

HB 1386- Necessary Document Program
Representative Tracy Kraft-Tharp and Senator Pat Steadman
Request: \$300,000

The bill: extends a grants program begun last year that helps low-income Coloradans obtain a Colorado ID. The program, administered by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Office of Health Disparities, allocates funds to non-profit organizations familiar with and experienced in, helping people to secure IDs. The funds will be used to assist with fees associated with retrieving birth certificates, divorce and marriage decrees, name change documents, and other documents necessary to secure replacement social security cards and an ID in Colorado.

The need: Colorado residents without a valid state ID can find themselves marginalized and excluded from essential services and assistance, including access to health care, housing, employment and public benefits. Citizens need a picture ID when opening a bank account, cashing a check, picking up prescriptions, boarding a plane and even entering some government buildings.

In order to obtain an ID, citizens generally need a number of supporting documents proving name, age, identity and lawful presence. For example, they might need a state certified birth certificate, a marriage certificate, a name change document, a divorce decree, or a certified medical record. It takes time and money to secure these documents, and many must be ordered from other states. It costs an average of \$50 a person to get all the documents together necessary to apply for an ID. For low-income people, \$50 is prohibitively expensive.

Who is affected? Seniors who were born at home may not ever have been issued a birth certificate, and will need old documents like census records and baptismal certificates to apply for a “delayed” birth certificate. Others need help because they lost documents in fires, floods and as a result of eviction. People fleeing domestic violence situations sometimes leave their documents behind. People seeking IDs may have to prove name changes resulting from marriage, divorce or adoption. People who are homeless often lose their IDs or are robbed.

Current Assistance: A range of Colorado non-profits help people get IDs. While these nonprofits may be able to allocate personnel to help people to secure IDs, they generally do not have the funds to purchase the underlying documents on behalf of people in need. The need is great. As an example, the Collaborative ID project helps more than 4,000 people get IDs every year, and spends more than \$70,000 annually. Prior to receiving state grant funding, MetroCaring turned away 15-20 people a day looking for help in obtaining an ID because they did not have the funds to help them.

90% of those seeking document assistance are U.S. Citizens; the other 10 percent are lawfully present aliens.

Community Partners: MetroCaring, Colorado Legal Services (CLS), Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH), Denver Urban Ministries (DenUM), The Gathering Place, Father Woody's Haven of Hope, Homeless Gear, Christ's Body Ministries, Springs Rescue Mission, Boulder Bridge House, Delores Project, Aurora Mental Health, Sister Carmen Community Center, Grand Valley Peace and Justice, Arvada Community Food Bank, Colfax Community Network, House of Neighborly Service, Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, Action Center, Saint Francis Center, All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition and Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Success of Current Program: 22 organizations statewide have agreed to host the Colorado ID Project. Since initiating the Colorado ID Project grant, 2,240 vouchers have been distributed to participants and \$49,311.39 of CDPHE funding has been spent, through February. Based on the current growth rate and continued expansion of the program to strategic locations, Metro Caring, the lead agency for the Colorado ID Project, projects to spend \$25,000 per month (\$300,000 per year).

Supporting Organizations

All Families Deserve a Chance (AFDC) Coalition
Christ's Body Ministry & Network
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Lawyer's Committee
Denver Urban Matters (DenUM)
Grand Valley Peace and Justice (Grand Junction)
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry- Colorado
Metro Caring
Safehouse Denver
St. Francis Center

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