



June 26, 2015

Reggie Bicha, Executive Director
Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS)
1575 Sherman St. 8th Floor
Denver, CO 80203-1714

Dear Director Bicha:

Thank you for soliciting input from Colorado Counties, Inc. on our budget priorities for the Department's SFY 2016-2017 budget year. CCI's members appreciate the opportunity to work in collaboration with the Department in identifying county budget needs.

Thanks in large part to the Department's leadership, counties received critical financial support from the State in the SFY 2015-2016 budget that begins July 1, 2015. Working jointly with you, your staff, the Joint Budget Committee and the Governor's Office, counties received additional child welfare funding to hire new child welfare staff and additional funding for counties with collaborative management programs. We applaud the state for these investments and know they will make a difference in the lives of those we serve. Thank you!

With the help of our staff, we have identified our funding priorities for the SFY 2016-2017 budget year. In summary, those include additional funding for county administration, the TANF block grant and Adult Protection Services. It is our assumption that full funding for all three tiers of the County Tax Base Relief Fund will continue to be a statewide priority in SFY 2016-2017.

The enclosed letter from the Colorado Human Service Director's Association speaks to these priorities in greater detail.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity and for including us in CDHS' budget process.

Sincerely,

Nancy Sharpe
Arapahoe County Commissioner
CCI HHS Steering Committee, Chair

Rose Pugliese
Mesa County Commissioner
CCI HHS Steering Committee, V. Chair

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Chris Kline
Adams County

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San Luis Valley Region:
Maria Garcia
Conejos County

June 4, 2015

To: Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI)

From: Colorado Human Services Director's Association (CHSDA)

Regarding: SFY 2016/2017 Budget Recommendations

Dear CCI,

We appreciate the opportunity to share with you the areas of need and our recommended program funding priorities to best inform and guide the discussions you as Commissioners will be having with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Joint Budget Committee, and State Representatives.

Through the regular monthly committee work of CHSDA, the solicitation of input from all Human Services Directors, and a review of year to date allocation spending as of April 30, 2015, the following items best represent the challenges, issues, and priorities of all Human Services Directors.

Priority #1 – CDHS County Administration Allocation – As of April 30, 2015, Counties have spent 96% of the available CDHS County Administration Allocation. This is primarily a result of continued increase in applications for public assistance and represents the attempts of Counties to meet real and true demand. At a time when we are struggling to meet expected processing timeliness, this allocation needs to be increased to fully fund this effort. CHSDA is willing to partner with CCI and CDHS in the projection and determination of what that adequate funding needs to be.

Priority #1 – A – Fund County Administration Workload Study – The foundation for the CDHS County Administration Allocation is based on a study last conducted in 2007. This study essentially identified worker effort in the measurement of minutes per task. Our systems, processes, and eligibility requirements have changed significantly in the past 8 years. The funding to update this study would ensure that the methodologies used to allocate funds reflect current practice, and that the appropriate levels of funding to support program efforts would be known, and hopefully appropriated, in outlying years.

Priority #2 – Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) – Funding for this program, which focuses on the poorest of the poor in Colorado, has been stagnant since the inception in 1997. While state wide spending analysis indicates that TANF funds will be underspent, a greater percentage of expenditures are being incurred for Basic Cash Assistance. This reality is preventing Counties from focusing on employment, employment supports, and community safety net programs. There is also the upcoming Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which will require Counties to partner with

Workforce Center programs. This is a positive move forward, but will be a great challenge, especially for rural counties, in an environment where need is increasing and funding is not.

Priority #3 – Adult Protection Services – With the added focus on APS, as a state we are projected to be slightly overspent. This does not take into account the additional legislation and mandatory reporting that will become effective January 1, 2016. Workload across the state has increased as a result of the additional efforts and mandatory reporting for the elderly and disabled – a good thing! However, in order to meet the increased need and maintain required case load ratios, the current funding is not adequate. As mentioned above, CHSDA is willing to partner to explore and project this future need, and to assist CDHS in helping to justify and advocate for supplemental funding in SFY 2015-16, should spending continue to trend as it has in this current fiscal year.

Other funding areas that need not be forgotten are listed below. These items are not listed in order of priority; we are simply providing them so as to not lose their importance as CCI engages in the upcoming budget and funding discussions.

County Tax Base Relief – While there have been positive gains, the current funding for CTBR funds some, but not all of the TIER III need. Given that the intent of these funds is to mitigate the inability of a county to meet the county share of mandated programs, keeping this on the radar is prudent.

Child Welfare - We encourage CCI to continue to engage in the discussions and efforts to incrementally address the shortage of case workers as indicated in the workload study, as well as increases in required efforts as a result of the implementation of the Hotline.

Thank you,

Chris Kline
CHSDA President