



LARIMER COUNTY WORKS POLICY

Title:	County Diversion		
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Desk:	EC and FAP	Revision:	# 10 07-01-10
Reference:	WFC & FAP		
Agency Letters:	AFDC 97-18-I, TCW 01-4-P, & CW-00-35-I		
Regulations:	3.600.1, 3.605, 3.619.1, B – G, 3.621.1, 3.621.2, 3.621.21 & 3.621.22		

BACKGROUND:

County Diversion Cash Assistance

Welfare reform legislation (C.R.S. 26-2-707) provides a county-option to create a diversion program for families who:

- 1) are **not eligible** for the basic cash assistance;
- 2) have a dependent child living in the home who is related to the adult within the 5th degree of kinship;
- 3) do not need long-term cash assistance;
- 4) have a demonstrable need for a specific item or type of assistance; and
- 5) enter into a written Individual Responsibility Contract (IRC). The IRC must:
 - a) identify the short-term need;
 - b) demonstrate the need for the assistance; and
 - c) define the expectations for the participant;
- 6) all members of the household meet state citizenship and identity verification requirements.

The purpose of the County Diversion Program is to provide short-term assistance, within established limits and guidelines, to assist low-income families to obtain or maintain employment.

County Diversion is a separate program from all other Diversion and payment options provide by Larimer County. Additional county options to provide work related supports are authorized as non-cash assistance to assist with work subsidies to employers or third parties to help cover wages, benefits, supervision and training; supportive services such as child care and transportation for employed families and direct services such as counseling, case management, job retention and other employment related services that do not provide basic income support are also available.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

To be eligible for the County Diversion Program, families must:

1. meet all eligibility requirements list above;
2. have applied, and been denied, Colorado Works due to income or resources;

3. the household cannot be ineligible for Colorado Works as a result of 60 month eligibility limits or as a result of non-compliance sanctions;
4. can not have any client caused claims, judgments, or Intentional Program Violation (IPV) convictions, or under current investigation in the State of Colorado; and
5. The gross monthly income (earned and unearned) must be **below 250%** of federal poverty level guidelines (these poverty guidelines are subject to change on April 1st of each calendar year).

Note: The Diversion Committee may review family situations on a case-by-case basis and authorize funds to those families who establish extenuating circumstances or "good cause" reasons for having household caused claims or judgments. The Director of Larimer County Human Services will review requests from households containing a member who has been convicted of an IPV, who have served the penalty period or from families currently under investigation on a case-by-case basis.

POLICY:

All assistance provided through the County Diversion Program must correlate to an expense which directly relates to an individual maintaining employment or having a bonafide job offer which requires assistance from the Larimer County Program in order to accept and start the job. This means that an applicant must be at risk of losing employment or is unable to accept a job offer if the requested assistance is denied. The hours of employment must match or exceed those which are required of participants who are in the Larimer County Works program and meeting the federally mandated work participation requirements. The federally mandated average weekly hours are:

Federal Fiscal Year	Single Parents with a child under the age of 6	Single Parents with a child age 6 an older	Two Parent Families (without child care)	Two Parent Families (with child care)
2007	22	32	37	57

Applicants for County Diversion assistance who do not meet the number of hours required by the federally mandated work participation requirements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Diversion Committee to determine if a good cause exemption from this requirement can be granted. Good cause may exist for health or safety issues or circumstances beyond the control of the applicant. Court ordered activities which limit an individual's ability to meet work goals do not establish good cause but may contribute to the decision that good cause exists.

The application must be processed through the state computer system as an initial application for Larimer County Works and a denial for income or resource reason must be authorized **before** the County Diversion application can be processed. The application shall be reviewed for all other categories of assistance including Food Stamps, Adult Financial and Medicaid.

PROGRAM YEAR AND LIMITS:

The maximum assistance which can be provided to any household per program year is:

1. Diversion - \$1,500 (under special circumstances, the diversion assistance may exceed this amount upon written approval of the Diversion Committee).
2. Larimer County shall require the participant to agree not to apply for any further assistance under the Colorado Works program the month in which they received the County Diversion payment.

Each program year shall be July 1 through June 30. **All funds are subject to availability and must be approved by the Diversion Committee.**

SERVICES WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC CATEGORIES PER PROGRAM YEAR:

Assistance which may be provided:

Diversion will be a non-recurrent payment intended to provide employment related needs as determined by the assessment process. All assistance guidelines are per family (not per person unless specified as such). Assistance is provided in the form of cash via the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. In the interest of providing assistance in the quickest and most effective manner, Larimer County will not provide County Diversion funds in the form of vendor payments or provide services in lieu of cash payments.

I. Allowable expenditure categories and assistance guidelines for County Diversion are:

Transportation:

- 1) Gas Money - \$100.00 per month
- 2) Vehicle repair (will require submission of one estimate from a licensed repair business). The requested repair can only be approved if the applicant's name appears on the vehicle registration
- 3) Vehicle registration based on base amount without any penalty charges accrued due to late payment
- 4) Bus passes - \$360.00 a year per family
- 5) Other reasonable transportation costs (does not include the down payment for the purchase of a vehicle) -- to be determined on a case-by-case basis

Licenses:

- 1) Colorado State ID/Driver's license - \$15.00 or state fee
- 2) Professional licenses - state fee

Insurance:

- 1) Vehicle insurance - 3 months of the current insurance policy or
- 2) 3 months insurance based on the lowest of 3 signed estimates
- 3) Professional liability insurance if required by state regulations

Job - Related Expenses:

- 1) Uniforms & clothing related to the job - initial need
- 2) Tools/Equipment - \$500.00
- 3) Medical expenses not covered by Medicaid and/or private medical insurance, which is needed to obtain to maintain employment (i.e., DOT physicals, immunizations) - \$200.00

- 4) Other reasonable job-related expenses - determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 5) Payment of child care fees current or delinquent are not covered under County Diversion benefits.

Discretionary:

- 1) To be determined by the Diversion Committee on a case-by-case basis
- 2) Relocation costs - \$500.00
- 3) Child Support Enforcement fee - \$20 or state fee
- 4) Housing expenses in the form of rent when a household has received a legally served eviction notice from their current residence may be considered if the household can demonstrate that an emergency situation has impacted their ability to meet this basic expense and will jeopardize their ability to maintain employment.

II. Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP):

TANF funds may be used to pay provider fees for CCCAP participants upon approval of The Larimer County Board of County Commissioners and/or the Larimer County Director of Human Services through an approved direct charge process at the program level.

III. Internship Employment (aka Transitional):

TANF funds may be used to provide subsidized employment to current Larimer County Works participants. Employees of this program are eligible for up to 12 month paid internship placements. The Director of Human Services and the Director of the Workforce Center will work in conjunction to determine job classifications and the number of participants, as well as make changes to this program as needed.

OTHER INFORMATION

Applications:

Eligibility for County Diversion funding is based on a complete Single Purpose Application (SPA I and II) signed within the 45 days immediately preceding the approval or denial of payment. No new Single Purpose (SPA) application is required for participants in the Transitional Employment program. Receipt of Colorado Basic Cash Benefits in the month in which the placement offer is made establishes eligibility. Access to CCCAP services is established by the presence of a completed CCCAP application and eligibility determination or the receipt of Colorado Basic Cash Assistance in the service month

Funding:

Portions of the funding needed to support these programs may come from Larimer County Works Diversion (County or State) Funds. Specific aspects of the program may deviate from the criteria for other diversion assistance.

Applicant/Participant Responsibilities:

All recipients of Diversion must enter into a Individual Responsibility Contract (IRC) and follow the agreed upon activities which may include, but are not limited to, maintaining employment for an agreed upon time-frame based on the assessment and/or participating in various government or community programs to ensure family stability.

If the family is participating in the Family Resource program, the IRC will also include the stipulation that the family meet the requirements of the Family Service Plan.

Sanctions/Recoveries:

Sanctions will not be imposed for failure to follow (or meet) the terms and conditions (criteria) outlined in the Individual Responsibility Contract. However, a recovery shall be established for the entire (100%) amount of the diversion assistance provided to the participant if the terms and conditions outlined in the IRC are not followed (met).

If the participant was unable to comply with the activities due to circumstances beyond their control (good cause), a recovery may not be established or may be voided as determined by the Diversion Committee and/or the Family Resource program.

All of the rules and regulations that apply to Basic Cash Assistance (i.e., Colorado Works) with regard to eligibility, Intentional Program Violations (IPV's), and recoveries apply to recipients of County Diversion. Hearings apply only if the family is denied a monthly TAG payment and not the County Diversion program.

Intentional Program Violation (IPV's):

Applicants for any of the above programs who have been convicted of an IPV **cannot** receive any TANF funds from any source during the designated disqualification period. Children may receive services paid for by these funds; however, no cash assistance can be provided to the family. The disqualification periods are:

- 12 months for the first offense beginning with the first month any Temporary Assistance Grant (TAG) payment was affected.
- 24 months for the second offense beginning with the first month any TAG payment was affected.
- Permanently for the third offense beginning with the first month any TAG payment was affected.

Employees Applying for County Diversion Programs:

Employees of the Larimer County Department of Human Services or the Workforce Center who apply for Colorado Works shall be interviewed by a lead worker or case manager II (child welfare liaison) and all records shall be kept confidential. The imaged files shall be password protected and the case notes will be located in the Diversion Database that is only accessible by staff with the security to do so. When State Diversion is being considered, the Diversion Committee shall consist of a manager from outside the Benefit Planning Division and shall not include the manager who directly supervises the applicant.