



Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program

House Bill 19-1107

Legislative Report to the Colorado General Assembly

January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

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Executive Summary

On May 28, 2019, Governor Jared Polis signed into law the Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program (HB19-1107), creating the Supportive Services Program (Program) at the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE). The Program provides up to \$400 in support services to Colorado job seekers or new employed individuals who are working on employment goals and may not qualify for or have access to other resources.

Administered by Goodwill of Colorado (Goodwill), the Program launched in January 2020, and is authorized through June 30, 2022. Goodwill entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with service providers across the state including workforce centers, departments of human services, community resource centers, and non-profit organizations. The service providers determine eligibility for participating, distribute funding, and are reimbursed by Goodwill.

The legislature funded the Program with a three-year, total appropriation of \$750,000. The General Assembly may appropriate the remaining money in the fund annually, up to a total of \$250,000.

As of July 2021, Goodwill signed MOUs with 30 service providers. One provider, the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium (CRWC), serves 51 of Colorado's counties. Additional providers bring the Program to a total of 60 out of Colorado's 64 counties.

Performance: January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

In the first 18 months of operation, the Program provided funding to **1,027** eligible individuals in the amount of \$453,507.91, including funds disbursed to participants as well as administrative costs incurred by CDLE and Goodwill.

Average Cost per Eligible Participant: \$293.76

Top Five Eligible Expenses (90% of all requests):

- Other (including laptops, training, clothing, scrubs and shoes, drug tests, background checks and work supplies): 420 (40% of top 5 requests)
- Emergency Housing: 207 (20% of top 5 requests)
- Transportation/Vehicle Repairs: 152 (14% of top 5 requests)
- Utility Payments: 93 (9% of top 5 requests)
- Fees Related to Employment: 77 (7% of top 5 requests)

Since the Program does not allow service providers to be reimbursed for any administrative costs, follow-up with participants regarding the effectiveness and the impact of support services is requested and documented, but not required.

Grant Award

Upon passage of HB19-1107, the CDLE Division of Employment & Training developed a grant application process and a competitive public solicitation. The Request for Applications (RFA) was published on August 27, 2019, and the application period closed on September 10, 2019. An evaluation committee comprised of CDLE, the Colorado Department of Human Services, and the Colorado Committee on Law and Policy reviewed all applications. The award to Goodwill of Colorado was announced on September 30, 2019 with the grant period of performance ending June 30, 2022.

Efficacy of Goodwill of Colorado

Service providers are required to submit evaluations as part of their participation in the Program. In periodic anonymous evaluations, service providers reported overall satisfaction with the Program and partnering with Goodwill who provided easy access and timely reimbursement of funds. In addition to noting the benefits of more funding and process improvements during the second year, the survey results showed:

- Average length of time to receive a requested reimbursement was **4.67** days
- Approval for an initial request for service was **0.24** days
- Access to funds was **extremely easy (60%)** or **easy (40%)**
- Service requests received the **same day response (42.9%)** or a response **within 2 business days (42.9%)**
- Receipt of reimbursement **within 15 days (60%)** **Extreme satisfaction (64.3%)** or **very satisfied (35.7%)** with Goodwill as a partner

93%

*Of service providers reported the Program had a **high or extremely high impact** on the long-term success of eligible participants.*

Service providers reported that the Program contributed to the long-term success of eligible participants by:

- Offering assistance that otherwise was not available and reducing additional barriers such as obtaining work tools and equipment, assistance with training related fees and requesting laptops for job preparation and readiness.
- Providing support for external needs to ensure job retention such as emergency housing, vehicle maintenance, and phone bills.
- Making employment journeys and job retention possible.



Goodwill of Colorado has been able to provide funds for employment and stability barriers that other grants would not be able to assist with, either due to the limited nature of their budgets or because of their guidelines. Several clients of our program have been able to find employment after overcoming a barrier using Goodwill's financial assistance.

-Service provider

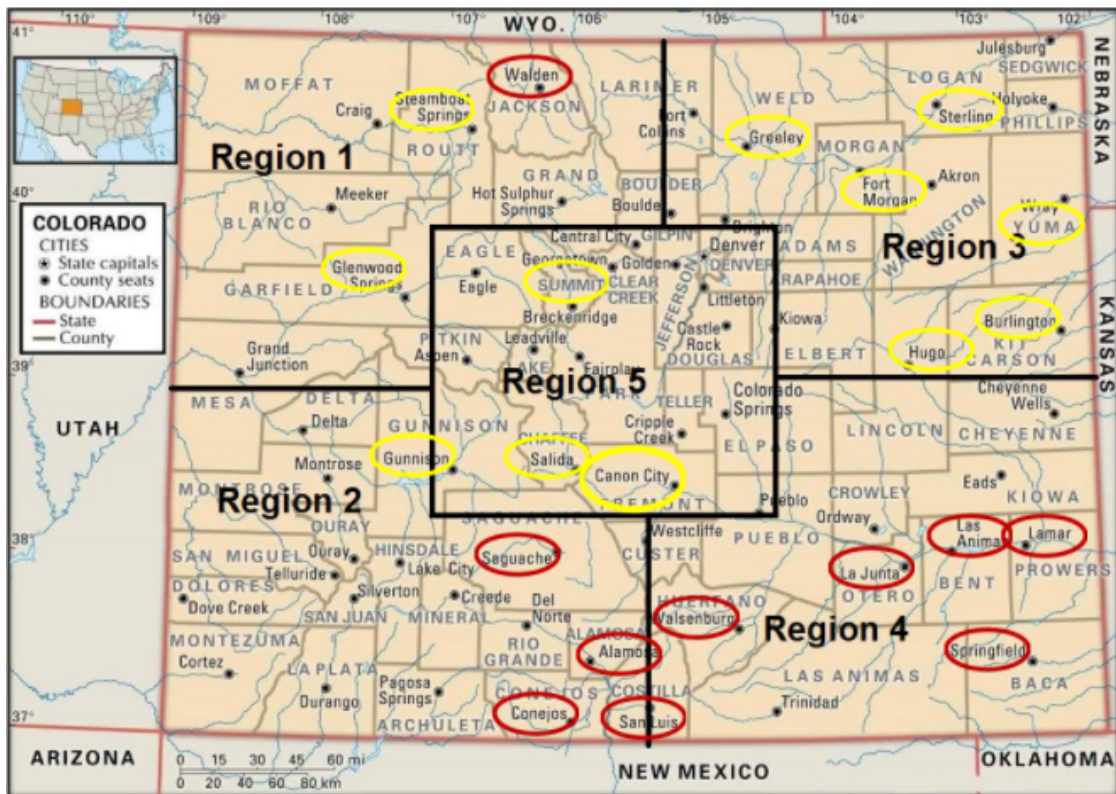
The table below showcases the number of participants served by providers in Year 1 and Year 2 of the Program. As ease of access to funds increased, additional service providers partnered with Goodwill and grew the Program. In Year 2, the Program nearly quadrupled its number of participants served.

Participants Served in Year 1 and Year 2			
Year 1 (Jan 2020-June 2020)		Year 2 (July 2020-June 2021)	
Agency	Served	Agency	Served
Costilla County Dept of Social Services	1 (0.51%)	Costilla County Dept of Social Services	2 (0.15%)
Center for Work Education and Employment	89 (7.85%)	Center for Work Education and Employment	251 (28%)
Eagle CO Dept of Human Services	1 (0.02%)	Eagle CO Dept of Human Services	5 (0.75%)
Focus Point Family Resource Center	6 (0.90%)	Focus Point Family Resource Center	15 (2%)
Goodwill	10 (1.30%)	Goodwill	26 (2.8%)
Larimer CO Economic and Workforce Develop	35 (4.69%)	Larimer CO Economic and Workforce Develop	34 (4.8%)
Morgan CO Family Center	9 (1.32%)	Morgan CO Family Center	64 (9.1)
Mountain Resource Center	3 (0.31%)	Mountain Resource Center	2 (0.3%)
Mt Carmel Veterans Service Center	7 (0.87%)	Mt Carmel Veterans Services Center	22 (2.8%)
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning	2 (0.3%)	Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning	2 (0.29%)
Springs Rescue Mission	6 (0.22%)	Springs Rescue Mission	3 (0.25%)

Teller County Dept of Human Services	2 (0.12%)		
Work Options for Women	14 (2.02%)	Work Options for Women	46 (6.3%)
		Culinary Arts Boot Camp for Veterans	1 (0.15%)
		Homeward Alliance Inc.	4 (0.34%)
		Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (H.O.P.E.)	19 (2.83%)
		Mile High Workshop	6 (0.71%)
		Northern CO Veterans Resource Center	5 (0.61%)
		Pikes Peak Workforce Center	6 (0.90%)
		Prowers County Dept of Human Services	1 (0.15%)
Total: 185		Total: 842	

Outreach

Goodwill initiated outreach efforts in December 2019, divided the state into five service areas (regions) with a focus on rural communities, with the Denver Front Range being in the center of the map. Goodwill researched each county's population and economic barriers. Areas circled in red experienced more economic barriers at that time than those marked in yellow. Goodwill proposed a 65/35 split of outreach funds between the Denver metro area and rural parts of the state. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Goodwill staff pivoted to conduct presentations over the phone or on virtual platforms. Goodwill continues to promote the Program by making cold calls to potential service providers, launching an email campaign, and delivering community presentations.



Demographics

In the first 18 months of operation, the Program served a broad range of eligible participants.

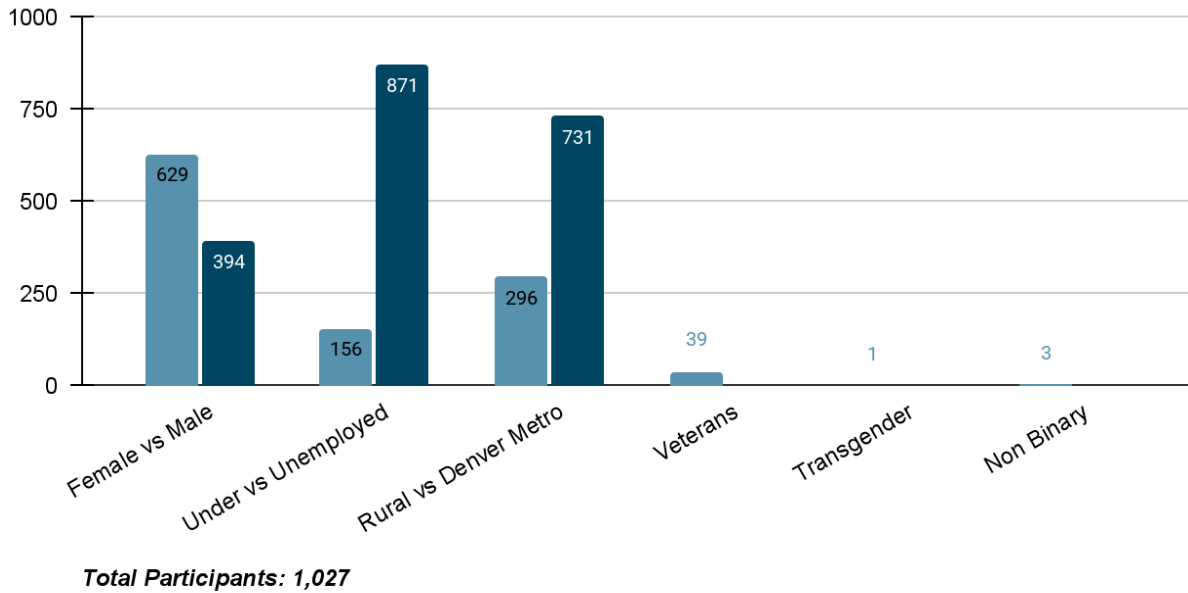
Age Range

- Age 16-24: 142 (14%)
- Age 25-34: 395 (39%)
- Age 35-44: 228 (22%)
- Age 45-54: 150 (15%)
- Age 55 and Above: 112 (11%)

The below table showcases the additional key demographics including gender, Denver metro vs rural Colorado, veterans and participants identifying as transgender and non-binary.

Key Demographics

Jan 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



COVID-19 Impacts and Adjustments

In March 2020, Goodwill quickly shifted aspects of Program administration. First, under the direction of CDLE, Goodwill suspended the 65%/35% split in fund distribution to the Denver metro area and the rural counties to serve as many participants as possible. Second, Goodwill implemented a variety of virtual tools and procedures including:

- Accepting electronic signatures and documentation to ensure seamless delivery of services.
- Developing creative ways of processing information in remote work environments by using photos of documents, and by gathering attestations verbally, and by email and text.
- Providing virtual job readiness training, along with \$220 per participant to engage in online learning.

Looking Ahead

Funding for employment, transportation and vehicle assistance, emergency housing, and utility payments continue to account for the majority of services requested in this program, which has been an essential lifeline for participants during the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic. Goodwill's ability to swiftly disburse funds is knocking down barriers, resulting in a second chance for participants.

With the Program in its final year of operation through June 2022, the CDLE recognizes Goodwill's efforts to promote and strengthen the vitality of the Support Services Program through its network of established service providers. So far the Program is off to a strong start in its third year by serving an additional 345 participants, **bringing the total to 1,375** since the Program's inception.

Success Stories and Testimonials

Frisco Workforce Center - Summit County Work Tools and Equipment, Food and Nutrition \$330.77

Norma received assistance in August 2020 to buy a printer for school, three sets of medical scrubs for work and groceries. Norma started Medical Assistant School with on the job training through Centura Health in Frisco, Colorado. She graduated from the Program in April 2021 and is now a certified Medical Assistant working for a pediatrician in Frisco. Norma is the only Medical Assistant who speaks Spanish and is able to help all staff, including doctors, explain test results and information to patients. Norma's goal now is to become a Registered Nurse and plans to complete documentation and exams by 2022. Norma will continue to work with the Frisco Workforce Employment Specialists to help her achieve this goal.



"The money provided to me by the Goodwill grant helped me buy work clothes for my new internship with Centura Health as a medical assistant. With the purchase of a printer, I'm now able to print out my homework that I have to keep in a binder for my skills lab along with printing the training mandatory materials I also need to print weekly. The food that was purchased has helped me eat healthy meals and pack lunches for work so I'm not spending money that I can use to pay my bills." --Norma

***Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center - El Paso County
Emergency Housing
\$333.04***

The participant was an unemployed veteran who was struggling after moving to Colorado and not finding work right away. He quickly exhausted the funds he had moved with and found himself living in his car. Having served honorably for 24 years in the US Army, this veteran had skills in auto and diesel mechanics as well as facilities maintenance. He was a Maintenance Supervisor and Master Sergeant/1st Sergeant before his retirement. He had some college but no degree or current Advanced Certified Expert (ACE) certification. Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center was able to assist him with emergency housing and an apprenticeship program with Blueprint Services, Inc. where he is making \$25 hourly and will be able to work towards a Journeyman credential which will provide him suitable income potential.

***Mount Resource Center - Jefferson County
Utility Bill
\$400.00***

Six months ago, this female participant's husband had a massive life-threatening heart attack leaving him partially blind and unable to work. Unfortunately, she had been laid off from her job as a Quality Control Engineer at the time of her husband's heart attack. As life would have it, her unemployment benefits had just run out, leaving the family with no income and dwindling savings. Mountain Resource Center (MRC) was able to assist with job search support, utility bills, and mortgage assistance. However, she was behind in her cell phone bill payment and was about to be disconnected. Sadly, MRC did not have funds available for cell phone bill assistance. This participant was desperately searching for employment and her phone was her work lifeline. In recent follow-up, she has obtained part-time work in her field as a medical device quality control tester. And while the family has a long journey ahead to financial stability, they are on their way as a result of the funds provided by Goodwill for job search support and cell phone assistance.

***Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (H.O.P.E) - Boulder County
Work Tools and Equipment
\$392.12***

The participant moved here from Kentucky with his wife. They had nothing but their vehicle and the personal belongings they were able to fit in their small 2-door car. They had been living out of their vehicle, trying to obtain employment and save enough money for a home. This participant found steady, permanent, full-time employment, but lacked any tools or

warm clothing to allow him to be successful. This service funded the clothes and the tools that helped him be comfortable and more efficient in his role.

***Eagle County Department of Human Services - Eagle County
Work Tools and Equipment
\$400.00***

This male participant has been hired for a job performing equipment repair for the local ski resort after spending an extended amount of time unemployed during the height of the COVID pandemic. Work boots suitable for outdoor work in the snow and ice were required for this, as during ski season he would often have to go out and repair snowmobiles and ski equipment on site. Upon finding that his existing pair were worn out, he had to wait to start this job until he secured new boots. With the help of the Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program, Eagle County DHS was able to buy him a suitable pair of boots. This allowed him to successfully begin the job, get a full-time income for the first time in a long while, and graduate from public services and financially support himself.

For questions regarding this legislative report, contact:

Patrick Teegarden, Director of Policy and Legislation

Patrick.teegarden@state.co.us

P: 303.318.8019

C: 303.908.0866