

COLORADO DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES

INTER-COUNTY COLLABORATION PROFILE

- **Background**
 - Population: 5,540,545; Number of Counties: 64
 - State Supervised, County Administered
 - Responsible for Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, Food Assistance, Economic Assistance, Child Support, Adoption, Foster Care, Family Assistance, Family Services, Youth Services, Adult Services, and Child Care (Whole Enchilada)

- **State Agency Role**
 - State level departments and divisions provide programmatic support to county departments through program experts
 - Program experts are assigned to specific counties
 - For certain programs, geographic proximity of counties is prioritized when assigning program experts
 - Attempt to provide consistent policy interpretation and guidance to ensure that practice is consistent across county departments
 - Provides mandated training for county department directors and staff
 - Standardized training processes for new hires helps to ensure consistency in program administration at the county level
 - Provides State-wide case management/data system
 - Records can be easily and instantaneously shared between counties through state-wide system
 - Entire records are transferred, counties cannot pick and choose when, how, or how much information will be shared
 - Convenes Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
 - Forum for counties and the state to work together to make recommendations to the CDHS Executive Director about policy changes to improve service delivery.
 - Membership includes seven CDHS representatives (from various departments/divisions) and seven county representatives-one from each of the six CHSDA regions in Colorado and an at-large member.
 - Five subcommittees, called Sub-PACs, specializing in specific program areas report to the PAC. These Sub-PACs have similar membership comprised of state and county representatives.

- **County Liaisons**
 - CDHS employs two County Liaisons that help provide administrative support to counties:
 - State employees, overseen by the Deputy Executive Director for Community Partnerships
 - Serve as communication liaisons between the county departments and CDHS to ensure effective working relationships between CDHS and county offices;
 - Partner with CDHS Offices, Divisions, and program staff to provide technical assistance to county departments when interpreting policy/trouble shooting cases;
 - Engage with CDHS Offices, Divisions, and program staff on current issues to support both counties and CDHS staff in addressing timely concerns and situations;
 - Support community development and increased partnership with CDHS and county services;
 - Serve as communication liaisons between individual county departments to ensure effective working relationships and facilitate the sharing of best practices;
 - Maintain consistent communication with counties through monthly Colorado Human Services Directors Association meetings, the county portal, and CDHS memo series

- **Notes related to inter-county collaboration**
 - *Northwest Collaborative:* Counties in the Northwest Region pool financial resources to employ a “floating” eligibility trainer that can provide coverage to county departments experiencing staffing issues, provide extra assistance to counties that need help troubleshooting a difficult case, and can also provide training to county department staff in that region
 - *San Luis Valley:* Counties in this region are relatively small and isolated. They do not have access to a lot of resources. They have chosen to share the responsibility of administering certain programs that the individual counties would not be able to support on their own
 - *COI Cases:* CDHS provides explicit guidelines for what qualifies as a conflict of interest but generally does not mediate the assignment of conflict of interest cases between counties
 - Can facilitate case assignment on rare occasions if a case is high profile or requires extraordinary resources or expertise
 - Regional identity helps to foster a culture of reciprocity regarding COI cases
 - *Inter-county movement:* For certain programs, if one county determines an applicant is eligible for benefits/services any future county that handles that case cannot reverse that determination