



# HUMAN SERVICES

## BACKGROUND

The mission of Mesa County Department of Human Services is to help individuals and families achieve safety, independence and self-sufficiency through the provision of professional, fiscally responsible, quality human services in a progressive, collaborative and customer service oriented environment.

To accomplish this mission, Mesa County Department of Human Services delivers a very wide array of services to all citizens of Mesa County. The funding for these programs is federal and state revenues, for the most part, with some county support required by mandate for many of the programs. In addition, the county does provide support for some of the programs that are not mandated. The administration of the programs is generally divided among four divisions within the Department of Human Services. Program descriptions by division follow.

## Mesa County Workforce Center Programs

- Wagner – Peyser: Provides employment services for job seekers and job listing and referral for employers; available to everyone in the county
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) : Provides for employment and training opportunities for financially eligible customers as well as dislocated workers and youth
- Colorado Works: Provides for case management services as well as other supportive services to assist families receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families cash assistance to secure training or employment opportunities
- Child Care Assistance Program: Provides families with financial assistance for childcare for their children; available for families up to 225% of poverty.
- Employment First: Provides employment and training opportunities for able-bodied adult Food Stamp recipients
- Consumer Navigator: Provides assistance to individuals with disabilities seeking employment and training opportunities as well as supportive services; functions as an advocacy position
- Veteran's Employment Services: Provides specialized services to veterans to aid them in their job search
- Veteran's Service Officer: Provides for assistance to veterans and their families to receive appropriate benefits and to provide supportive activities as needed.
- Resource Room: Provides access to computerized job search, resume assistance, copying and faxing and job-hunting for anyone at no cost.
- Professional Services: Individualized computer instruction, computer classes, assessment of skills and other professional short-term training on a fee basis.





- General Equivalence Degree (GED): Free GED classes to low income individuals to assist them with obtaining their GED; morning, afternoon and evening classes are offered
- Employer Services: Assistance to employers to help them select a skilled workforce through job seeker assessment and referral.

### **Self Sufficiency Division Programs**

#### Cash Assistance:

- Colorado Works (TANF) provides cash assistance and employment and training services to low-income families.
- Old Age Pension (OAP) provides cash assistance to low-income elderly individuals.
- Aid to the Need Disabled (AND) provides cash assistance to low-income disabled adults.

Medicaid: The Medicaid program provides medical insurance coverage to low-income families and individuals.

Food Assistance (Food Stamps): Food Assistance is provided to low-income families and individuals to help with the cost of food. All benefits are issued through an EBT card (electronics benefits transfer) accessed at the point of purchase.

Energy Assistance (LEAP): The LEAP program provides help to low-income families and individuals with paying winter heating costs. Payments are made directly to energy providers.

Child Support Enforcement: Child support enforcement services are provide to all families who request assistance in establishing and enforcing child support orders.

### **Child Welfare Division Programs**

Overview: Child Welfare services are provided with the goal of stabilizing and strengthen family functioning and parental responsibility. The delivery system emphasizes family strengths, interdisciplinary treatment teams and quality review processes. . Child Welfare Services are intended to strengthen the ability of families to protect and care for their own children, minimize harm to children and youth, and ensure each child served has a safe and permanent living environment.





Child Protection / Youth in Conflict: This program is mandated to accept and investigate referrals concerning the abuse/neglect of children and youth. Following an investigation and confirmation of abuse or neglect, services are offered to the family for the purpose of addressing the issues to assure safety and permanence for the child.

Youth who are in severe conflict with their families and adjudicated delinquent youth may also be served. The purpose of intervention in these situations is individual and community safety and family stabilization.

Family Preservation: Family Preservation services are provided to prevent or reduce the level of out-of-home placement, while assuring children are safe and their well-being is maintained. There are eight basic Family Preservation services. These services are Intensive Family Therapy, Day Treatment, Life Skills, Sexual Abuse Treatment, Special Economic Assistance, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment and Mental Health Therapy. These services are provided in collaboration with Colorado West Mental Health Center, and School District 51.

Out-of-Home Placement: Out-of-home care may be provided by extended family (Kinship), family foster homes, therapeutic foster homes, group homes or residential treatment facilities. The needs of the child determine the intensity and duration of placement and services.

Expedited Permanency Planning (EPP): The EPP Program is for children birth to age six who are placed in out-of-home care through a dependency and neglect petition. The legal process is accelerated to assure services are provided to reunite the children with the family within 12 months of being placed out of the home. Placements with extended family or adoption are vigorously pursued while parents work on their reunification plan. The purpose of the program is to ensure that children under age six are placed in permanent homes as expeditiously as possible.

### **Adult Services Division**

Options for Long-Term Care: This program is also known as the Single Entry Point. The program provides assessment of long-term care need, care planning and case management for the frail elderly and disabled in the community. The staff is responsible for the functional assessment for all applicant/recipients for Medicaid long-term care in Mesa County.





Home Connections: Under this program, the community has come together to fund and implement a unique program wherein minimum supports are provided at reduced rates (or as in-kind services) to avoid or delay progression into formal long-term care services. By providing small supportive services that build on the strengths of the participants is not only cost-effective but enhances quality of life and prolongs independence.

Adult Protective Services: This program serves the at-risk elderly, blind and disabled citizens in the county. These are people who are in danger due to abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect. The focus is to offer services with the least restrictive intervention and to provide outreach and education while respecting the right to self-determination.

Area Agency on Aging for Northwest Colorado: This program serves five counties including Routt, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Garfield and Mesa. It includes programs under the Older Americans Act and Older Coloradans Act. Through contracts with a variety of agencies in the communities of the region, services are provided to all citizens over the age of 60.

Medicaid Non-Emergent Medical Transportation: This program provides transportation for recipients to Medicaid covered services. The recipient must be eligible for Medicaid and be transported to an appointment for Medicaid covered services.

Women's Cancer Control Initiative: This program is operated under a grant from the Center for Disease Control. The program provides outreach, counseling and access to diagnostic service for low-income women on the Western Slope of Colorado.

### **STRATEGIES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES IN CLIFTON AND FRUITVALE**

The current location of the Department of Human Services' offices in the Community Services Building and the WorkForce Center are pretty well located to provide services to the communities of Clifton and Fruitvale. It should also be noted that many of the services provided by the Department of Human Services are provided in the field: specifically, in homes, schools and other facilities. The Adult Services and Child Welfare programs are generally provided outside of our office, therefore the location of our offices near any one community is not essential to the program.





In addition to the fact that many human services programs are provided in homes and other facilities in the community, it should be noted that previous experience has pointed to the fact that many clients of the Department would rather come to the main office to apply or receive services. One of the identified reasons for this is that there is some sense of anonymity when coming to the Department offices, especially because of the co-location with the Mesa County Health Department. Also, for some programs targeting the elderly and disabled the recipient only needs to apply in the office very rarely, if at all.

There also seems to be a misperception that the majority of low-income families or at-risk families and individuals reside in the Clifton or Fruitvale area. While there are pockets of these communities where there seem to be clusters of poverty, the communities as a whole are much like any other area. There are many middle class homes and stable living environments in these areas. The recipients of DHS services are spread over most of the county, with an obvious majority being on the valley floor as it is the most populous area of the county.

With all of this said, the Department of Human Services would be pleased to participate in piloting a satellite outreach office with other county services in the Clifton area. We envision that there would be someone available at an office shared by several county departments on a rotating basis to provide access to assistance payments and WorkForce programs and to provide information and referral to all programs.

In addition the Department does agree with the benefit of expanding in-school programs such as Family Centers and will be happy to partner with the school district and the community to implement such programs in area schools.

### **OTHER PROVIDERS**

In addition to the Mesa County Human Services Department there are several providers which offer various human services in the Clifton-Fruitvale Community. The Mesa County 211 Information Line includes a comprehensive listing of area human service providers including the categories of: Youth Services, Senior and Veteran Services, Child Care, Shelter, Rental Assistance, General Assistance, Food, and Utility Assistance.

The 211 Information Line is the national abbreviated dialing code for free access to health and human services information and referral (I&R). It is available via telephone and the Mesa County internet site at <http://infoline.mesacounty.us/index.cfm>.

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number that makes a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies.





The Mesa County Benevolent Community Partnership works to help eliminate duplication and fill gaps for the needy in Mesa County. It is a network of faith and service based organizations whose primary mission is to serve others through religious and/or service value systems. It is the mission of the Benevolent Community Partnership (BCP) to coordinate the precious financial and human resources of our service providers. BCP's goal is to deliver these services in a strategic manner which maximizes effectiveness and minimizes duplication. BCP is working in the following service areas: Employment, Families, Food, Health Care, Housing, Seniors, Substance Abuse, and Youth.

**Human Services Key Issues and Public Comments:**

- Public perception that there is a high rate of social services cases/clients.
- Perceived lack of community/neighborhood pride - in key areas.
- There are limited medical facilities close- by.
- There are pockets in Clifton that are more involved in Human Service programs than in other areas just as in other parts of the urbanized County.
- Many clients appreciate anonymity when receiving services so locating services too close to home may not be desirable.

