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Q1 Contact Information for Nomination

Name of Contact	Celia Hardin
Full Name of State Agency	Colorado Department of Labor & Employment
Email Address	celia.hardin@state.co.us
Name of Initiative the state (and/or partnership) is being nominated for:	Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program

Q2 1. Provide a brief description of the innovative services, innovative service delivery, or efforts of national impact you have chosen as your primary focus for the nomination. Response Word Limit: 150

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) is working in an innovative service delivery model with the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) to operate the Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP). CW STEP creates partnerships between local workforce centers, human service departments, and community organizations with the goal of creating and providing subsidized employment and work based learning opportunities to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) customers, and to have those customers exit the program to unsubsidized employment at high wages. CW STEP is operating with five grantees, across thirteen Colorado counties, in the Denver metropolitan area and rural communities. The CW STEP collaboration is breaking new ground in Colorado, bringing together two state agencies to better serve their shared customers by braiding funding and resources to provide a constellation of supportive services to aid customers in gaining and maintaining employment with living wages.

Q3 2. Provide a statement of results, accomplishments, impacts and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts described in question #1 were an exceptional contribution. Response Word Limit: 200

CW STEP gives low-income job seekers who have struggled with homelessness, domestic violence, and involvement with the justice system a second chance to demonstrate their skills, grit, and determination to themselves and the businesses in their community. CW STEP places resilient individuals in paid internships, apprenticeships, transitional jobs, and on-the-job training experiences. Customers may be paid the prevailing wage, increasing current income and setting higher wage expectations for the future. CW STEP codified and streamlined the model for connecting individuals to opportunities, while streamlining the customer experience in multiple government programs. Duplicative services are eliminated, with agencies focused on what they do best.

Before the beginning of CW STEP, Colorado had a 39% entered employment rate each month for all individuals receiving TANF benefits. The average wage was \$12/hour. With the dedication of the CW STEP team and participants, 620 customers were placed into a work experience and 54% obtained employment at exit with a \$14.70/hour average wage. Beyond the improvement in the lives of participants and their children, the wider community has benefited from this program. Almost all of these families have ended their use of TANF and Food Assistance benefits and their income is spent in their communities.

2020 NASWA State Innovation Award Nomination - **Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development**

Q4 3. Provide a brief description of the nominee’s significant contributions in any one of the other two areas listed under “criteria” that you did not focus on above. Response Word Limit: 200

CW STEP is committed to innovative services for the individual and accomplishes this goal through a variety of state and locally designed processes and practices. All grantees provide customers with personalized subsidized placements and employment planning focused on career advancement and 2-Generation family supports. Grantees are empowered to explore local best practices for customer service and offer a host of supports including weekly professional development and executive functioning classes, bringing the concept of goal setting to employers to provide consistent messaging and progress, and developing efficient evaluation practices for job sites, resulting in more quality feedback to customers.

Working closely with business development staff at local workforce centers, placement sites are cultivated with a commitment to customers’ professional development of customers. Partnership between the customer, work experience supervisor, and CW STEP worker creates both a safety net when barriers arise and a connected pathway to unsubsidized employment through regular evaluation of skills and job search support. Close partnership between human services and workforce centers has allowed for both cross-training and resource sharing. This partnership is echoed at the state level, with CDLE and CDHS collaborating to bring advanced motivational interviewing, self-care, and business partnership training to all CW STEP grantees.

Q5 4. Provide samples of work including creative materials, videos, graphics, documents, plans, etc. regarding the efforts and results you outlined in questions #1 and #2. File size limit is 16 MB. Only PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG, JPG, JPEG, GIF files are supported.

2019-20_CO_Six Success Stories_Pinnacle WFD.docx | Removed (file is corrupt)

Q6 Sample of Work #2 File size limit is 16 MB.

2019-20_CO_Video Links_Pinnacle WFD.docx (11.4KB)

Q7 Sample of Work #3 File size limit is 16 MB.

Respondent skipped this question

Q8 Sample of Work #4 File size limit is 16 MB.

Respondent skipped this question

Q9 Sample of Work #5 File size limit is 16 MB.

Respondent skipped this question

Q10 Please upload a statement of approval from the Agency Administrator

2020_Administrator_Approval-Signed.pdf (17.8KB)



COLORADO
Department of
Labor and Employment

Division of Employment & Training
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Denver, CO 80202-3660 | (303) 318-8000 | colorado.gov/cdle

January 3, 2020

National Association of State Workforce Agencies
Attention: Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development Review Committee
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 142
Washington, D.C. 20001

Review Committee:

I have reviewed this nomination and I approve it for consideration for the Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Dowling', is written over a faint circular stamp.

William Dowling
Director



Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program: Recruitment Videos

CW STEP Customer Recruitment Video

<https://vimeo.com/304249593>

CW STEP Employer Recruitment Video

<https://vimeo.com/311291624/210729f42b>

Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program: Six Success Stories

When S.V. was first referred to CW STEP, she was unsure of the direction she wanted go with her career and her life. Like all CW STEP customers, she had a child at home, and her work experience consisted of short-term jobs, no longer than a couple of months. With her previous customer service experience, the CW STEP team felt that she could be a good fit for a position with ACE Hardware. Based on previous experience with ACE Hardware, the grantee knew the business had a great training program with their associates that could greatly benefit S. V. and put her on a career path. Fast forward a month, S.V. had been working at ACE and the CW STEP representative was conducting a 30-day performance review. During this conversation, the manager stated that S.V. did not fit the culture at ACE and he was unsure he would be able to hire her at the end of her work experience. This was devastating for S.V. During this time, she was also attending executive functioning classes once a week and brought up her performance review during class. Through conversation, she realized she did enjoy the job and wanted to stay. The class strategized a conversation she could have with her supervisor. S.V. found the courage to have the conversation, and she was able to express herself and ask the right questions to clear the air. She and her supervisor discussed her strengths—details and organization—and she was given a section of the store to organize. S.V.'s sense of self-worth and her willingness to take ownership over a section of the store created pride within S.V. that allowed her to be a better mother and a better employee. She was hired by ACE and is maintaining employment.

When D.T. was first referred to CW STEP, he was unsure of the direction he wanted to go with his career. He had been laid off from his previous employer, Ingersoll Rand, and wanted to change industries but was unsure of where his interest lied. D.T. also struggled with prior substance abuse, lack of transportation, and being a single parent to his three children. He never had a job he felt would lead to a career or was passionate about. D.T. completed several interest indicators with his CW STEP worker and expressed interest in helping people with special needs in becoming self-sufficient. This indicated a match with Discover Goodwill's Possibilities program, which the worker knew had a great training program that could greatly benefit D.T. and put him on a career path. D.T. was attending weekly professional development classes; however, he had an incident where he relapsed with his substance abuse and no call no showed to work. In collaboration with the site supervisor, CW STEP worker, and a community partner—the Center on Fathering—D.T. was able to get back on track. D.T.'s increasing sense of self-worth, and his willingness to take ownership over his substance abuse, created pride within D.T. allowed him to become a better father and a better employee. He was hired by Possibilities and is maintaining employment.

Ms. A. began her placement in CW STEP, but then staff discovered that she would only be eligible for the program for 30 more days, well before the scheduled end of the experience. The CW STEP worker immediately partnered with workforce staff operating the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and was able to adjust the placement and funding to the WIOA program so that Ms. A. could finish her work experience. Simultaneously, her site supervisor connected her to a full time unsubsidized employment opportunity. While she impressed the potential employer through two interviews, she was ultimately not selected for the position. She continued to work hard in her placement and is using her new skills and network to look for a meaningful career.

A 47 year old single mother of three was referred to the CW STEP program in March. She had worked as an administrative assistant and file management specialist for most of her career. She was looking for entry to a more stable industry where she can have a dependable job with consistent income and hours that would allow her to successfully balance her home and work life. The CW STEP staff held a work based learning hiring event, and the customer was introduced to a local insurance agent that was looking to hire an office assistant with a plan to eventually earn insurance licensure and transition to becoming an agent with the company. The customer quickly built rapport with the business and was scheduled for a same day interview. Her stellar performance resulted in an on the job training offer and the customer has thrived in her placement. With support and funding from the CW STEP program, the customer was able to take her licensure classes and exam and she is now a licensed agent with the local insurance office.

Little Bears Child Care has become a strong partner for the CW STEP program in northern Colorado. The employer has embraced the idea of training strong future employees and has provided two opportunities for CW STEP customers, both resulting in permanent, unsubsidized employment at their business at the end of the placement. A.O. and B.R. are both single mothers with very young children. Both women had backgrounds and interests in early childhood education, but were in need of some hands-on training in a licensed daycare center. Little Bears saw the potential of the women and offered them both subsidized employment and training. After, delivering outstanding performance and consistently going above and beyond expectations, both women were offered unsubsidized positions at the center. Further, the center made spots available for all four of the two ladies' children, eliminating child care worries while they continue to move along their career pathways.

Ms. B. became a first time mother at age 14. She had moved from rural Colorado to the city to be with her boyfriend, but after 5 years in a toxic and controlling relationship, she knew she needed a change. After the success of earning her GED, Ms. B. was ready to tackle employment as a CNA. After completing her training, she found a placement in home care with CW STEP; however, lack of hours and transportation issues put that work experience at risk. Because working was so important to her, the CW STEP team worked to find Ms. B. a new placement at a nursing home, and she really hit her stride. After successfully completing her work experience, the site hired her full time. The increase in income allowed Ms. B. to purchase a car, and she is poised to continue her education and become a registered nurse. "Just getting into the program was a life changer for me...so just having to get out there and figure out who I am, and who I want to be, was a challenge and a life change. I love my job. It's difficult at times, hard, but worth it at the end of the day."