



# Research to Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Programs in Child Support

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Center For Policy Research

# Overview

- About Center for Policy Research
- Fatherhood and NCP Employment Programs
- Timeline of NCP Employment Programs
- Research and Evaluation of NCP Employment Programs
- Challenges in Conducting NCP Employment Programs
- Lessons from NCP Employment Programs







# About Center for Policy Research

Colorado-based nonprofit research firm

Provides research, evaluation and TA to practitioner & policymakers

Conducted over 25 demonstration projects with DCSS to make CS more family friendly





# Fatherhood and NCP Employment Programs



# Fatherhood and Noncustodial Parent (NCP) Employment Programs

- Research shows Fatherhood & NCP Employment programs improve employment status, earning, support payment & parent-child contact
- Research shows brief parenting-time interventions improve support payment & parent-child contact
- Research shows family-friendly policies & programs can improve child support payment, child contact & IV-D image





# NCP Employment Programs Common Service Components

## Employment

- Skills assessment
- Resume development
- Interview prep
- Group sessions on employment issues
- Cultivating NCP-friendly employers
- Short term training

## Child Support Services

- Child support case review
- Driver's license reinstatement or abeyance of suspension
- Order modification
- Reduction in monthly arrears payment

## Case Management

- Dedicated case manager
- Transportation Assistance
- Limited cash funds to address basic needs or barriers to employment
- Community referrals

## Parenting

- Referral to group sessions on fatherhood, healthy relationships
- Parenting skills trainings



# Timeline of Fatherhood and NCP Employment Programs in U.S. and Colorado





# Timeline of Fatherhood & NCP Employment Programs



## Timeline Start

**1988**

Family Support Act funded Access & Visitation (AV) Grant Program (\$10/million/year) and Parents Fair Share (PFS), the first NCP Employment/Fatherhood Program.

**1997-2003**

OCSE funded Responsible Fatherhood Programs demonstration, Colorado started Parent Opportunity Program (POP) in El Paso County, Evaluation of both by CPR





# Timeline of Fatherhood & NCP Employment Programs



**2005**

DRA created Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) Grants, \$50-\$75million/yr for competitive grants to Fatherhood Programs. CDHS awarded \$10 million for Be There for Your Kids .

**2015-2020**

39 HMRF awards in 19 states; In 2020-2025, 58 awards in 25 states (CDHS ECE got \$7million)

**2008-2010**

Arapahoe County conducts Parents to Work!; Evaluation by CPR

**2011-2018**

OPRE funds rigorous PACT evaluation in 4 Fatherhood Programs in 2 states and 5,522 fathers



# Timeline of Fatherhood & NCP Employment Programs



**2012-2018**

OCSE funds many 1115s on NCP employment & parenting-time & rigorous CSPED evaluation in 8 states and 10,173 NCPs, CPR assists with program monitoring & evaluation in CO and TN

**2020-2024**

CDHS implements IMPACS using TANF funds

**2024**

OCSS releases Final Rule on Employment & Training Programs for NCPs, no policy guidance yet





# Findings from Evaluations of NCP Employment Programs



# NCP Employment Program Evaluations

- The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (**ETJD**)
- Parents and Children Together (**PACT**)
- Child Support Noncustodial Demonstration (**CSPED**)
- Parents' Fair Share (**PFS**)
- Strengthening Families (**SF**) Through Stronger Fathers Initiative
- Noncustodial Parent Choices (**NCP C**) Program
- Parents to Work! (**PtW**)







# Who are the Fathers/NCPs in Employment & Fatherhood Programs?

|                                                      | CSPED (n=10,173)                  | PACT (n=5,522)                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Male                                                 | 90%                               | 100%                                                      |
| Less than a high school degree or GED                | 26%                               | 31%                                                       |
| Racial minority                                      | 73%                               | 87%                                                       |
| Never married                                        | 52%                               | 68% (Parents to Work!)                                    |
| Children with more than one partner                  | 62%                               | 46%                                                       |
| Hadn't worked for pay in previous 30 days            | 48%                               | 30% in past 6 months                                      |
| Average monthly earnings if worked                   | \$769                             | \$616                                                     |
| Ever convicted for a crime                           | 68%                               | 73%                                                       |
| Homeless, Halfway house, or pays reduced rent        | 44%                               | 54%                                                       |
| No access to car or public transport                 | 30%                               | 32% (Parents to Work!)                                    |
| Did not see child as much as they wanted             | 80%                               | 80%                                                       |
| Average monthly support order at enrollment & burden | \$401<br>58% owe half of earnings | \$327 (Parents to Work!)<br>Child Support 34% of earnings |



# Summary of Outcomes for Seven NCP Employment Programs Rigorously Evaluated

|                                                                  | ETJD | PACT | CSPED | PFS | SF | NCP C | PtW |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|-----|----|-------|-----|
| Employment in the year following enrollment                      | 1    | 4    | 3     | 4   | 1  | 1     | 1   |
| Consecutive quarters employed in year after enrollment           |      | 2    |       |     |    |       |     |
| Average monthly earnings in the year following enrollment        | 1    |      | 3     | 4   | 1  |       | 1   |
| Any child support payment paid in the year following enrollment  | 4    |      | 4     | 2   | 1  | 1     | 1   |
| Avg. monthly child support payments in the year after enrollment | 1    |      |       | 4   | 1  | 1     | 1   |
| Order modified after program entry                               |      |      | 1     | 1   |    |       |     |
| Satisfaction with child support services after program entry     |      |      | 1     |     |    |       |     |
| Knowing how to request a change in child support order           |      | 1    |       |     |    |       |     |
| Increased time with child                                        |      | 2    | 3     | 4   |    |       |     |

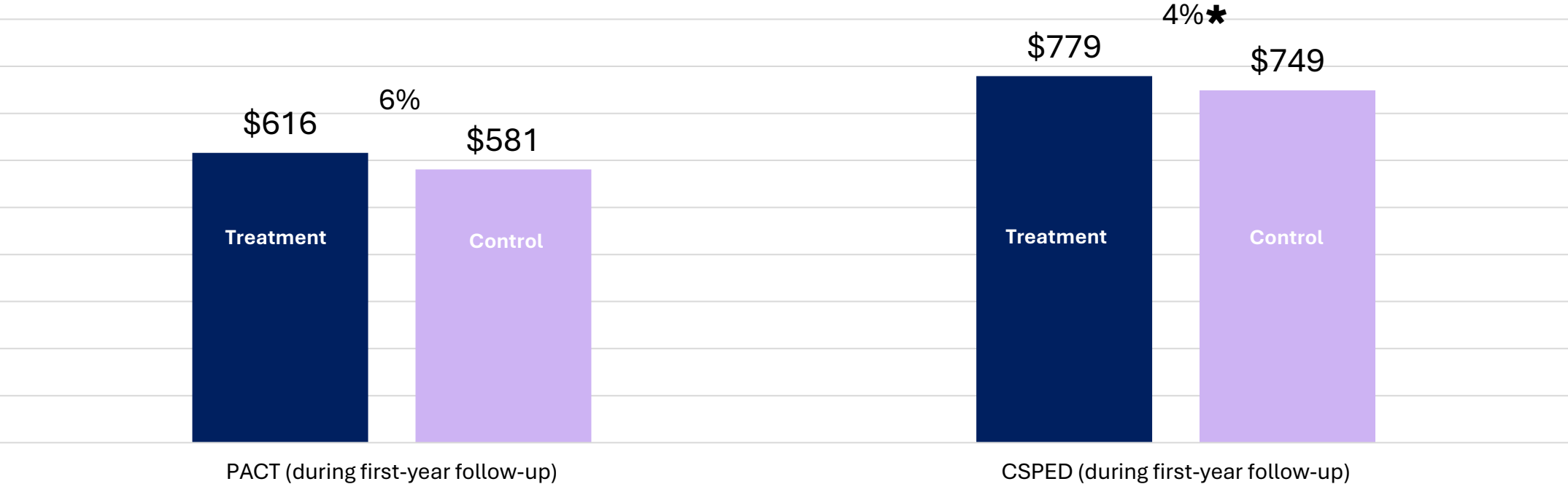
Key: 1 – Significant at .01; 2 – Significant at .05; 3 – Significant at .10; 4 – Gains, but not significant



# Impact on Earnings

Elaine Sorensen, OPRE, November 2020

Average Monthly Earnings During First and Final Year After Enrollment  
Based on Quarterly Wage Data



\* Statistically significant at .1



# Impact on Percent Employed

Elaine Sorensen, OPRE, November 2020

Average Percent With Earnings During First and Final Year After Enrollment Based on Quarterly Wage Data



\* Statistically significant at .1

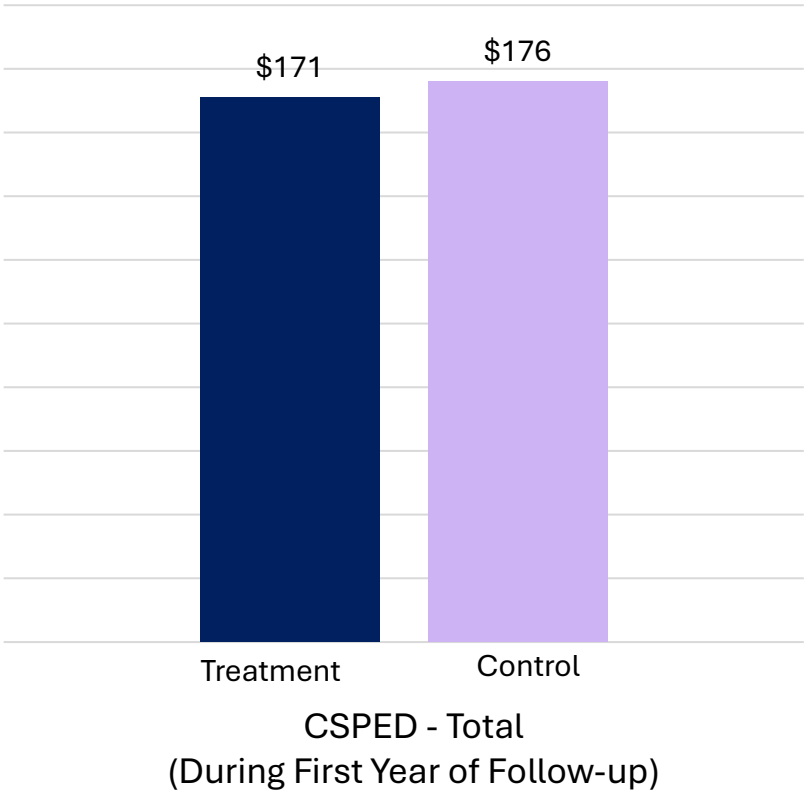




# Impact on Child Support Payments

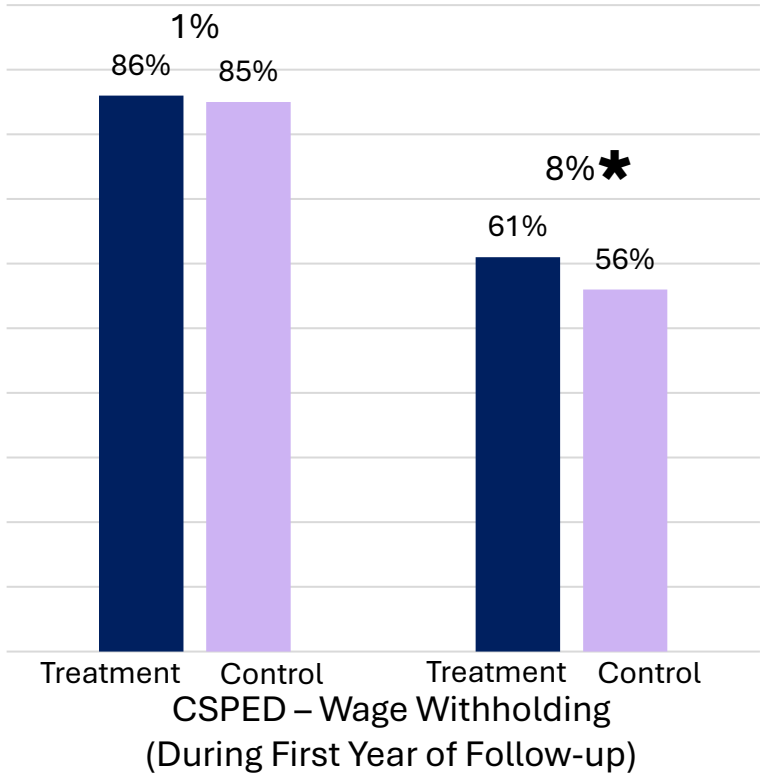
## Impact on Amount of Child Support Paid

Elaine Sorensen, OPRE, November 2020



## Impact on Percent Who Paid Child Support

Elaine Sorensen, OPRE, November 2020



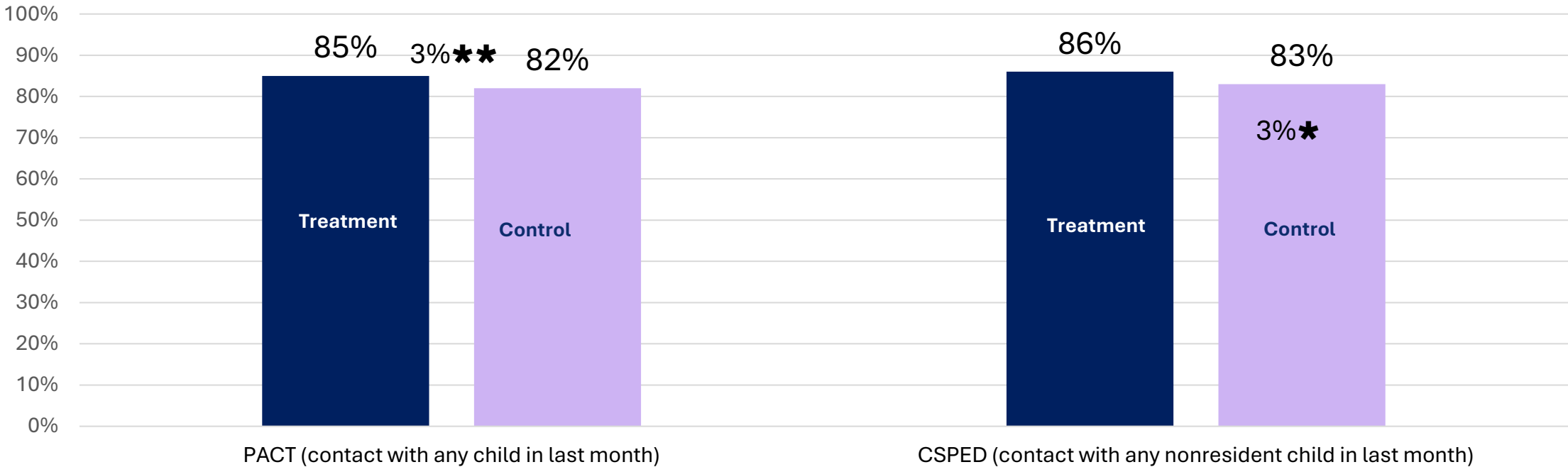
\* Statistically significant at .1



# Impact on Percent Who Had Contact with Their Children

Elaine Sorensen, OPRE, November 2020

Percent of Noncustodial Parents Who Had Any Contact with Their Children During First and Final Year After Enrollment Based on 12-Month Follow-up Survey



\*\* Statistically significant at .05

\* Statistically significant at .1



# Challenges in Conducting NCP Employment Programs



# Referral and Enrollment Challenges

***Many NCPs are behind in their CS payments, but few enroll***

- NCP instability, mobility and lack of motivation
- Low referrals due to high CS worker caseloads & staff turnover
- Program eligibility requirements that may exclude many NCPs
- Lack of motivation and staff education on program referral and enrollment process
- Lengthy enrollment procedures & program participation requirements



# Service Delivery Challenges

***NCPs have many needs that are not easily addressed***

- Many NCPs are a "hard-to-employ" population
- Available jobs for NCPs pay low wages
- Supportive service funds low and don't cover many expenses
- Child support orders are 30%-50% of income & \$12,300 in arrears
- Child support relief is hard to get. Many NCPs do not qualify for child support order modifications or license reinstatement





# Challenges Engaging NCPs

***NCPs behind in their CS payments are difficult to engage***

- Nearly 1/3 of enrolled NCPs do not participate in services:
  - Multiple barriers to employment
  - Unstable housing and lack of transportation
  - Various community programs haven't worked in the past
  - Distrust of the child support system
  - Mental health and substance use issues
  - Lack of motivation





# Lessons from NCP Employment Programs





# Lessons from NCP Employment Programs- Child Support

Involve child support in service  
provision

Implement effective  
recruitment efforts and  
streamline referral process



# Lessons from NCP Employment Programs- Case Management

Practice  
comprehensive case  
management

Use effective  
engagement  
strategies

Address barriers to  
employment and  
self-sufficiency



# Lessons from NCP Employment Programs- Employment Services

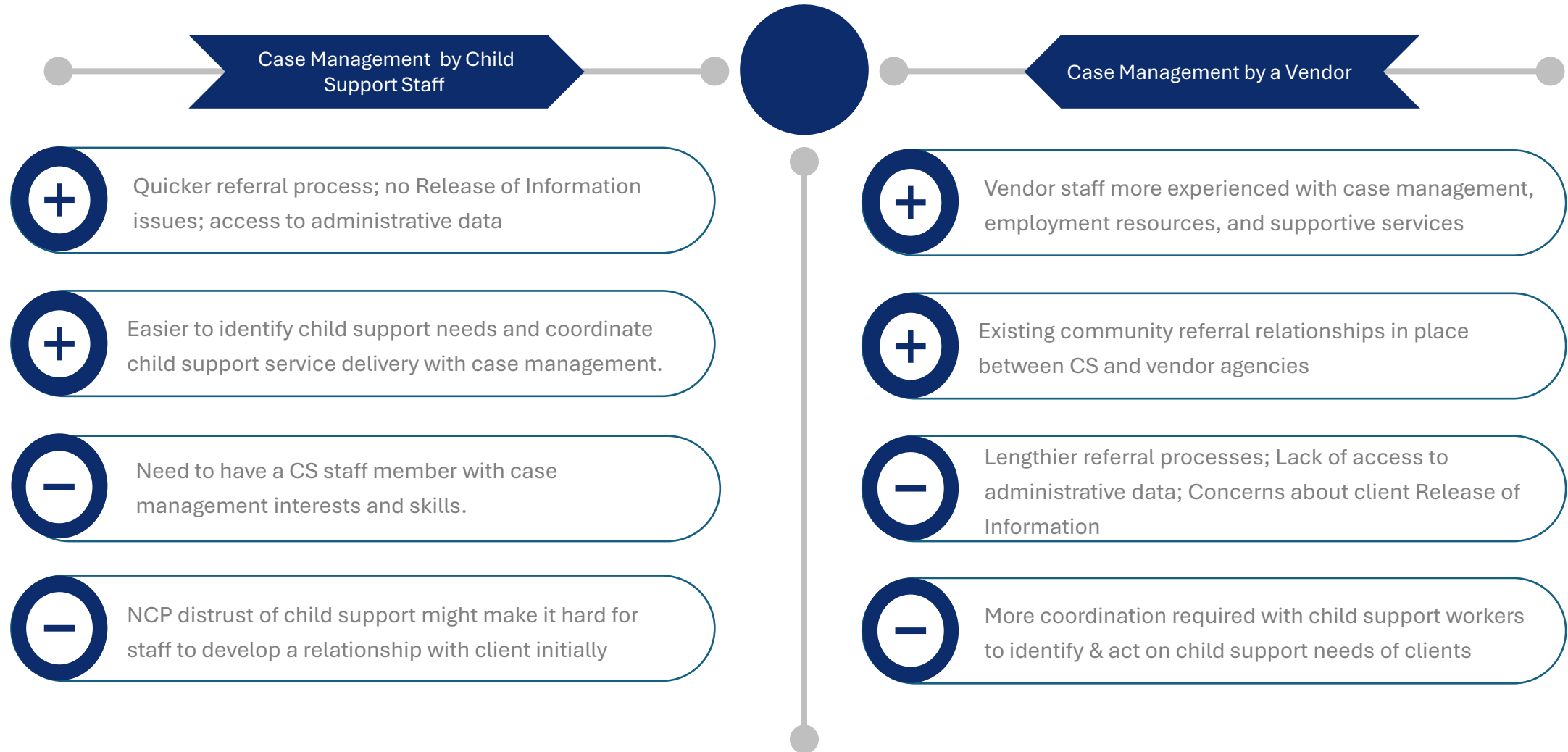
Use intensive work program  
strategies

Use comprehensive  
employment services





# Lessons from NCP Employment Programs- Service Provision Arrangements





# Questions/Comments?

Additional Resources:

[www.centerforpolicyresearch.org](http://www.centerforpolicyresearch.org)

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# Improved Payments and Child Success (IMPACS) Program

Keri Batchelder, Deputy Director, CO CSS Program



# Agenda

- IMPACS Overview
  - Goals and Guiding Principles
  - History
  - Service Providers
- Description of Services & Clients
- IMPACS Evaluation Key Findings





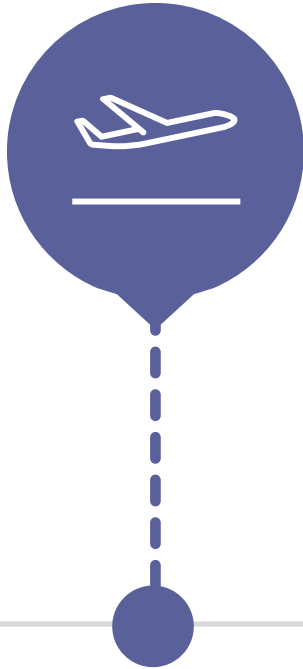
# IMPACS Overview





**2020**

CO legislature gives CDHS TANF funding to create the IMPACS program which is open to all interested counties.



**March  
2021**

IMPACS launches Phase I with 4 participating counties and 3 vendor organizations offering job and case management services.



**June  
2023**

IMPACS concludes Phase I having served 210 NCPs. CDHS launches Phase II with 2 new counties and 1 more job & case management arrangement—an internal child support agency.



**June  
2025**

IMPACS concludes Phase II having referred 644 NCPs and served 461 since program start. CDHS launches Phase III with lessons learned from two previous phases.



**July  
2027**

Current IMPACS appropriation ends. Final evaluation of program and its outcomes to be released.

# History of IMPACS





# IMPACS Program Goals and Guiding Principles

## Guiding Principle:

- IMPACS furthers CDHS's commitment to a two-generation (2Gen) approach
- 2Gen approaches seek to coordinate supportive services to meet the needs of all family members

## Goals:

- Increasing the number of child support cases that receive payment and the amount paid
- Improving employment outcomes for NCPs behind in payments
- Addressing barriers to NCP employment and earning
- Enhancing parents' relationships with their children





# IMPACS Service Providers

## Employment Services of Weld County- Serving Weld County

- Workforce Center housed within the Weld County Department of Human Services, specializing in employment, education, and training resources
- Participated in Phase I only of the project

## Hilltop Family Resource Center- Serving Montrose and Delta Counties

- Family Resource Center providing an array of services to families and individuals in Western Colorado
- Involved since inception of IMPACS

## Discover Goodwill - Serving Denver, Jefferson, and Pueblo Counties

- Nonprofit organization offering multiple employment and anti-poverty programs
- Denver involved since inception; Jefferson joined 1/2023; Pueblo joined 9/2024

## Larimer County Child Support Services - Serving Larimer County

- Provides IMPACS services within the child support program from a staff member who is both a case manager and an enforcement worker
- Joined in Phase II in May 2024



# Description of Services & Clients



# Services

- IMPACS providers help clients address basic needs, obtain training, secure jobs, increase contact with children, and meet their child support obligations
- IMPACS provides services across five categories:
  - Case management
  - Employment
  - Child support
  - Supportive services (e.g., flexible cash funds for basic needs)
  - Parenting
- Average Number of Hours Clients Spent with IMPACS Staff: 12.4 hours



# Services

*“They made me feel like I had somebody that I can depend on. And they haven’t let me down yet. Like if I have a problem, I call them, and they’re there.” —*

Goodwill client

## Case Management Services

Included needs assessments, goal setting, encouragement, support, and collaboration with the referring child support agency.

**45.9%** of all provided IMPACS Services were case management





# Services

## Employment Services

Included developing employment plans, creating and updating resumes, interview prep, providing information on job leads, training opportunities and workforce programs, and cultivating employers.

**30.6%** of all provided IMPACS Services were employment services

*“Kim is a beast at finding jobs. She’s a monster, man. She will get it done . . . [She] sits in that little bitty cubicle and makes miracles happen.” — Goodwill client*



# Services



## Child Support Services

Included assisting clients with completing applications for order modification, exploring license reinstatement or abeyance of suspension activities, reducing monthly arrears payments, and/or delaying initiation of income assignment while getting NCP housing and transportation in place.

**1.3%** of all provided IMPACS Services were child support services

*“It is huge to have a program to support ‘the bad guy.’ We reach out to the Denver child support team and advocate for clients. We can help them get more parenting time and get their licenses reinstated.”*

*- IMPACS Case Manager*

# Services

*“What motivates me is seeing my girls because I feel like every girl needs their father. My son, too, is helping me be a man, but every girl needs their dad.”* — Goodwill client

## Parenting Time Services

Included coaching on increasing and enhancing time with children and referrals to fatherhood or parenting classes or other services

**3.8%** of all provided IMPACS Services were parenting time services



# Services

## Supportive Services

Included addressing basic needs and immediate barriers clients faced, such as a lack of secure housing, food, or transportation and responding to crises. IMPACS programs provided financial support, such as rent assistance, car repairs, or transportation vouchers.

**18.4%** of all provided IMPACS Services were supportive services



*“They gave me a computer. That was huge because it made it a lot easier for me to tap into what is going on, compared to just hearing it from the streets . . . . They made sure I had tokens or Uber so if I was going to be late, I got help, full help.” —  
Goodwill client*

# Supportive Services

**Table 1.**  
Numbers and Percentages of IMPACS Clients Receiving Financial Assistance, Mean Amounts and Numbers of Payments, and Totals by Service Provider

|                      | Clients Receiving Financial Assistance | Mean Amount of Assistance for Total Clients | Mean Amount of Assistance for Clients Receiving Assistance | Mean # of Payments per Clients Receiving Assistance | Total Financial Assistance Provided |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Total (n=447)</b> | <b>336 (75.2%)</b>                     | <b>\$694.78</b>                             | <b>\$924.30</b>                                            | <b>4.6</b>                                          | <b>\$310,566</b>                    |

**Table 2.**  
Total Amounts Spent for Clients in Various Expenditure Categories by IMPACS Service Providers

|                      | Total Amount for Housing, Utilities, & Groceries | Total Amount for Transportation | Total Amount for Child Related Costs | Total Amount for Technology | Total Amount for Work Expenses | Total Amount for Miscellaneous Expenses* |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Total (n=447)</b> | <b>\$101,653.33</b>                              | <b>\$36,959.04</b>              | <b>\$2,050.26</b>                    | <b>\$4,058.15</b>           | <b>\$99,801.18</b>             | <b>\$66,803.05</b>                       |

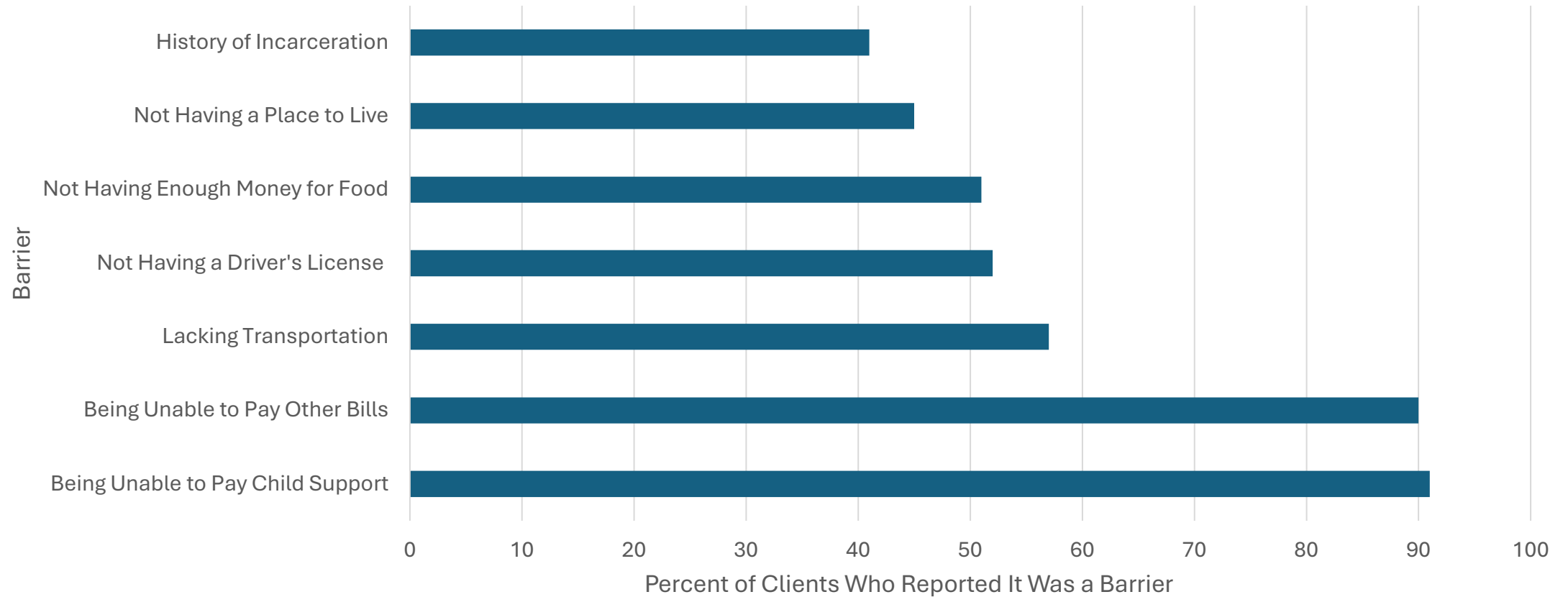




# Clients



Top Barriers to Self Sufficiency Reported by Clients at Enrollment  
(n=432)





# IMPACS Evaluation Key Findings





# Phase II Key Findings: Milestones

IMPACS case managers are encouraged to track milestones that clients achieve during their participation in the program. Milestones represent significant accomplishments or efforts that clients make while participating in IMPACS. They are recorded in five areas and track with the objectives of the IMPACS program: employment, case management, parenting, supportive services, and child support.

Child Support Milestones  
Achieved



Employment Milestones  
Achieved



Parenting Milestones  
Achieved



# Phase II Key Findings: Child Support

For clients who were considered "graduated" at the end of Phase I (n=22), IMPACS services increased child support payments by 54% compared to pre-service levels.

Child support administrators in Montrose and Larimer County report improved child support payment patterns for IMPACS clients.

Analysis of child support payments for all IMPACS clients prior to and following enrollment in IMPACS, using child support administrative data, is pending.



# Phase II Key Findings: Barriers to Self Sufficiency

IMPACS clients reported a **decrease in the number and severity of barriers** to self-sufficiency 6-, 12-, and 18 months after enrollment

Table 3.  
Average Change in Barriers Encountered and Scores Across all IMPACS Sites and Counties by Survey Type, Phase I and Phase II

|                                | Change from Intake to 6-Month Follow Up (n=56) | Change from Intake to 12-Month Follow Up (n=42) | Change from Intake to 18-Month Follow Up (n=50) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Number of Barriers Encountered | -2.95*                                         | -4.00*                                          | -3.38*                                          |
| Barriers Scale Score           | -6.86*                                         | -9.95*                                          | -5.52*                                          |

A negative change indicates a reduction in the number of barriers or reduction in score.

\* p<.001



# Testimonials

*“I have reached out to a company, and with the help of my resume, it is interested in hiring me... Looks like this is headed in a great direction and I wanted to give [IMPACS] a big thanks for the resume and everything you have helped me with...”*

*“You know how much of a blessing [IMPACS] is to me and my kids. I thank you again for all your support you’ve been given us.”*

*“I have officially caught up with rent. Work is going great, and I feel confident that I can focus on my child support payments.”*

*“I am excited to start work on Monday at Amazon, and am eager to learn my job duties, and have a routine. Now having a home and employment allows me to spend more time with my daughter.”*







# Challenges Implementing IMPACS

- Eligibility requirements for clients and limits on data sharing with vendor organizations
  - Written ROI requirements for potential clients reduces referral activity
  - Exclusions of NCPs with a non-disclosure indicator limits potential participants
  - Lack of vendor access to ACSES increases administrative burden for CS staff
- Lack of affordable housing a very high psychological/practical barrier
- Client barriers and motivation issues
  - Mental and behavioral health issues or complex justice involvement histories
  - Limited motivation “I give clients gift cards to urge them to engage. And even then, I hear them say, ‘I don’t know if I want help yet.’”
- Staff turnover at vendor agencies
- High CS caseloads and uneven staff awareness & comfort with program
- Multiple father-supportive programs in some counties is confusing

# Recommendations from IMPACS Phase II

- Have CS workers routinely recruit NCPs behind in their CS payments
- Eliminate eligibility requirements and use simplified referral and enrollment processes
- Prepare a "script" so CS workers can describe the benefits of IMPACS including help with child support and limited cash assistance for basic needs
- Expand job training opportunities and access to higher paying jobs
- Use child support incentives for participation (e.g. lower monthly arrears, delay license suspension or explore reinstatement)
- Discuss pros and cons of delivering case management services internally in child support versus contracting with external vendor
- Expand IMPACS to new counties in Colorado





# Thank You!

*If you have any additional questions, feel free to reach out to Colorado's Fatherhood and Parent Employment Administrator, Sarah Culp at [sarah.culp@state.co.us](mailto:sarah.culp@state.co.us) .*

*Data and findings taken from IMPACS Phase II Annual Report. To see report please reach out to the Lead Project Evaluator, Jessica Pearson at [jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org](mailto:jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org).*







# Hennepin County Workforce Development



Workforce Development Officer

# Hennepin County: Reducing and eliminating employment disparities

- Provide low-barrier training and employment services and supports to residents
- Increase opportunities for residents to earn a livable wage
- Increase support access to:
  - Housing
  - Healthcare
  - Education
  - Transportation and Connectivity



# Workforce development federated model

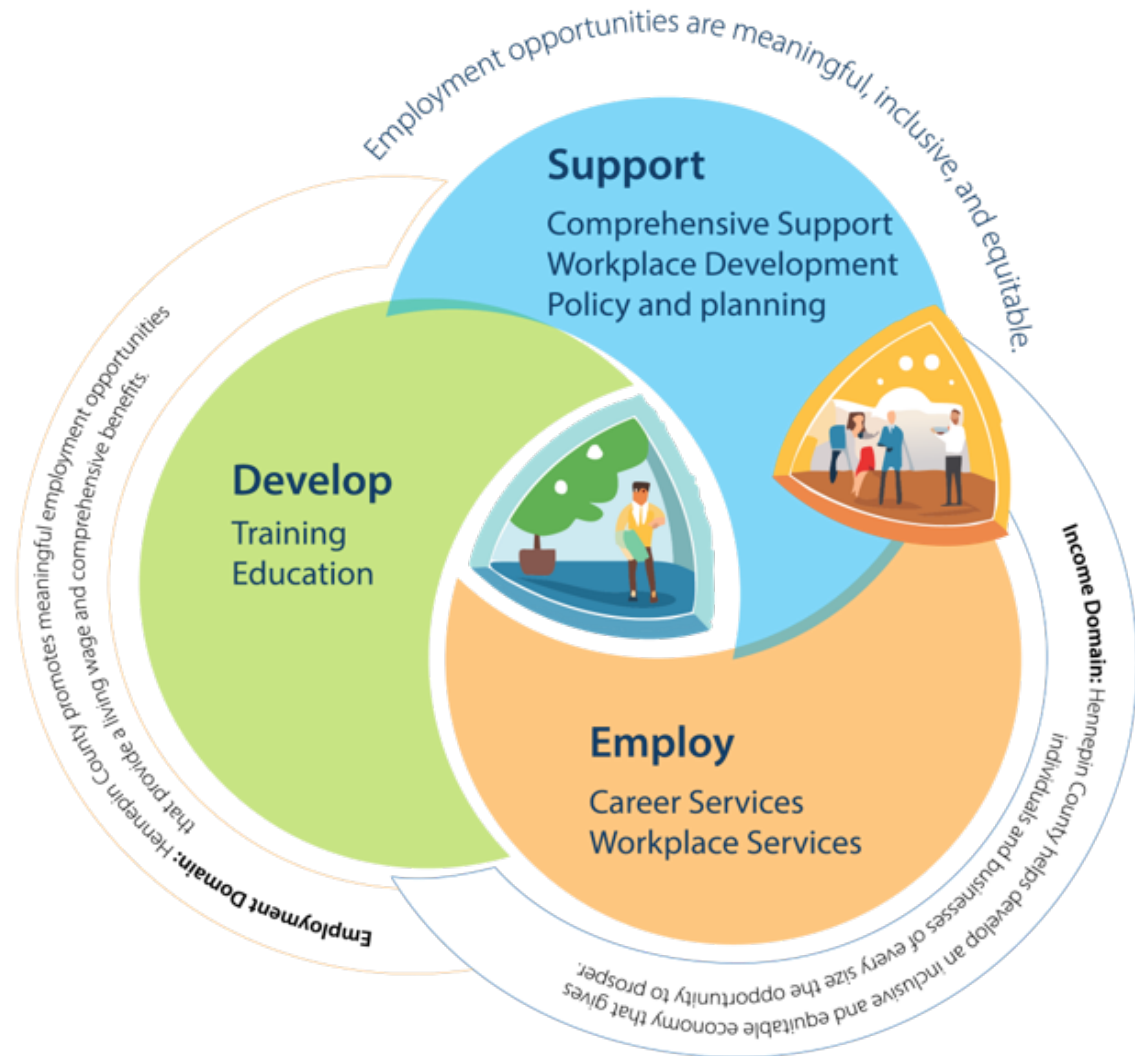
- Serves as the strategic hub for all workforce-related activities within Hennepin County
- Federated structure balances flexibility and specialization at the department level with strategic consistency, equity, and efficiency at the system level
- Prevents fragmentation, improves outcomes for residents, and ensures the public workforce system is both inclusive and high performing





# Hennepin County Workforce development framework

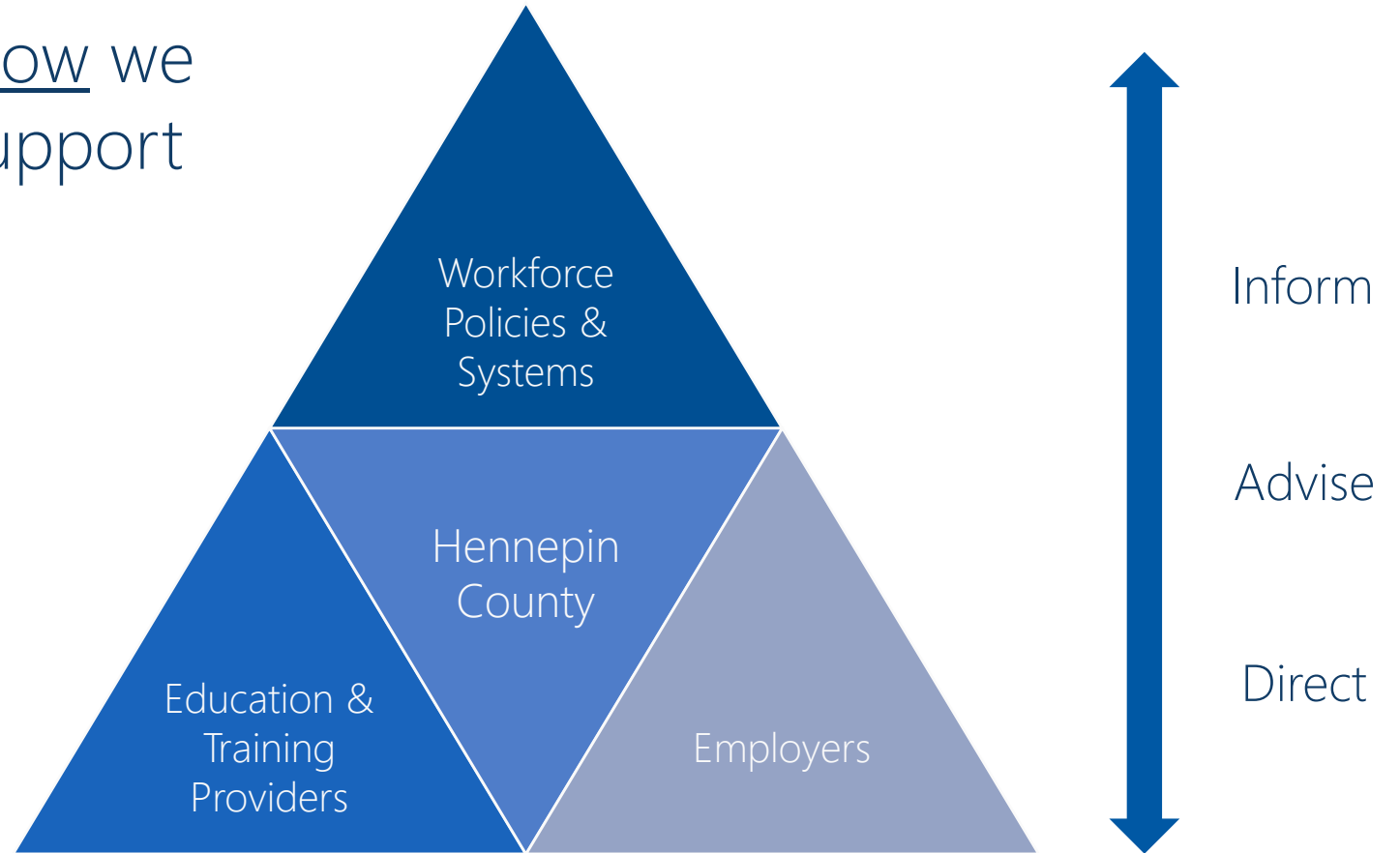
Connects what we do to  
create opportunities in  
workforce and reduce  
disparities in  
employment and income



# Our role in the workforce ecosystem

Our approach defines how we work with partners to support communities:

- Direct
- Advise
- Inform



# Leveraging and amplifying funding

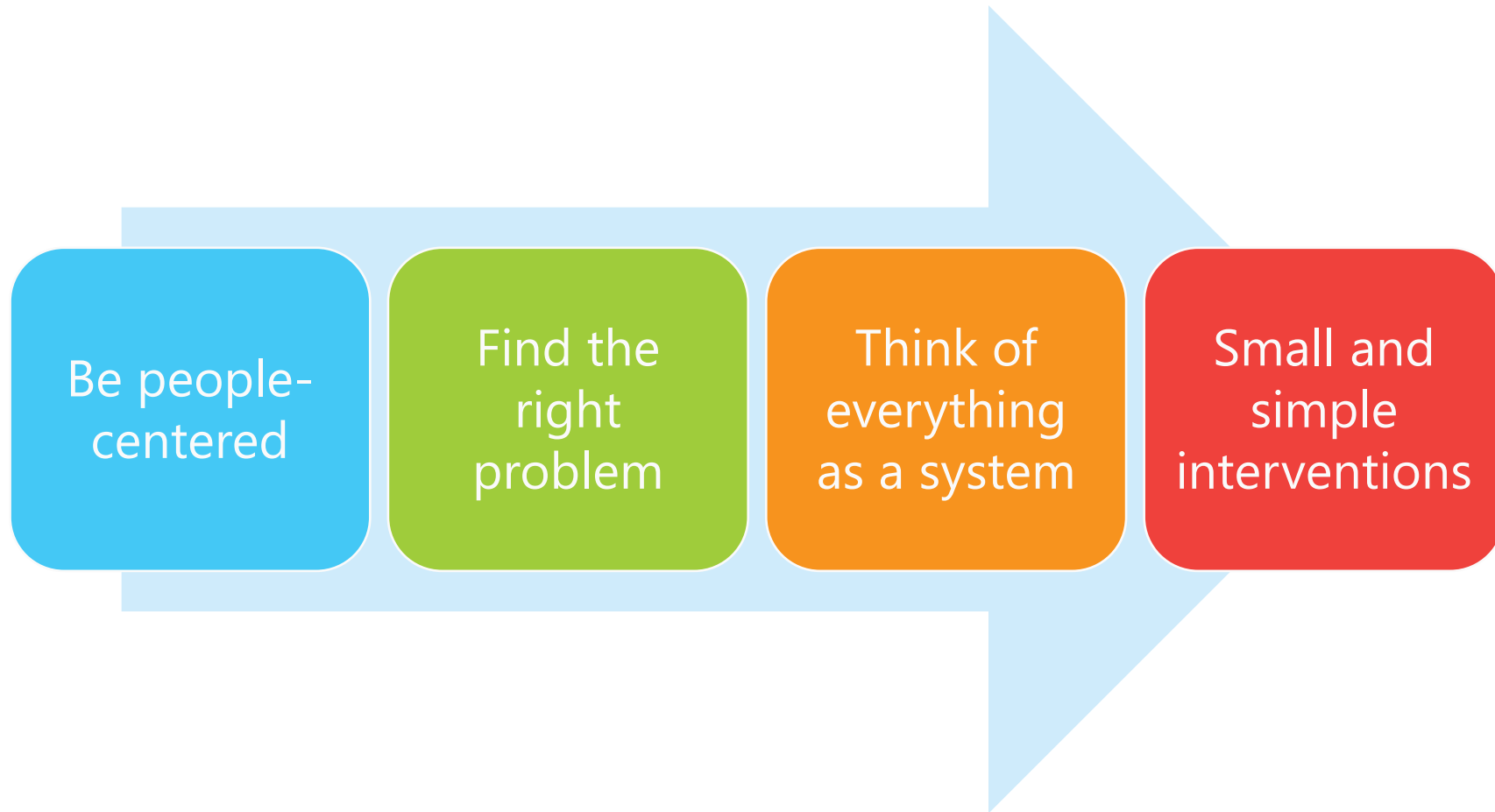
- Workforce development systems alignment and collaborations
- Multiple funding sources
  - Property tax
  - Federal funds – ARPA
  - WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker
  - SNAP Employment & Training



# Child Support Parent Re-engagement Pilot Program (PREPP)



# Human-centered design principles:





# Hennepin County: PREPP lessons learned

Economic Support Services buy-in

Clear communication to parents about program purpose and offerings

Low-barrier program participation requirements

Participant-driven

Flexible support dollars

Strong coordination between Economic Support Services and E&T provider



May Xiong

Chief Workforce Development Officer

Department of Workforce Development

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# Questions?

1. What tools have been instrumental in setting up parental employment programs?
2. What is the first step in starting a program? Funding or concept?
3. Other questions:
  - Key Partnerships
  - Funding
  - Engagement and attrition
  - Challenges