and the potential benefits for workforce clients. For example, in Broomfield County, a meeting was organized with workforce administrators and representatives from CBOs/FBOs to discuss these important issues. Furthermore, directors delved into federal and state "Charitable Choice" rules and regulations to gain a firm grasp on this integral element of the project.

As the project progressed, follow-up meetings were arranged to keep workforce center directors apprised of any new developments with respect to the project. These meetings spanned workforce centers across the state, including Lamar, Rocky Ford, Pueblo, Durango, and Cannon City. In addition, a special meeting was organized in Weld County to obtain critical feedback on data collection tools for the needs assessment and its subsequent analysis.

Brown Bag/Charitable Choice Sub-Committee Meetings

In addition to the forums mentioned above, presentations on the Colorado Partnerships Initiative were also delivered at brownbag lunches and Charitable Choice meetings. These meetings were designed to provide a brief overview of the most recent federal developments regarding CBOs/FBOs and Charitable Choice legislation.

Brown Bag. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative was the focal point of the brown bag lunch entitled "Restoring the Soul of Our Communities" at the Boulder Jewish Community Center on July 24, 2003. Approximately 40 representatives from CBOs/FBOs in attendance discussed a wide range of issues, including: the White House Faith-Based Initiative guidebook, the recently approved Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act, and Charitable Choice rules and regulations.

Charitable Choice Sub-Committee Meetings. At this event in Fort Collins, participants were presented with an overview and progress report of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, along with a Charitable Choice mini-training session. Attendees were then encouraged to pose questions regarding a variety of topics, including: project activities, the Web site, on-line service provider catalogue, and opportunities to partner with CBOs/FBOs. This sub-committee is comprised of representatives from the Larimer Department of Health and Human Services, Larimer County

Commissioner's Office, the City of Fort Collins, the Larimer Workforce Center, and faith-based organizations.

OUTREACH MATERIALS

The Colorado Partnerships Initiative developed several outreach materials, which can be found in Attachment X. This included the following.

- ◆ *A 3-fold, color brochure.* This brochure provided an overview of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative and the benefits of collaboration between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. Findings from our needs assessment indicated that there was not a clear understanding of the Colorado workforce system, and that both workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs were unaware of how and why they should collaborate.
- ◆ *Promising practices flyers.* Several flyers were developed to provide a snapshot of promising practices around the nation. Sample case studies, collaborations between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers, outreach practices and Colorado-specific partnerships were included.
- ◆ *Charitable Choice flyer.* In speaking with various workforce center directors and staff, it was apparent that most were not familiar with the Charitable Choice provision. In response, a Charitable Choice flyer was developed to outline the rules and regulations that enable CBOs/FBOs to partner with workforce centers.
- ◆ *CBO/FBO resource flyers.* These flyers provided CBOs/FBOs with the tools necessary to navigate Charitable Choice, register as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and become a service provider in the areas of mentoring, childcare, English as a Second Language, and shelters for the homeless.
- ◆ *Workforce center resource flyers.* Flyers were created for workforce centers to outline the benefits of collaborating with CBOs/FBOs as well as how to apply Charitable Choice to workforce center operations. Additionally, a separate flyer was designed to provide outreach tips to CBOs/FBOs for local Workforce Investment Boards.
- ◆ *Summaries of focus group findings.* Findings from each regional workforce staff and client focus group were compiled into a summary report, which was then distributed to the workforce center director. Each summary included a description of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative and purpose, top service needs identified, and suggested tools for forming new partnerships.

Outreach materials were distributed at Learning Circles, regional conferences, and Charitable Choice presentations. Additionally, service providers who were contacted regarding the online catalogue of services were also sent a copy of the brochure. Approximately 2,300 brochures were distributed to workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs around the state.

Brochure

The brochure is comprised of three sections: Colorado workforce centers, Benefits of Partnerships, and CBOs/FBOs. The Colorado workforce centers section explains the programs and services available at workforce centers and how the workforce centers serve both employers' and job seekers' needs. Services such as labor market information, job-hiring assistance, career counseling, and assessment are explained in more detail. The Benefits of Partnerships segment, lists several benefits derived from partnerships between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. Workforce centers are often unaware of the services CBOs/FBOs provide, and may not realize they share many common goals. Examples of common goals include: one-on-one and group mentoring, assistance in attaining self-sufficiency, employment, and training. Most

importantly, this section highlights the fact that collaboration between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs helps to create a stronger community. Lastly, examples of services that CBOs/FBOs typically provide, and populations they work with, are noted in the CBOs/FBOs section. Moreover, some of the special populations served by workforce centers are listed here to emphasize that CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers can work together to meet the specialized needs of those populations.

Promising Practices Flyers

Several promising practices were identified through published materials, state Web sites and faith-based Internet sites. National case studies regarding childcare, education, services to the homeless, job coaching/training, mentoring, and youth services were included on the promising practices flyer. A separate promising practices flyer specific to Colorado was also developed to highlight existing partnerships. Several examples were cited, such as:

- ◆ Regular meetings between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs;
- ◆ Workforce center liaisons to CBOs/FBOs;
- ◆ Training/education regarding workforce center and CBO/FBO services;
- ◆ Request for Proposal advertisements;
- ◆ On-site collaboration;
- ◆ Referral lists; and,
- ◆ Job fairs.

Information regarding additional outreach tools such as Memorandums of Understanding, vouchers and donated space was also included in the flyers.

Charitable Choice Flyer

Incorporating Charitable Choice language into contracts or Memorandums of Understanding between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs is an effective way of promoting partnerships among Workforce Investment Boards and CBOs/FBOs. With that in mind, the Charitable Choice flyer was designed to answer questions regarding the provision and how it related to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative. Specific information regarding programs Charitable Choice applies to, eligibility, allowable services, workforce client protections, and CBO/FBO protections are provided. Additionally, questions regarding the federal definition of Charitable Choice and separation of church and state are addressed.

CBO/FBO Resource Flyers

Several flyers were created to help guide CBOs/FBOs in becoming nonprofit service delivery providers. Four service areas in particular were outlined: childcare, mentoring, English as a Second Language, and shelter for the homeless. Exhibit 11 summarizes several of the suggestions that were specified for starting a new program or opening a new facility.

Exhibit 11
Sample Tips for Becoming a Service Provider

- Collect data demonstrating the community need
- Determine the target population
- Develop an action plan
- Identify resources
- Develop a monitoring tool
- Research the county or city zoning laws
- Check city and county ordinances
- Request fire and health inspection of facility
- Attain a licensing inspection

Workforce Center Resource Flyers

Findings from our needs assessment and focus groups pointed toward a desire on behalf of the workforce centers to partner with CBOs/FBOs. To help build upon this desire, a flyer was created to highlight the benefits of collaborating with CBOs/FBOs including:

- ◆ Broadening outreach to difficult to reach populations;
- ◆ Expanding the network of supportive service providers;
- ◆ Eliminating barriers; and,
- ◆ Connecting with youth.

As a supplementary tool, a separate flyer was fashioned to help local Workforce Investment Boards reach out to CBOs/FBOs. Several outreach suggestions were offered such as: developing an educational outreach campaign, networking, developing a Web site, appointing local CBO/FBO community members to the Board, developing public relations and newsletters. Additionally, a Charitable Choice flyer was composed to clarify when and how Charitable Choice applies to workforce centers.

Summaries of Focus Group Findings

Several common themes were derived from the focus groups that were conducted with workforce clients and staff. The top service needs from each workforce region were compiled into a summary sheet that was then used to identify opportunities for partnership among workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs.

COLORADO PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE WEB SITE

As part of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, a Web site was developed (www.coworkforcepartners.com) to provide a forum for news, information, and guidelines to help foster collaboration between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers. The creation of the Web site was announced at all learning circles and regional conferences, and the Web site address was printed on brochures that were distributed to workforce centers and service providers around the state. A letter was also sent out to all service providers contacted regarding the on-line catalogue informing them of the Web site.

The Colorado Partnerships Initiative Web site provides information on best practices, tools for collaboration, Charitable Choice training materials, Learning Circle summaries, and a catalog of over 800 community- and faith-based service providers. There were over 700 visits to the Web site in the last month of the project.

Promising Practices

The Promising Practices section is broken down into three categories:

- ◆ Promising Practices Report
- ◆ Promising Practices in Colorado
- ◆ Case Studies

The Promising Practices Report developed by the Colorado Partnerships Initiative details promising practices in other states that have actively promoted collaborations between their workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. The report cites several examples of national research on formal partnerships between government agencies and CBO/FBO service providers and discusses the different types of financial collaborations that exist between them. In compiling the list of best practices, examples from our site visits to three states — Texas, California, and New Jersey — as well as our interviews with state and local program directors around the country were included. The Promising Practices document accounts for over 60% of the total downloaded files from the Web site.

In reviewing the materials we gathered from selected workforce centers around the state and from discussions with regional directors, we compiled a list of best practices that highlight working relationships between Colorado’s workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. Examples include regular meetings with CBOs/FBOs, on-site collaboration, educating CBOs/FBOs about workforce center services and educating workforce centers about services CBOs/FBOs can provide, referral lists, and job fairs.

Case studies related to childcare, education, services to the homeless, job coaching/training, mentoring, and youth services are also posted. The studies were identified through published materials, state Web sites and faith-based internet sites.

Tools For Collaboration

Recommended tools for collaboration are organized into three groupings: workforce centers, CBOs/FBOs, and employers. Exhibit 12 highlights examples of information that can be found in each category:

Exhibit 12 Tools for Collaboration		
<u>Tools for Workforce Centers</u>	<u>Tools for CBOs/FBOs</u>	<u>Tools for Employers</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best Practices• Workforce Center Outreach• Workforce Investment Board Outreach• Charitable Choice and How It Applies to workforce centers• Benefits of Collaborating with CBOs/FBOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing Charitable Choice• Opening a Daycare Center• Starting an ESL Program• Registering as a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization• Opening a Homeless Shelter• Starting a Mentoring Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work Opportunity Tax Credit Federal Bonding Program

Charitable Choice

The Charitable Choice provision, establishes regulations regarding the use of Federal funds for the purchase of services from non-profit, community-based and religious, faith-based organizations. The provision was

designed to eliminate barriers that may prevent government entities from working with CBOs/FBOs and is a vital component of any form of collaboration between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. Answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Charitable Choice provision such as Charitable Choice regulations, services provided, CBO/FBO protections, and customer/client protections can be found on the Web site. A Charitable Choice PowerPoint presentation is also accessible through this site. A copy of the Charitable Choice PowerPoint presentation can be found in Attachment IX.

Learning Circle Summaries

Learning Circles have taken place in 14 workforce regions across the state bringing representatives from workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs together to share information and resources. A community assessment was conducted for 16 regions and Community Collaboration Action Teams were formed to work on specific needs identified at each meeting. Summaries of these meetings and information on future learning circles can be accessed via the Web site.

On-line Catalogue

The Colorado Partnerships Initiative has assembled a list of service providers and services available in Colorado in the form of an on-line catalogue. CBOs/FBOs were contacted primarily by phone to gauge their interest in submitting information to the on-line catalogue. CBO/FBO representatives were asked to enter into a service agreement and provide information regarding their programs and services either via phone, mail, fax, or email. The response to the on-line catalogue and its feature was overwhelmingly positive.

Currently, there are over **800** service agreements for the on-line catalogue

The catalogue has the capacity to search for specific services by region and provider, and is available to all groups including workforce clients, workforce centers and service providers. Users may search for service providers in over 50 categories listed in Exhibit 13. Service providers may register their organization and add their profile to the database through the Web site at any time. Once registered, a service provider can update and edit their profile anytime and post notices on the Calendar of Events. Users are encouraged to check the calendar regularly, which lists current events sponsored by the service providers. Currently, there are over 800 service providers listed and over 50% of visitors to the site have logged on to the catalogue.

Exhibit 13 Service Provider Categories	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse Counseling • Adult Day Care • Agriculture • Auto Repairs • Budgeting • Career Counseling • Child Care • Child Protection • Clothing • Colleges • Community Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Jobs • Labor Marker Information • Legal issues • Marriage Counseling • Mediation Negotiation • Medical Assistance • Meeting Space • Mental health services • Mentoring • Parenting

Exhibit 13
Service Provider Categories

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer Training• Counseling• Disability Services• Education• Emergency Shelter• Employment Assistance• English as a Second Language• Ex-Offender Services• Family Planning• Federal Bonding• Food• Furniture• GED• Health• Homeowner Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refugee Services• Rental assistance• Resume Skills• Substance Abuse issues• Support Groups• Training• Transportation• Tutoring• Unemployment Insurance• Utilities• Veteran's Benefits• Victim services• Work Opportunity Tax Credit• Youth Services
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Conducting a search is a very simple, user-friendly process. The screens below walk through an example of searching for employment assistance in Pueblo County.

Step 1: Click on the Pueblo Region in the map of Colorado;

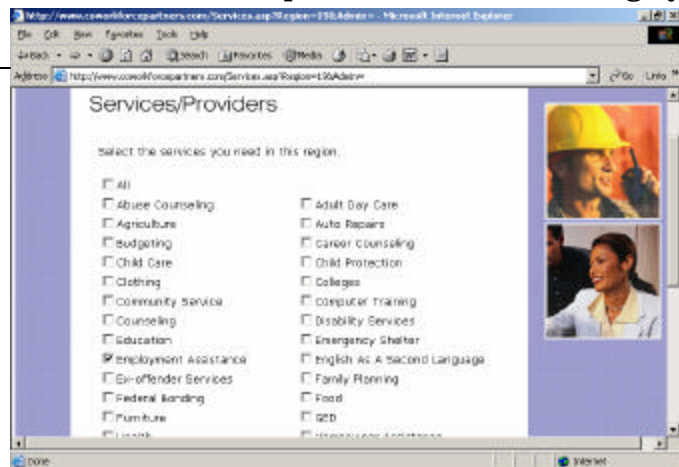
Step 2: Check the box for "Employment Assistance" in the list of service categories; and

Step 3: Receive a list of organizations providing Employment Assistance in the Pueblo Region.

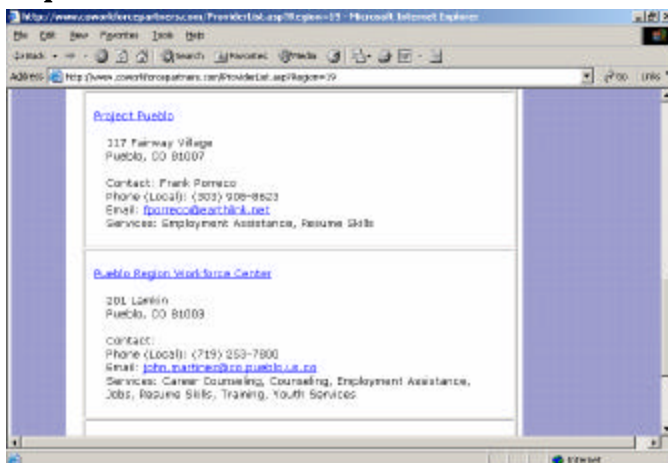
Step 1 – Select a Region



Step 2 – Choose a Service Category



Step 3 – Receive a List of Service Providers



GRANTS TO WORKFORCE CENTERS

Universal access has been a key goal of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative. As a way of helping workforce regions increase communication and collaboration between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs, grant funds were made available to all workforce regions in the amount of \$3,000. The purpose of the grant funds was to help strengthen and build relationships between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs and increase their ability to work together and partner effectively. Sixteen workforce regions applied for funding and submitted a variety of innovative ideas to enhance partnerships with CBOs/FBOs in each area.

The following are samples of activities and projects that were proposed.

1. *Open Houses* – Invite local CBOs/FBOs to come to the workforce center and learn more about programs and services available.
2. *Informational Meetings/Focus Groups* – Conduct informational meetings and focus groups between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs to help increase understanding of how each organization operates.
3. *Community Mapping Session* – Organize a Community Mapping session to provide CBOs/FBOs with effective tools to create and strengthen relationships with workforce centers.
4. *Faith-Based & Community Initiatives Summit* – Gather workforce center staff and CBO/FBO representatives to discuss community needs and share ideas for collaboration.
5. *Staff Training* – Provide training to workforce center staff on the identification and utilization of CBO/FBO program services.
6. *CBO/FBO Outreach Consultant* – Hire a consultant to conduct outreach and develop relationships with CBOs/FBOs.

Workforce centers began work on grant activities almost immediately, resulting in highly successful project outcomes. Below is a brief summary of events that took place in Larimer, Broomfield, Boulder, Southeast Region, and Pikes Peak.

Regional Summit

The Larimer County Workforce Center organized a Faith-Based & Community Initiatives Summit entitled *Rising To The Challenge: Doing Together What We Can't Do Separately*, which took place on May 29th, 2003. The summit was organized with the intention of (1) creating a stronger network among CBOs/FBOs and government agencies in Larimer County; (2) enhancing responsiveness to human needs in Larimer County; and, (3) “doing together what we cannot do separately”. The event was very well attended and had representatives from the cities of Estes Park, Loveland, and Ft. Collins. In total, there were 136 individuals that attended and approximately 67 FBOs represented.

The philosophy and model of the ensuing activities was based on Appreciative Inquiry Theory. This is a strength-based perspective that focuses on what is working in the community. The idea was to identify what programs/services have been successful and try to build upon them or replicate them. As part of the afternoon session, a panel of CBO/FBO representatives addressed the attendees and each stated what they thought to be the biggest need in their community. Panel members included representatives from Neighbor to Neighbor, Larimer County Workforce Center, Catholic Charities Northern, FirstCall, Crossroads

Ministries, and House of Neighborly Services. Among the needs listed were: rental assistance including first and last month's rent, emergency shelter, help with utility bills, food, money management training, job mentoring, transportation, and funding to keep current services in operation.

The summit ended with a short wrap-up and it was announced that Larimer County would try to sponsor a faith-based summit each year. As a follow-up to the summit a debrief meeting was planned with approximately 20 people in attendance to determine next steps. The meeting was quite a success and the following next steps were outlined:

Larimer County will:

1. Identify a document or assessment tool in order to gather a profile about various organizations and a contact person.
2. Create a list-serve that will facilitate informal communication and networking.
3. Publish a newsletter to include information about what is happening and what is being planned in the near future, date for the next gathering, etc.
4. Hold another Planning Meeting for those interested in continuing discussion about maintaining momentum.
5. Hold a "Services Fair" in which organizations can share what they do, help people connect, and provide knowledge about resources.
6. Hold a discussion session and identify parameters for how faith-based organizations and governmental entities can work together. Identify roles and responsibilities of each, boundaries for each, how funding can work and not work, constraints on government agencies, etc.
7. Educate the community about the Initiative.

Enhanced Outreach to FBOs

The experience of the Broomfield Workforce Center provides some important lessons on how to reach out to CBOs/FBOs in the community and subsequently draw interest in the program. The Workforce Center Director suggested that a more personal approach would be most appropriate. In response, the Workforce Center utilized the Colorado Partnerships Initiative funds to hire a consultant to meet one-on-one with faith-based organizations located in Broomfield County. This consultant met individually with approximately twenty faith-based organizations over a two-month period to introduce and explain the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, and the role the Workforce Center plays in the community. While most of the organizations were not familiar with the concept of a workforce center, the vast majority found the information to be both relevant to their congregation/membership and enlightening.

Overall, both the Workforce Center and faith-based organizations considered this outreach effort and approach to initial contact in Broomfield County, as groundbreaking. Not only did this initiative educate the faith-based community about the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, but FBOs were also introduced to the possibilities of partnering and collaborating with a workforce center. Prior to this work, most faith-based organizations were unaware that partnerships could be formed. Only a very few stated that they were not interested in any type of collaboration, but overall most were very open to the idea.

One church in particular took great interest in the Colorado Partnerships Initiative and applied for a Compassion Capital Grant to form a job club. While, unfortunately, the church did not ultimately receive any

funding towards this goal, the effort alone represented how an important step in fostering interest in partnerships between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers had been taken through this Initiative.

Strengthening and Expanding an Existing Network

The Boulder Workforce Center decided the best use of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative funds would come from partnering with Volunteer Connections, a project sub-grantee, to work jointly on reaching out to local churches in Boulder County. By joining forces with a well-known community-based organization, the Workforce Center was able to reach out to a wider network of both CBOs/FBOs. Together, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative funds were utilized for the following purposes: to purchase a computer, create a database, administer a survey to faith-based organizations, expand “Project Work Together” to faith-based organizations, and organize monthly brown-bag lunches.

For the creation of the database, an individual was hired to contact all the local faith-based organizations in Boulder County and gather information regarding location, contact information, and services provided. Once the database was completed, a follow up survey was administered to faith-based organizations to identify their interest in existing volunteer opportunities in Boulder County. In total, about 120 organizations responded to the survey. A few churches in particular expressed an interest in mentoring and were referred to the Workforce Center to learn more about the mentoring program “Project Work Together.”⁵ Currently, there are approximately 12 volunteers from faith-based organizations across the County that will be taking part in the mentoring program. Participating faith-based organizations include the Buddhist Coalition, Methodist Church, Calvary Baptist Church, and the Baha’i of Lafayette. Two training sessions are scheduled to take place in the upcoming months.

Lastly, there were five brown bag lunches held at different sites each month to discuss topics such as: Charitable Choice, community needs, volunteer management, and funding opportunities. The brown bag series was a great success in linking faith-based organizations to other community-based organizations and the Workforce Center and facilitating the exploration of opportunities for collaboration.

Hosting an Open House

The Southeast and Pikes Peak Regions both used their grant funding to host open houses. Overall, in both cases, the open house helped gain more exposure for the workforce center and was an effective marketing tool in reaching out to both CBOs/FBOs in the region.

Southeast Workforce Region. In the Southeast Workforce Region, the Workforce Center partnered with the Lamar Public Library, a sub-grantee, to organize and promote an open house. The event, aimed at raising awareness among the community regarding resources available to help families and individuals become employable. Over fifty individuals, including students from the local community college, attended the open house, which was held at the library. In total, there were 11 vendor booths with information about the services they offer including: Fresh Start Ministries, Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language, Lifelong Learning, BOCES of Southeastern Colorado, and the Public Library. Attendees spoke at length with each vendor to learn more about the services available and were also shown the education videos and

⁵ The program primarily serves TANF customers but is open to any individual that has received at least one cash payment since 1996.

workbooks the library purchased with funding from the sub-grant. Several agencies represented stated they had already made use of the videos and workbooks and found them to be extremely valuable.

Pikes Peak Workforce Region. Similarly, applying the open house design, the Pikes Peak Workforce Center prepared an invitation only event specifically aimed at CBO/FBO leaders. The rationale was that it was important to educate organizational leaders on the services the Workforce Center provides, so they could go back and tell their staff. The Workforce Center worked closely with Faith Partners to obtain lists of faith-based organizations in the community and sent out over 250 invitations.

Approximately thirty-five representatives from both CBOs/FBOs were in attendance and each received a tour of the Workforce Center. Attendees were informed of the various programs and services that exist for job seekers and were also shown how to register a customer online. By and large, the Workforce Center felt the open house was a great success in raising awareness in the community regarding workforce programs as well as raising morale among staff. Since the date of the open house, a small number of community-based organizations, not previously affiliated with the Workforce Center, have called to request a tour and additional information.

CHARITABLE CHOICE

As part of the Colorado Partnerships: Workforce, Faith and Community Works Initiative, Charitable Choice trainings were conducted with the intent of educating both workforce center staff and CBOs/FBOs on the regulations regarding the use of Federal funds for the purchase of services from non-profit, community based and religious, faith-based organizations. Formal training was presented at Learning Circles, brown bag lunches, and regional conferences around the state, in addition to informal presentations given at staff trainings and focus group meetings.

At each Charitable Choice presentation, attendees were provided with a range of handouts, which included information on the following:

- ◆ Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Charitable Choice
- ◆ Charitable Choice Regulations
- ◆ How Charitable Choice Applies to Workforce Centers
- ◆ How CBOs/FBOs Can Implement Charitable Choice
- ◆ WIA Service Information

As the basis for each presentation, it was explained that Charitable Choice was designed to eliminate barriers that may prevent government entities from working with CBOs/FBOs, and allow faith-based organizations to compete for federal and state grants while protecting their religious integrity. Though there is no federal definition of a faith-based organization, it was clarified that if an organization defines itself as a faith-based organization, they are treated as such.

All training, formal and informal, included a brief explanation of the programs to which Charitable Choice applies, and when the regulations apply. Services that CBOs/FBOs can provide under Charitable Choice were also emphasized, such as job counseling, job readiness training, General Equivalency Degree (GED) training, English as a Second Language (ESL), drug and alcohol treatment, and food pantries.

Another important component of each presentation was a thorough explanation of the protections Charitable Choice guarantees to workforce clients and CBOs/FBOs. The following information was highlighted, and included on the frequently asked questions handout:

Charitable Choice protects the religious liberty of clients by ensuring:

- ◆ A secular alternate service provider is available for services provided by an FBO.

If an eligible individual is not comfortable or objects to receiving assistance or services from a contracted FBO, the governmental agency must provide that individual with an alternate provider within a reasonable amount of time (this only applies to programs currently covered by Charitable Choice). The government agency is not required to contract with an alternate provider, but must be able to offer the same service to eligible individuals, either through an informal or voucher agreement with the alternate provider.

- ◆ Provision of services without religious discrimination.

Government funded services must be offered to everyone regardless of religious belief or affiliation.

- ◆ Customers/clients cannot be required to participate in religious activities as a condition to receive services.

Charitable Choice protects the religious integrity of faith-based providers by allowing:

- ◆ Autonomy and control of organizational mission.

- ◆ The right to display religious art/symbols.

- ◆ Use of religious criteria in hiring and firing employees⁶.

FBOs that accept a contract funded by one of the covered programs mentioned previously to which Charitable Choice applies, are exempt from the Civil Rights Act regarding employee recruitment and hiring practices (e.g., can hire only those who are members of their religion or who meet other religious criteria); however, they are not exempt from its other provisions (e.g., age, race, gender, disability etc). This provision is not applicable to WIA.

- ◆ Limited financial audits

CBOs/FBOs may establish a separate account for federal monies received, thus subjecting only this account to a government audit.

The concluding point of each presentation explained that Charitable Choice does not violate separation of church and state. Indeed, attendees were cautioned that government funds may not be used to sponsor religious activities or proselytization, and that funding must fulfill a social service goal, specifically, that of helping individuals become independent. In conclusion, a list of references was distributed (Exhibit 14) and attendees were encouraged to consult the Colorado Partnerships Web site for more information.

The response to each presentation was extremely positive, and several attendees stated that they gained a much greater understanding of Charitable Choice. In some cases, attendees requested to have additional

⁶ <http://www.cpjustice.org/charitablechoice/guide/>

information sent to their organization, while others requested that a Charitable Choice presentation be given at a conference sponsored by the attendee at a later date.

SUMMARY

As evidenced by our success, a clear and high profile commitment to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative mission was key. In order to establish working relationships between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers beyond the ones already in existence, it was important to cultivate relations with representatives from both sides and provide them with the necessary tools. Of equal importance was the respect and dedication shown by both CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers in collaborating together to make the Colorado Partnerships Initiative a reality. Our hope is that the Colorado Partnerships Initiative has provided the groundwork for sustained partnerships and collaboration between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers.

Exhibit 14 Charitable Choice References
<p>CENTER FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE (http://www.cpjustice.org/charitablechoice). The Center for Public Justice is an independent education and policy research organization. It is a resource and information guide to navigating Charitable Choice and provides many links to related articles.</p>
<p>FAITH BASED COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (http://www.faithbasedcommunityinitiatives.org). FaithBasedCommunityInitiatives.org. is designed to circulate information about the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), and assist new and existing Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to apply and qualify for competitive Federal Funding.</p>
<p>HUDSON INSTITUTE (http://www.hudsonfaithincommunities.org/intermediaries.html). The Hudson Institute has launched a Faith in Communities initiative to research articles, studies, and ministry models currently in place.</p>
<p>URBAN INSTITUTE (http://www.urban.org) The Urban Institute is a policy research organization, which examines policy changes, cost/benefit analysis, effects, and comparative models. They have published numerous articles related to faith-based organizations in the nonprofit sector.</p>
<p>USDOL, CENTER FOR FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (http://www.dol.gov/cfbci). The USDOL has established a new center to provide resources to facilitate the link between employment and training programs and service providers that are faith-based or community organizations. The Web site also publishes announcements for grant opportunities.</p>
<p>WELFARE INFORMATION NETWORK (http://www.welfareinfo.org/implementingcharitablechoiceIN.htm). The Welfare Information Network provides information on policy decisions, promising practices, program and financial data, funding sources, federal and state legislation and plans, program and management tools, and technical assistance. They have published various articles related to Charitable Choice.</p>
<p>THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/mission.html) Created by Executive Order, the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives exists as a resource to, and an advocate for, faith-based and community organizations. These groups need help attracting resources, gaining access to federal programs, and finding help rather than hurdles when learning how to work with government.</p>

Chapter VI

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The Colorado Partnerships Initiative has taught us many lessons about implementing a statewide initiative to support the development of partnerships between local workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. These lessons included the identification of effective processes and strategies for supporting these partnerships, the strengths and challenges of the local partnerships among workforce and CBOs/FBOs, and finally systemic factors that contribute to and challenge the success of these partnerships. As these partnerships evolve and strengthen, understanding the keys to their continued success is of paramount importance. This chapter identifies and discusses several lessons we have learned through the course of this Initiative. It then identifies some next steps that we believe are needed to further expand CBO/FBO capacity, sustain partnerships and continue to realize success.

LESSONS LEARNED

Effective Strategies and Supports

Lesson 1: Community needs assessments, when conducted and reviewed in a community forum such as a Learning Circle setting, are essential tools in assisting workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs to identify common concerns and forge common strategies.

Prior to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, many workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs had no experience working together and furthermore did not have the basic understanding of each other's structure, services, or processes that were needed to forge a partnership. Community needs assessments provided workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs with a mutual understanding of the community, environment, and critical needs. Utilizing Learning Circles as a model for conducting and reviewing these community needs assessments also provided workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs with an opportunity to examine issues and needs related to funding, training, public awareness, marketing, and each organizations' resources and services. These early dialogues provided a foundation for identifying common strategies, clarifying partnership roles and responsibilities and building trust. By highlighting the gap between the needs of the community and the resources available, a catalyst for change was created.

An example of the success of this strategy occurred in Pueblo, a community with a minimal history of partnerships between the workforce center and local CBOs/FBOs. During the initial Learning Circle dialogues in which participants reviewed the results of their community needs assessment and mapped their collective resources and services, workforce centers learned of local CBOs such as the Bethel United Methodist Church, La Familia Fuerte, Cesar Chavez Academy, and Hope for Children that were either providing GED, ESL and other basic adult education needed for job readiness or that shared an interest in offering these support services. CBOs and FBOs that participated in the learning circles also learned more specifics on the levels of quality and the types of support services that clients needed to successfully access the services of the workforce center including the need to increase basic reading levels, resume preparation, interviewing skills and work ethics that are needed to obtain and retain jobs. The director of Pueblo WorkLinks participated in every learning circle beginning with the very first gathering where he shared and requested support on the need to increase basic reading levels among existing and new clients to read at an 8th

grade level. Two of the sub-grantees, Bethel United Methodist Church and the Cesar Chavez Academy responded directly to this request for creating the space within their facilities and collaborating with other CBOs/FBOs to provide classroom instruction in basic reading and math. This new understanding of how each partner's services might complement each other allowed CBOs/FBOs to further hone their service strategies to begin to build specific identified competencies and provide the workforce center with additional resources to refer clients who came to them, but did not have the job readiness skills to immediately access their job placement services.

Lesson 2: To build effective partnerships and a sustainable network, there must be wide-ranging and multiple opportunities for dialogue among workforce centers, CBOs, and FBOs, which requires an initial level of coordination and facilitative support.

This Colorado Partnerships Initiative provided the impetus, resources, coordination, and facilitative support necessary to form an initial network and begin to develop partnerships. The initial development of a community network and partnerships, where none existed, can be a time and resource intensive process. Having the resources to secure a neutral convener and facilitator who has the credibility and skills to convene stakeholders and facilitate multiple opportunities for relationship and trust building can be critical to the initial success or failure of a fledgling network and budding partnerships. Once the network and partnerships are initially launched, having ongoing support to conduct critical assessments, coordinate communication, and disseminate information for a period of development is equally important. Critical elements of the Colorado Partnerships Initiative that provided this support included Learning Circles, Community Action Teams, regional conferences and open houses. Each of these forums created opportunities for engaging community stakeholders, developing a common understanding of community needs, building a network to address community needs, sharing information, and building the capacity of CBOs/FBOs as service providers and workforce resources. By convening these forums, the process of consensus building helped to accelerate the formation of CBO/FBO partnerships with workforce centers. Having the resources to provide such critical start-up services as convening, facilitating, assessment, and coordination of communication over the course of the year allowed the networks and partnerships to develop the critical relationships, protocols, and infrastructure and to build their own capacity so that they could assume the responsibilities of self-facilitation and sustain the partnerships that were developed.

Lesson 3: Providing partners with an initial level of common marketing and outreach materials, training opportunities, and tools advanced the understanding of the Initiative's goals and provided the "how-to" information that CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers needed to move forward in developing a common language and approach.

All partners were provided with an initial orientation to the Colorado Partnerships Initiative components and requirements and provided with related research and resources during Learning Circles. Written materials provided to all partners at the orientation included brochures, informational handouts, research, and concrete examples of promising practices. Brochures and other materials helped reinforce the Initiative's goals and objectives. Several of the most useful informational handouts dealt with (1) tools for collaboration, (2) Charitable Choice provisions, and (3) examples of promising practices. Orientation information and materials relating to the capacity-building grant were kept simple and used non-jargon language so that someone outside of government could easily understand the terminology. CBOs/FBOs and workforce staff appreciated the straightforward materials and referred to them throughout the Colorado Partnerships Initiative. Providing this initial orientation to all partners helped create a common understanding of Initiative

goals in relation to unique community context and each partner's resources and needs. This process of providing common educational opportunities to help build the partnerships was continued with the provision of common training and capacity building opportunities through the remainder of the Initiative.

Lesson 4: Capacity-building grants are useful in equipping CBOs/FBOs to become active partners with workforce centers.

Many CBOs/FBOs, while eager to partner with local workforce centers, lacked key equipment, technology, supplies and skills to be effective. In addition to the multiplicity of capacity building opportunities offered to the local networks and partnerships, specific capacity building grants were available for individual CBO and FBO partners to build their capacity to participate in effective partnerships. Many of the grants awarded were in response to specific needs identified in earlier assessments including technology upgrades, accounting and client tracking software, job readiness skill building software programs such as ABE or ESL support services software, and educational materials. In addition, several CBOs/FBOs leveraged their capacity building grants to obtain in-kind services from their community to install and maintain new equipment purchased.

Capacity building grants were an effective tool in helping CBOs/FBOs become (1) more effective and efficient service providers, (2) more innovative in designing and delivering services, and (3) better able to communicate with workforce centers. The grant-making process itself was also viewed as a capacity-building tool in that those CBOs/FBOs who participated gained practical experience and feedback on their grant-writing skills, budget development, and reporting. So even those CBOs/FBOs that were not selected for the subgrants learned something through the grant process, including improving their grant-writing skills and developing better communication linkages with workforce centers.

Strengths and Challenges of Local Workforce and CBO/FBO Partnerships

Lesson 5: CBOs/ FBOs need and want technical assistance in order to become effective partners for workforce centers.

CBOs/FBOs need and want technical assistance to strengthen their ability to write grants, keep records, maintain their accounts, and evaluate their services. Several CBOs/FBOs are doing admirable work and want to pool resources with workforce centers, but they lack the internal administrative capacity needed to be effective partners. This was one reason that the free technical assistance provided through the Initiative was well received and why there were numerous requests for more technical assistance. These additional requests came from two sources:

- CBOs/FBOs who had received some initial technical assistance and were ready for more advanced assistance. That is, they had mastered some skills (e.g., basic record keeping) and were now ready to move to the next level (e.g., using automated tools more effectively for their record keeping).
- CBOs and FBOs who had heard about the benefits of the technical assistance from others and wanted some assistance for their own organization.

The level of interest demonstrates the willingness and desire of CBOs/FBOs to be viable and efficient resources to the workforce system. The community assessment process that both CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers participated in initially helped CBOs and FBOs understand what was most needed to bolster their effectiveness from the perspective of the workforce centers and thus focus on the most critical

capacity building needs. Examples of this included building specific capacity in helping clients with specific support services toward job readiness, including training on coaching clients in resume writing, literacy, and other needed job skills in addition to services CBOs/FBOs were already providing such as GED and ESL. The provision of this technical assistance in conjunction with the capacity building grants was an optimal model for building capacity in a short period of time.

Lesson 6: Some workforce centers already have effective partnerships with CBOs and FBOs.

When we discuss new collaborative efforts that have emerged from the Colorado Partnerships Initiative, it is important to keep in mind that several CBOs and FBOs have established successful relationships with workforce centers that are mutually beneficial. We can learn from these long-standing and successful partnerships, particularly in how to establish these relationships with new CBOs/FBOs and how to design and implement an integrated service delivery network.

Some of the characteristics of successful workforce and CBO/FBO partnerships that have been identified through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative include: a reciprocal level of understanding on both partner's organizations; creating regular, intentional opportunities for communication; having formalized partnerships with clearly defined roles; and sharing resources including co-location of offices or staff. Partnerships were successful when both partners were familiar with each other's organization, services, strategies, mandates, and approach and were able to make appropriate referrals. Successful partnerships also maintained regular, intentional communications channels to discuss changing needs and demographics, service delivery strategies, and the health and functioning of the partnership. Many successful partnerships also had formalized agreements and protocols for providing services, which included agreements for compensation, agreements on standard approaches and levels of quality in service delivery, and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities. Finally, a successful model that was pioneered and expanded through the Colorado Partnerships Initiative is the development of "satellite" workforce centers that are co-located within CBOs/FBOs. These satellite offices provide increased access to clients in rural areas in which transportation may be a key barrier to accessing existing full-service centers. Satellite offices were established in Lake City and Salida and included an onsite computer with access to the same web-based databases and software as the full-service sites. Workforce centers also agreed to provide staff for these satellite sites on a limited basis. The CBOs/FBOs provided space and support to clients with the training they received from the workforce staff.

Systemic Factors Support and Challenge the Development of Effective Partnerships

Lesson 7: The Internet is an effective means to share information and connect resources, however the digital divide remains a real challenge for partnerships in rural areas.

The multi-purpose website developed for the Initiative proved to be a valuable resource. The on-line service directory, for example, connects workforce clients to services and provides useful referrals to workforce staff. It has an interactive component that allows service providers to update the information in the directory about their organization when staff or services change. The website also was a quick, efficient and cost-effective means of distributing information about the Initiative to interested parties. It included all of the information developed for the project (e.g., best practices, findings from Learning Circles, agendas for regional workshops, Charitable Choice training) and provided links to other websites of interest (e.g., the USDOL's Center for Faith Based and Community Initiatives).

Making this service available to clients in both workforce centers and CBO/FBO partners was a key focus of much of the capacity building efforts, particularly as it relates to the establishment of satellite offices. With the establishment of satellite offices, many clients were able to access an unprecedented level of service from their workforce center through the Internet, transcending previous barriers of geography and transportation. It also allowed CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers to share and update information with ease. However, there continue to be infrastructure challenges for rural communities in accessing the Internet on a reliable basis. Many smaller communities lack the infrastructure necessary for consistent, high speed access. In addition, many CBOs/FBOs lack the technical expertise to maintain their computer equipment, develop and maintain a network, and assist clients who have no previous experience working on computers.

Lesson 8: It is important to foster partnerships at the local and regional levels, but encourage regions to share information and learn from each other.

Optimal collaboration is achieved through grassroots involvement that is defined by local needs. The central idea is to design a partnership and collaborative effort with local partners while learning from others. The Colorado Partnerships Initiative started with Learning Circles and Action Teams, which were locally based and aligned to Workforce Investment Board region boundaries. The Learning Circles focused on developing solutions to local issues and leveraging resources to strengthen local service delivery.

The Initiative also sponsored four Regional Conferences, held in various parts of the State, and open to anyone from any jurisdiction. These conferences were occasions to share information from the various regions and learn what the local action teams were developing and what activities they were supporting to address their local needs.

Lesson 9: States and the federal government play a crucial role in supporting regional partnerships.

Partnerships obviously will not be successful without local support. However, support from the State and federal government is necessary to connect local efforts, provide leadership, facilitate information sharing, and create a vision. The State has the capacity to connect regions, maintain the website, and serve as a clearinghouse for outreach materials and other information. More importantly, however, the State in cooperation with the federal government, must provide the leadership needed to encourage partnerships to form. This leadership can include providing incentives for workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs that successfully collaborate; assess current mandates and reporting standards in light of lessons learned around effective partnership building to ensure maximum flexibility and support for partnerships; encourage identification of common standards of quality and approaches in the delivery of support services to build job readiness skills; and the continued provision of financial resources to support collaboration building and partnerships in addition to direct services to clients.

The workforce regions are part of a greater whole and they need to understand this and know that the State and federal government support them in their efforts and mission. Attorney General John Ashcroft's personal visit to Colorado on behalf of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is an example of how that support can be manifested. Many of the FBOs and workforce regional representatives who heard him speak were inspired by his visit and comments. More of this support is needed to energize CBOs/FBOs and workforce staff at the regional level into action.

Lesson 10: Existing partnerships between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs need to engage even broader sectors of the community to address the most challenging needs.

Many of the most challenging systemic factors and community needs identified could not be addressed by the partnerships formed in this Initiative between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs. These included broader issues of economic development, creation of a living wage, and the increase in the number of people who are unemployed and in need of services due to Colorado's economic downturn. Building on the lessons learned and success of the partnerships established between workforce centers and CBOs/FBOs it may be useful for those partners to begin to engage broader community partners such as local government, regional economic development councils, civic and business organizations, and chambers of commerce in the same process of community needs assessment and joint resource development.

Lesson 11: It is important to involve Workforce Boards, Directors, and staff throughout the process.

From the early stages of project implementation, it is important to work with the full range of workforce community stakeholders. We found that CBOs/FBOs are enthusiastic about working with local workforce Investment Boards and Directors to develop strategies to collaborate with one another. Yet, we should not lose sight of the fact that we are building the capacity of CBOs/FBOs so they can be a resource to the workforce system. With this in mind, workforce directors, staff and board members must be active partners in all stages of the Initiative.

NEXT STEPS

There are several next steps that we believe would be useful to help support and sustain CBO/FBO collaboration with workforce centers. Below, we highlight some of those steps.

Step 1: Establish Intermediaries

Intermediary organizations can serve as a bridge between government and CBOs/FBOs and thus enhance the quality and increase the quantity of CBO/FBO participation in the community. For example, they can help small CBOs/FBOs with grant writing, be a voice for them within the community, coordinate service delivery, and provide the organizational infrastructure that small organizations often lack initially.

Step 2: Host Additional Conferences

There are several benefits to organizing ongoing conferences that bring CBOs, FBOs and government agencies together. First, they are a forum for sharing information with participants about federal funding opportunities, Charitable Choice, and best practices. Second, they provide a venue for CBOs/FBOs to learn about the needs and resources available in the community. Finally, they give workforce staff an opportunity to meet with CBO/FBO representatives and discuss the nature of their respective services and identify how to fill gaps in service needs.

Step 3: Conduct Faith-Based Summits

FBOs face very different challenges than CBOs and would welcome a forum to discuss the challenges and possible responses to them. Faith-based summits create an opportunity for representatives from diverse religious backgrounds to come together and explore public/private partnerships in a constructive setting.

Step 4: Deliver Periodic Charitable Choice Training to Workforce Staff

Charitable Choice training will help facilitate the formation of partnerships between CBOs/FBOs and workforce centers. Charitable Choice provisions offer explicit protections for FBOs and workforce clients and they lay the groundwork for collaboration . Until FBOs are fully integrated into the workforce system, periodic Charitable Choice training would help educate workforce staff about the opportunities to work with and benefits of working with CBOs and FBOs to expand the range of services available.

Step 5: Provide Additional Funding

Building capacity takes time and cannot be rushed. Additional funding is needed to continue strengthening the capacity of CBOs and FBOs to address workforce needs better. Strategic planning, board development and proposal writing are just a few examples of capacity building measures that additional funds could help support.

Step 6: Deliver Further Technical Assistance to CBOs/FBOs

More technical assistance is needed to help CBOs/FBOs effectively access funding sources, operate and manage their programs, develop and train staff, replicate promising programs, and expand the reach of their programs into the community. There is also a need for different levels of technical assistance depending on the history of the organization. For example, the technical assistance needed by a CBO with no service delivery experience is different from a FBO with service delivery experience.

In conclusion, the Colorado Partnerships Initiative has been a useful first step in helping build the capacity of CBOs/FBOs to be a resource to Colorado workforce. Yet, it is only a first step and more needs to be done if we want CBOs and FBOs to become true and long-term partners with workforce centers.

In an effort to build a bridge between workforce and CBOs/FBOs, and better understand the strengths and challenges of community-workforce partnerships, we researched the best practices of other states that have worked with CBOs/FBOs, conducted needs assessments, gathered information by organizing focus groups, Learning Circles, and Community Actions Teams, provided outreach, marketing, and educational materials, and created an interactive website. Applying these strategies, we captured information from community leaders and workforce directors, received valuable information from representatives of communities statewide, and provided the early foundation needed to build a successful initiative.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

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