



Fact Sheet: Expanding Employment and Training Opportunities for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Funded by the Butler Family Fund, the goal of this project is to engage in diverse activities to expand the number and type of employment opportunities created through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) that are accessible to individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness or have had this experience in the past.

WIOA was passed by Congress in 2014. Colorado will define how it will formally implement its state, regional and local plans in the first half of 2016. Under WIOA, workforce boards and job centers are required to give priority of service to populations who have significant barriers to employment, including individuals who lack basic skills, those on public assistance, out-of-school and out-of-work youth, and those experiencing homelessness.

The Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP) has already been immersed in the WIOA planning process. For three years, CCLP coordinated the Skills2Compete Colorado Coalition (S2C), a multi-sector policy advocacy group, and is now assuming a leadership role for this project. CCLP views WIOA as a tremendous opportunity to advance the economic security and well-being of low-income Coloradans.

Primary activities of this project include:

- Working with each workforce region to identify specific strategies that result in language inserted into different regional and local strategic plans that prioritizes employment services for homeless and formerly homeless job-seekers with significant work barriers.
- Assisting workforce regions to understand roles of specific parties to implement WIOA in a way that increases opportunities for homeless and formerly homeless job-seekers.
- Identifying innovative ways to monitor the implementation of WIOA and how it supports this population to find positive jobs and career pathways.
- Developing a network of community-based organizations as community partners who assist with implementation of WIOA and effective preparation of potential workers.

Proposed measures of success for the project:

- Inserting meaningful language in the state, regional and local WIOA plans that prioritizes services for those who have experienced homelessness and have significant job barriers, as well as related accountability.
- Potentially adjusting performance measures and indicators when individuals with special needs and significant work barriers are being assisted through the workforce system;
- Increasing availability of WIOA funds for employment services for this population;
- Increasing number of positive placements in competitive jobs for this population;
- Potentially developing legislation for 2017, if needed, to strengthen opportunities for this population – this might include incentives for employers, etc.

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