



COLORADO CENTER  
on LAW & POLICY

2015-16

# ANNUAL REPORT



## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director of a nonprofit policy advocacy organization wears many hats -- from overseeing office logistics to shoring up fundraising. But fulfilling the Colorado Center on Law and Policy's mission of improving the health, well-being and economic security of low-income Coloradans remains the best part of my job description.

Using the tools of research, education, advocacy and litigation, CCLP addresses the barriers that prevent people from meeting their basic needs -- such as food, shelter and access to health care. We assess how state agencies operate and hold them accountable for delivering the services they are required to provide by law. Along with meeting face-to-face with decision-makers in health care and human services, we share our data and analysis with policymakers in hearings and meetings, and build awareness and support for our policies through traditional and social media. Over the years, CCLP's victories have improved the health and financial security of hundreds of thousands of Coloradans. We led the successful charge to establish a state Earned Income Tax Credit for low-wage workers, pushed to reform unemployment insurance and took a leading role in Colorado's decision to expand Medicaid to serve more Coloradans under the Affordable Care Act.

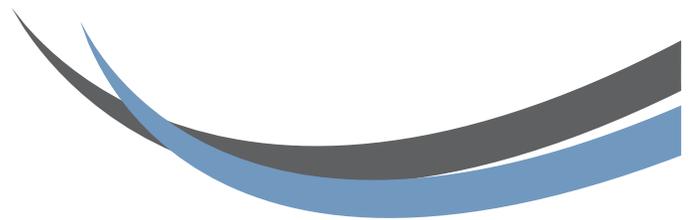
Along with the successes outlined throughout this annual report, CCLP took on some important challenges during this past year. We tried to address some of the most intractable obstacles to economic security: securing affordable housing and overcoming the stigma of past mistakes to get a job. We built support for legislation that would have dedicated new funds to create housing that Colorado's lowest-income households can afford. We also brought together a diverse coalition to back a bill that would have prohibited most employers from asking about past criminal history on preliminary job applications -- making it easier for more Coloradans to get a job and support their families. While neither effort was signed into law this year, we remain committed to solving these pervasive problems and engaging the public in a broader policy discussion.

As I look ahead, I know CCLP will be in the forefront of efforts to rein in the cost of health care, overcome the barriers that prevent Coloradans from meeting their basic needs, and provide more people with pathways from poverty so they can live full lives and provide a bright future for their children. In tackling what stands in the way of health, well-being and economic security for low-income Coloradans, I am fortunate to be joined by a smart, effective and informed staff, an engaged and enthusiastic Board of Directors, and generous donors who sustain our work.

In this annual report, members of our staff shared personal perspectives about their work from June 2015 to May 2016. I hope this captures the energy and passion that is evident to me every day at CCLP.

Sincerely,

Claire Levy  
Executive Director



# How We Are Making a Difference in Family Economic Security

The path to upward mobility can be an obstacle course, challenging the fittest among us. As the Manager of CCLP's Family Economic Security program, I work with different organizations to identify obstacles to self-sufficiency, then coordinate efforts to advance policies that will help more Coloradans attain economic security.

This work is not easy and involves mountains of research, data, relationship-building, consensus, negotiation and advocacy. CCLP's "Self Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2015" showed that a sizable minority of Colorado's population can't financially meet basic needs without help. While we're far from where we need to be in terms of building financial security and stability for all Coloradans, here are some glimmers of hope that we saw in the past year.

**\* Colorado's most vulnerable residents will be able to get official documents needed to obtain state-issued ID through a statewide program.** It's nearly impossible to access essentials such as health care, housing, employment and public benefits without a state-issued ID card. Often, the documents required to issue an ID are lost in unfortunate circumstances such as theft, frequent moves, fires, floods or domestic violence. CCLP led the charge for House Bill 1386. Approved by legislators and signed by the governor, the bill funds a five-year, \$300,000 project to help people throughout Colorado get the official documents they need for an ID card.

**\* People will have more options for high-school equivalency tests needed to qualify for most jobs, training and post-secondary opportunities.** In 2014, the GED Testing Service adopted a new test that was more difficult and expensive than previous tests and was only available in computerized form – severely limiting opportunities for those without a high school diploma. To rectify the situation, Skills2Compete, a coalition coordinated by CCLP, led a campaign in conjunction with the Colorado Adult Education Professional Association to have Colorado recognize all three high school equivalency tests.

**\* Coloradans experiencing homelessness will have greater access to skills training and job opportunities.** Workforce centers throughout the state are required by the 2014 federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to prioritize service for individuals who have various barriers to employment, including homelessness. In late 2015, CCLP received a significant grant from the Butler Family Fund to assure that implementation of WIOA in Colorado served the needs of people who are homeless. With this grant CCLP is helping connect workforce service providers with programs already serving homeless Coloradans. This project should help Coloradans without housing find (and keep) the employment they need to pay rent.

**\* We fought to coordinate child care for education and skills training for parents with young children and low educational achievement.** Single parents with young children and low educational achievement face high poverty rates. To increase their income, these parents often need additional education or training. But negotiating the education system and obtaining child care coverage is often too daunting. CCLP developed House Bill 1050 to set up an interagency and community task force to address this issue. The bill passed the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission and in the House, but was killed in Senate State Affairs. Despite the setback, our work on this issue will continue.

In the coming year, we will advance policies and practices to expand access to training and employment for Coloradans who lack stable housing, a recent work history, or a high school diploma or those who wrestle with challenges such as caregiving responsibilities or a criminal record. It won't be easy, but the potential for a better tomorrow motivates us to continue the fight while celebrating the victories that will help low-income Coloradans.

- *By Chaer Robert, Manager of CCLP's Family Economic Security Program*



Chaer Robert (left) shows her support for a ballot initiative to raise Colorado's minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2020. She is joined by CCLP Board Chair Nan Morehead; Jesus Loayza, CCLP Research Fellow and Michelle Webster, CCLP Manager of Research and Policy Analysis.

## Other Legislative Highlights

### Ban the Box bill

Developed by CCLP, **House Bill 1388** would have barred most employers from asking about criminal history on preliminary job applications – giving more people a fair chance for a position that could help them get their lives back on track. Despite winning approval from the state House, the bill was killed by a Senate committee.

### Affordable housing and tenants rights

Also developed by CCLP, **HB 1466** would have invested \$30 million from Colorado's unclaimed property trust fund to help low-income tenants defray high rental costs and provide financing to developers of low-income housing units. The bill passed through the House but was killed by a Senate Committee. Another CCLP bill, **HB 1461**, would have increased tenant notification from 7 to 28 days on month-to-month leases. The legislation also stalled in a Senate committee.

# CCLP's Health Program Advocates for Basic Human Needs

Access to quality, affordable health care is essential to every family's economic security. Health care costs can push families over a financial cliff in a heartbeat. That's why CCLP's Health Program advocates on a variety of fronts for the health and well-being of low-income Coloradans.

Over the past year, CCLP continued to work on implementation of the Affordable Care Act and to improve access to public programs — particularly Medicaid — among many other priorities. Highlights of our work in 2015-16 include:

**\* Children covered by Medicaid will have increased access to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment program (EPSDT).** The pediatric Medicaid benefit was designed to offer enhanced benefits to children with the goal of reducing complications and problems later in life, and helping them become healthy and productive adults. During the past year, CCLP helped to amend restrictive criteria for access to behavioral therapies to ensure that children on the autism spectrum or other conditions have access to necessary services.

Also regarding Medicaid, we supported successful legislation that improved the Medicaid appeals process by allowing 60 rather than 30 days to file an appeal and adding "good-cause exceptions" for those who miss an appeal deadline. This change will allow more Coloradans to keep receiving health benefits.

**\* The public's voice was heard in the conversion of InnovAge from a nonprofit to a for-profit organization.** In 2015, CCLP successfully lobbied to amend a bill that allowed for-profit entities to operate Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). These programs use Medicare and Medicaid funding to provide community-based comprehensive care for people in need of long-term services and support. CCLP's amendments made it possible for the community to comment on InnovAge's conversion plan.

CCLP provided advice and support to community nonprofits with a stake in InnovAge's plan to convert from a nonprofit to a for-profit, and we organized outside evaluation of InnovAge's plan. Testifying in front of Colorado's Attorney General and in written comments, our Health Program staff and special counsel Ed Kahn made the case for preserving the full fair-market value of InnovAge for the benefit of Colorado's frail elderly and disabled communities. We also worked to ensure that the foundation that received proceeds from the conversion operated independently of InnovAge.

In her decision approving the conversion, Attorney General Cynthia Coffman ordered that up to an additional \$16 million be added to the sale price. She also prohibited officers and directors from receiving a planned \$2.3 million in severance payments. In addition, she adjusted the board composition to safeguard the independence of the conversion foundation, required InnovAge to fund an ombudsman to oversee the interests of InnovAge clients, and

ordered that 80 percent of the company's value remain in Colorado for the benefit of frail elderly and disabled Coloradans. This PACE conversion was the first in the country. We were pleased both with the result and the precedent it sets.

**\* In addition to those high-profile cases, we handled several individual cases, offered technical support to colleagues on issues ranging from mental health parity to immigrant access to health care, and monitored rulemaking by the Medicaid agency and Division of Insurance.** We also worked to build health equity, defended Medicaid and the Colorado's health insurance exchange before legislators, and participated on the Commission on Affordable Health Care and other task forces and committees. We also demanded improvements on communications with clients who receive public benefits, and filed a complaint with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare services to protect immigrant access to Medicaid.

It's worth noting that the InnovAge case harkens back to CCLP's roots as a watchdog in the conversion of nonprofits in the late 1990s. More than 15 years later, we continue to take down the economic barriers that stand between Coloradans and their basic human needs.

*- By Elisabeth Arenales, Director of CCLP's Health Program*

## Other Legislative Highlights

### Connect for Health Colorado

During the 2016 legislative session, there were several bills aimed at the State's Health Benefits Exchange including, **House Bill 1148**, which would have given the Legislative Oversight Committee the ability to repeal any rule or policy concerning the bidding and awarding of contracts by the Exchange (doing business as Connect for Health Colorado). CCLP worked to amend the bill, which was passed by the Colorado legislature and signed in to law by the governor. CCLP also opposed **Senate Bill 6**, which was aimed to codify how Connect customers were referred to insurance brokers, but withdrew its opposition after the legislation was amended. The bill was passed by legislators and approved by the governor.

### Cost and affordability

Several bills in the 2016 legislative session attempted to address health care cost and affordability, including: **HB 1102**, which sought to make public information available regarding the underlying costs related to the manufacture, marketing and sale of prescription drugs. CCLP supported HB 1102 as a step towards cost transparency, but the bill died in its first committee amid strong opposition from the pharmaceutical industry. **HB 1336** requires the Colorado Department of Insurance (DOI) to study the effects of reducing Colorado's current insurance rating areas from nine to one. CCLP supported this bill as a means of investigating solutions to extraordinary health insurance costs in many mountain and rural communities and as a means of analyzing the drivers of health care costs in Colorado. The bill passed both chambers and was approved by the governor.

# Data Tells Important Stories About Low-Income Coloradans

When used effectively, data can tell stories in ways that create impact and motivate people to take action. As Manager of Research and Policy Analysis for CCLP, I get to combine my twin passions of writing and using numbers to weave together a story about issues impacting the lives of low-income Coloradans.

At CCLP, we use data to help us understand how the economy is working for low-wage workers and whether people have access to the supports they need to emerge from poverty and set foot firmly on a path toward self-sufficiency. We also use data to hold state agencies accountable and develop policy solutions aimed at ensuring we have an economy that works for all Coloradans. Our hope is that CCLP's research and policy analysis moves us closer to ensuring the health, well-being and economic security of low-income Coloradans.

Here are a few examples of our Research and Policy Analysis work from the past year:

**\* We released the State of Working Colorado 2015-16 report.**

Every year, CCLP produces this compendium of data on how the Colorado economy is functioning for the low-income workers who truly drive growth in the state. This report drills down beyond the headlines of low-unemployment and strong job growth to understand how the economy is working for Coloradans across the income spectrum. From this work, we know the conditions that will propel our economy forward — true low unemployment, a living wage for low-income workers and broadly shared economic growth— are still lacking in Colorado. The good news is that there are clear policy steps we can take to improve these outcomes and we are actively working to move these policies: raising the minimum wage so families can afford the basics; ensuring access to child care for work or training, expanding options for adult learners to earn a high school equivalency certificate, and investing in affordable housing. Our hope is that the State of Working Colorado continues to inform the policy dialogue across the state and inspires new ideas for building an economy that works for all Coloradans.

**\* We participated in efforts to raise the minimum wage.** CCLP is a key partner in an effort to increase the statewide minimum wage and give low-wage workers and local economies a much-needed boost. Economic gains during the recovery have gone primarily to a small share of high-earners in the state — leaving low-income workers still struggling. The data also tells us that by raising the minimum wage so that families can meet the basics, their spending will boost Main Street, create jobs and help our communities



CCLP's Manager of Policy and Research Analysis Michelle Webster (left) and CCLP Executive Director appeared on Rocky Mountain PBS's public affairs show "Colorado State of Mind" to discuss the findings of the "State of Working Colorado 2015-16" last December. The show is hosted by Cynthia Hessin (right).

thrive. Increasing wages is both fair and smart. It is fair because no one who works full-time should live in poverty and it's smart because when people have more money to spend, it boosts local economies and creates jobs and thriving communities.

**\* We worked to increase access to food assistance.** We know the importance of food security for families to thrive. The food assistance program — called SNAP — not only ensures families have the fuel they need to live healthier lives but it also helps create jobs, increase grocery sales and supports local food producers. Colorado ranks near the bottom for access to food stamps. CCLP believes Colorado can do better. We have been partnering with Hunger Free Colorado to increase access to food assistance and improve the overall functioning of this very important program.

Along with those accomplishments, there is much more on the horizon. We are working to make our research and policy analysis more accessible to a wider audience by experimenting with new online tools and methods for telling stories with data. Look for a new report on the intersection between health outcomes, income, race/ethnicity and place. We will continue to tell the important stories about issues facing low-income families and push for policies that forge pathways from poverty and promote shared prosperity.

**- By Michelle Webster, Manager of CCLP's Research, Policy and Analysis program**

# Communicating CCLP's Priorities and Concerns to Colorado

When I worked as a legislative reporter for a news organization, it was my job to report back to constituents what their legislators were doing and how their actions and policies affected them. Frankly, it was an awesome but often fulfilling responsibility – much like my current position at CCLP.

As Communications Director, I work with CCLP's staff to raise awareness about poverty and what Coloradans can do about it. I'm charged with getting our message out to the media, the public and policy-makers through outreach campaigns, blogs, e-newsletters, our website, reports, commentaries and events. Since joining CCLP in late 2014, the organization has greatly increased the visibility of its policy priorities among decision-makers and the public.

Here are some of the Communications highlights for 2015-16:

**\* Media outreach for the Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard 2015 report generated over 24 in-depth stories and commentaries on TV and radio and in newspapers throughout the state.** The coverage, which spanned from June through August, 2015, helped reinforce the Self-Sufficiency Standard as a definitive resource for measuring how much income it takes to cover families' basic needs without assistance in every Colorado county. The report has been referenced by news organizations, policymakers and legislators since the initial rollout.

**\* We developed and worked with various news outlets to place numerous commentaries and op-eds about our issues throughout the state.** Notable placements included Health Program Director Elisabeth Arenales' explanation in The Denver Post about InnovAge's plan to convert from a nonprofit to a for-profit organization and what was at stake for Colorado's frail and elderly population. Also in The Denver Post, our Executive Director Claire Levy lamented the lack of public funding for affordable housing and challenged lawmakers to take action. At our request, former House Speaker Terrance Carroll weighed in on our "ban-the-box" bill in the Aurora Sentinel last April and explained why the legislation was especially important for people of color.

**\* Our online presence is strong and growing.** We've garnered more than 2,000 friends and followers on Facebook and Twitter. Our e-mail news products, CCLP Heads-Up, Health Law and Policy News and Colorado News Roundup continue to draw a strong readership and positive feedback.



CCLP's Director of Communications Bob Mook (far left) listens as Larry Mishel (far right) talks to reporters following CCLP's Second Annual Pathways from Poverty Breakfast. Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute, was the keynote speaker at the fundraising event.

**\* We've hosted several special events familiarizing the public with our policy priorities and prompting discussion amongst advocates and decision-makers throughout Colorado.** In early January, our 2016 Legislative Preview Breakfast drew a standing-room-only crowd who came to hear what Rep. Beth McCann and Sen. Larry Crowder had to say about the session ahead. Our Family Economic Security Fellow, Aubrey Hasvold, coordinated and conducted a series of community-oriented briefings on the 2015 Self-Sufficiency Standard Report all over Colorado. Last summer, our Health Program gave a special lunch briefing examining the Supreme Court's ruling on two cases related to the Affordable Care Act. Last October, about 150 people came to hear insights about poverty, wage stagnation and income inequality from the Economic Policy Institute's Larry Mishel during CCLP's Second Annual Pathways from Poverty Breakfast fundraising event.

**\* Throughout 2015 and well into 2016, we've been exploring new ways to highlight our policy priorities in an increasingly competitive, high-tech and information-driven world.** One notable example is the development of the Human Services Gap Map, an online report that will offer a county-by-county comparison of enrollment, state funding levels and costs in SNAP, WIC, Colorado Works and Medicaid. The project is the result of a collaborative effort with Hunger Free Colorado and others.

With the communications world constantly changing, I look forward to working with my talented colleagues to promote CCLP's concerns and policies so that we continue to keep the public Informed and make a difference in forging pathways from poverty.

*- By Bob Mook, CCLP's Director of Communications*



# Staff, Board of Directors and Volunteers

**COLORADO CENTER**  
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## Our Staff



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Director of Health Program



**Claire Levy, Esq.,**  
Executive Director



**Chaer Robert,**  
Manager of Family Economic Security Program



**Bethany Pray, Esq.,**  
Health Care Attorney



**Michelle Webster, Esq. ,**  
Manager of Research and Policy Analysis



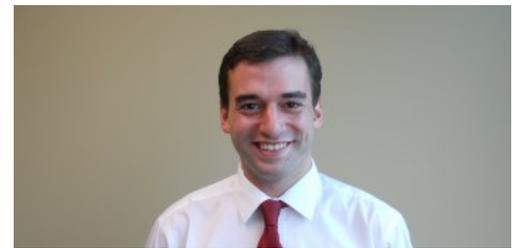
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Meshach Y. Rhodes, Esq.

# CCLP statement of financial activity

Year ended Dec. 31, 2015

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL 2015	TOTAL 2014
Grants and contributions	\$462,717	\$952,660	\$1,415,377	\$918,241
In-kind contributions	\$23,540	-	\$23,540	\$28,672
Legal fee reimbursement	-	-	-	-
Other income	\$4,505	-	\$4,505	\$2,044
Rental income	\$36,000	-	\$36,000	\$33,338
Program revenue	\$8,400	-	\$8,400	\$11,230
Net assets released from restrictions	\$634,991	(\$634,991)	-	-
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$1,170,153</b>	<b>\$317,669</b>	<b>\$1,487,822</b>	<b>\$993,525</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Program services: Health Care	\$511,323	-	\$511,323	\$415,188
Program services: FES	\$301,840	-	\$301,840	\$320,860
Program services total	\$813,163	-	\$813,163	\$736,048
Management and general	\$171,772	-	\$171,772	\$181,260
Fundraising	\$160,015	-	\$160,015	\$71,059
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,144,950</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,144,950</b>	<b>\$988,367</b>
Change in net assets	\$25,203	\$317,669	\$342,872	\$5,158
Net assets beginning of year	\$190,829	\$105,593	\$296,422	\$291,264
<b>NET ASSETS END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$216,032</b>	<b>\$423,262</b>	<b>\$639,294</b>	<b>\$296,422</b>

CURRENT ASSETS	2015	2014
Cash and cash equivalents	\$375,057	\$165,767
Grants receivable	\$279,454	\$124,061
Deposits and prepaid expenses	\$8,568	\$8,263
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>\$663,079</b>	<b>\$298,091</b>
Property and equipment, net	\$11,085	\$18,2014
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$674,164</b>	<b>\$316,295</b>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2015	2014
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$34,870	\$19,873
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>\$34,870</b>	<b>\$19,873</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		
Unrestricted	\$216,032	\$190,829
Temporarily restricted	\$423,262	\$105,593
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$639,294</b>	<b>\$296,422</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$674,164</b>	<b>\$316,295</b>

## About CCLP

Dedicated to reducing poverty and advancing economic security, the Colorado Center on Law and Policy has served as a voice for low-income Coloradans for more than 15 years.

As a leader in the advocacy community, CCLP provides policymakers, opinion leaders, nonprofit organizations and the general public with research and analysis about issues important to low-income Coloradans.

## Organizations that support us

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