

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people

OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES
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February 15, 2011

The Honorable Betty Boyd, Chair, Senate Health &
Human Services Committee
The Honorable Ken Summers, Chair, House Health &
Environment Committee
Colorado State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203

The Honorable Mary Hodge
Chair, Joint Budget Committee
200 E. 14th Avenue, 3rd Floor
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Boyd, Representative Summers, and Senator Hodge:

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly passed Senate Bill 08-177, which, among many things, created the Statewide Strategic Use Fund (SSUF) administered by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). The fund is used to award competitive grants that provide targeted services and support to low-income families throughout Colorado. Section 26-2-721.3 (7) C.R.S. requires CDHS to annually report to the Joint Budget Committee and the Health and Human Services Committees of both the Senate and House on the use of the appropriated funds in the preceding fiscal year.

In June 2010, 29 projects that had been awarded \$9.99 Million in grant funds by CDHS in SFY 2009 completed their projects. Funds delivered a wide array of services to TANF eligible families in every corner of the state. Significant outcomes were reported in grantees' final reports, which are summarized in the attached report. For SFY 2010, the Department awarded \$9.7 Million to 22 agencies to support projects across the state. This second round of grants will continue through June 30, 2011. For SFY 2011, the Department awarded \$4.3 Million in grant funds to 20 agencies to aid struggling families across the state. This third round of grants will continue through June 30, 2012. During the 2010 legislative session, SB 10-010 was passed, allowing two-percent of the appropriation to be used for an evaluation. The Department has contracted \$80,000 with Colorado State University to conduct a rigorous, scientific evaluation of the SSUF program.

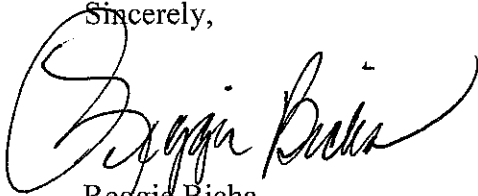
Grantees submit regular invoices and quarterly reports to the Department that detail the expenditure of funds for eligible activities that are providing direct services and otherwise aiding Colorado's most

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vulnerable families. Additionally, each grantee participates in a detailed, on-site monitoring visit where all aspects of the grant-funded project are explored and training and technical assistance is provided.

We are pleased to submit this report that details the progress and outcomes achieved by the SSUF grantees. As you will see, SSUF funds are serving struggling families in new ways – delivering strategic and wide-reaching services outside the scope of what counties can do with their TANF block grant. Moreover, struggling families are receiving various and targeted support they need in order to become self-sufficient. If you have any questions, please contact Samantha O’Neill-Dunbar at the Colorado Works program, (303) 866-2864 or Samantha.oneilldunbar@state.co.us. Thank you for your commitment to Colorado’s families through your support of the Statewide Strategic Use Fund program.

Sincerely,



Reggie Bicha
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Members of the House Health and Environment Committee
Members of the Joint Budget Committee
Ms. Kelly Stapleton, Legislative Council Staff
Ms. Elizabeth Burger, Legislative Council Staff
Ms. Amanda Bickel, Joint Budget Committee Staff

Statewide Strategic Use Fund
Annual Report to the Colorado General Assembly
February 15, 2011

Background

The Statewide Strategic Use Fund (SSUF) is a unique use of federal TANF funds to provide targeted services and support to under-served low-income families throughout Colorado. The SSUF was created by SB08-177 to aid struggling families in new ways – through strategic, broad-reaching initiatives that lead to positive outcomes on a broad level (in terms of both populations served and areas impacted) and across a sustained period of time. In the first two years of existence (SFYs 2008-09 and 2009-10), the General Assembly appropriated \$10 Million of TANF funds to the Colorado Department of Human Services for the SSUF. In state fiscal year 2010-11, the General Assembly appropriated \$4 Million to the SSUF. To date, funds have been granted to 71 nonprofit organizations, county departments, and state agencies to meet identified needs of TANF-eligible populations in communities across the state.

Grant applications are reviewed by the Strategic Allocation Committee (SAC), appointed by the State Board for Human Services, on a competitive basis. Through the process, each application is individually scored against set criteria and then weighed against the total pool of applicants. Projects representing a multi-county or statewide impact are prioritized; geographic equity is also considered. Successful grantees use a collaborative model in delivering services, are evidence based, and serve a unique need that cannot be met through traditional funding sources.

All three grant periods have been extremely competitive, evident of the depth of unmet needs among struggling families. Grant funds deliver a wide array of services, including strengthening vulnerable families; employment and training; mental health; positive youth development; housing and homelessness; assisting victims of domestic violence; building capacity within the child welfare system; transportation; pregnancy prevention; refugee services; resources coordination; and more. This report contains information about all three rounds of SSUF grantees. Final outcomes are presented for the first round of grantees, who's grant-funded projects concluded in June 2010. Excerpts and progress reports are presented from the second and third rounds of grantees, both of which are actively engaged in delivering services.

Round I

In the first round of SSUF grants, the Department received 167 applications requesting nearly \$62.5 Million in grant funds. Ultimately, 29 organizations were awarded \$9.99 Million in SSUF grants to support a wide array of innovative projects all across Colorado. Grantees' contracts began in May 2009; projects ended on June 30, 2010. Grant funds resulted in positive outcomes for tens of thousands of TANF eligible families, as described below:

Child Welfare

A \$50,000 grant was awarded to **Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center** to provide legal services, via volunteer attorneys, to poor families in Jefferson and Denver counties who are

struggling to maintain custody of their children due to legal, financial, family, or domestic violence matters. Through the course of the project, the Prevention Partnership assisted 68 families to keep children with kinship caregivers and avoid formal Department of Human Services intervention. The Domestic Violence Program supported 491 children in 292 cases via child-focused recommendations to the courts. The Domestic Violence Program was honored by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges as “one of the most effective and innovative programs for children in the nation.” This project was refunded in Round III.

The **Southern Ute Indian Tribe** received \$111,603 in SSUF grant funds to offer a continuum of care for court-involved families via Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Strengthening Families (SF) parenting education. MST is an intervention for families in immediate crisis to maintain a child in their home; SF is used as a follow up service to MST to reinforce and stabilize new family behaviors or as a primary intervention for lower-risk cases when the need for parenting skills training is an appropriate prevention service. At the close of the project, 24 people had participated in the MST program. Only one youth was placed outside of the home. In the SF program, 35 adults and 31 youth were served in family classes; 121 adults received jailed parent classes. The program reported a reduction in all factors, including 80% reduction in substance abuse charges and 90% reduction in violence charges. The program also reported that parent behavior outcomes improved over the treatment period.

The **American Humane Association** received \$254,342 to enhance the child welfare system throughout Colorado. The grantee used data from the Colorado Trails System to demonstrate disproportionality and disparity in child welfare services across Colorado. Through the grant, each county was made aware of the status of both services and disparities in their area. Additionally, grant funds assisted efforts in community engagement, workforce development, and engaging allied professionals. As a result of this project, capacity within the child welfare system has been improved. The project established a critical infrastructure, sound methodology, and valid dissemination processes. This project was re-funded in Round III.

The **Tennyson Center for Children** received a SSUF grant of \$304,113 to provide in-home and community-based services to aid caregivers in Metro Denver maintain a child in their home, who might otherwise be placed in an out-of-home placement. Staff and families worked together to address child protection concerns, emotional and behavioral challenges, domestic violence, parenting, child trauma, educational needs, and specific mental health concerns. Additionally, marriage and family counseling and training in life skills and job acquisition/maintenance was provided. In total, 63 families received intensive services to maintain and/or reunify families. 599 struggling families received marriage and family counseling. The grantee reported that they will continue to provide services to struggling families as long as needs continue.

Domestic Violence

A \$250,000 SSUF grant was awarded to the **Women’s Crisis & Family Outreach Center** to address systemic issues of domestic violence via expanded outreach, shelter, therapy, case management, and expert testimony. Services were provided in Cheyenne, Lincoln, Elbert, and Douglas counties; more than 6,000 people were reached out to in these communities. Through the course of the project, 110 TANF-eligible women were served in the shelter, receiving one-on-one services during their stay and in preparing to leave the shelter. Participant outcomes

include: 100% retained care and control of their children; 95% avoided homelessness or return to another shelter; 100% increased access to and benefit from community resources; 79% improved or maintained their financial situation; 45% secured a better job or returned to school.

The **Colorado Department of Human Services Domestic Violence Program** received a \$700,000 SSUF grant to address domestic violence via 1) increased capacity of local domestic violence programs to support children who have been exposed to domestic violence, and 2) enhanced partnerships between community-based domestic violence programs and Colorado Works programs in county departments of human services. Services were delivered across Colorado. This project successfully increased the capacity of 25 community-based domestic violence programs to provide advocacy to children and families who have experienced domestic violence, especially in rural and otherwise underserved areas. Grant funds provided 2,676 individual and 4,861 group counseling contacts for children and youth. Six programs participated in the co-location project with their county department of human services. Partnerships resulted in successful outcomes for TANF clients who are experiencing domestic violence as a barrier to self-sufficiency via expanded collaborations and targeted services.

Family Strengthening/Support

A \$100,000 SSUF grant was awarded to the **Durango 4-C Council** to support and strengthen families by ensuring that children receive quality childcare in the setting of their family's choice. In total, 22 child care providers in La Plata and San Juan Counties were trained via 102 sessions. The grantee reported the following outcomes: 100% of the providers felt confident that they knew how to support children's learning; 100% felt confident that they knew how to interact with children to help their development; 100% read books to children three or more times a week; 83% had visited a library with children in the past month; and 100% had done something different with the children in their care.

A SSUF grant award of \$148,927 was awarded to the **Autism Society of Colorado** to provide a support network for families of autistic children via training of licensed childcare providers to better serve children with autism and other behavioral disorders. The grantee reported that, during the course of the project, 183 licensed childcare providers in Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Park, Pueblo, and Weld Counties were trained. A DVD was also produced that will sustain training to childcare centers serving children with special needs.

The **Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments** received a SSUF grant of \$264,703 to promote self-sufficiency via community resource navigators and expanded programming in parenting classes, GED preparation, and financial literacy. Services were provided in Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, and Lake counties. The grantee reported a number of positive outcomes leading to improved self-sufficiency for families through the course of the project. Navigators worked intensively with 186 families, the majority of who have reported active changes in their lives towards self-sufficiency, including employment, education, and wage increases. Additionally, 40 people attended a six-week early childhood education class, 73 people completed financial education classes, 216 people received GED preparation, and 329 parents and children participated in the Fatherhood Initiative.

Colorado WIN Partners/University of Colorado Denver received \$434,000 in SSUF grant funds to study and understand the needs of TANF eligible families and services that exist in the community. Using Arapahoe County as a model, the project was designed to understand what providers need, provide wrap-around care via collaborative relationships, offer multi-agency entry points, and pilot an IT device to use technology to facilitate referrals and close the loop on activities. During the course of the project, 133 referrals were made for families; 72% of the referrals were pursued. At the project's conclusion, analysis shows a significant increase in collaboration, including increased trust, integration, and an increased appreciation for other agencies' organizational cultures.

A \$500,000 SSUF grant was awarded to the **Family Resource Center Association** to provide training and capacity building to 24 Family Resource Centers across the state to deliver case management and budgeting/financial management classes for families. Through the course of the project, 122 staff from all 24 centers were trained in an evidence-based case management curriculum proven to increase family self-reliance. 22 staff were trained in a financial literacy curriculum. Since training, 10,000 families have received services, showing statistically significant increases in all 16 domains of family stability.

Housing/Homelessness Prevention

The **Adams County Housing Authority** was awarded \$350,000 in SSUF grant funds to coordinate services in order to prevent homelessness in Adams County. The project was modeled on the Denver Road Home plan to end homelessness, including a resource map and expanded classes and trainings to support self-sufficiency. More than 50 community agencies were interviewed to compile the comprehensive resource map for Adams County and analyze the extent/distribution of homelessness in the county. Through the course of the project, approximately 8,000 families received direct services in order to avert homelessness.

A \$381,875 SSUF grant was awarded to **Habitat for Humanity** to provide high quality education and training to aid families transitioning out of poverty. Services were provided throughout Colorado, through 31 affiliates. Deliverables included development of a research-based curriculum for families; collection/publication of best practices and promising approaches in family support; and technical assistance, training, and capacity building for affiliates. Eight research-based curriculums for family services were developed: orientation, first-time homebuyer, financial management, legal aspects of homeownership, home maintenance, family management, good neighbor, and controlling your family's energy costs. 94% of the affiliates participated in family support and Bridges Out of Poverty training.

Jewish Family Services received \$600,000 in SSUF grant funds to provide early intervention services to prevent homelessness. Case management, flexible financial assistance for rent and utilities, and wrap-around services were provided to at-risk families in the Metro Denver area. Through the project's duration, 137 households were referred to the program; 106 were accepted. Case evaluations reveal increased wages, increased education level, reduced debt, increased receipt of Child Support, improved transportation, and more. Six month follow-ups with participants demonstrate improvements in prioritization/time management, taking initiative, and follow-through with payment commitments.

Mental Health and Other Disabilities

A \$50,802 SSUF grant was awarded to the **North Colorado Medical Center Foundation** to provide mental health services to pregnant and post-partum women. Grant funds were used to train community providers in Weld County in the *Promoting Maternal Mental Health* curriculum, as well as provide direct maternal mental health services to at-risk pregnant women. Through the project, 32 community providers were trained; 11 at-risk, pregnant women received direct services.

Family Voices of Colorado/JFK Partners was awarded a SSUF grant of \$250,000 to help families navigate the social services system. Needy families with children with disabilities or special healthcare needs in Metro Denver received assistance in finding and accessing services, especially in the areas of mental health and other hidden disabilities. Through this project, 130 families were referred to and enrolled in services. Families reported a high level of satisfaction with services provided, as well as a significant impact on the family's previously unmet needs, including getting help in a crisis, childcare, reduced stress, and improved feelings about the future. 75% of families indicated that the services they received "often" or "very often" made a difference in their family's life

The **Colorado Department of Human Services Divisions of Behavioral Health and Child Care** received \$1 Million in SSUF grant funds to develop mental health consultation programs for childcare providers in Pueblo, Montrose, and Montezuma Counties, and in the San Luis Valley. The Western State Institutional Review Board approved the evaluation protocol, which is one of the largest scale evaluations ever completed on mental health consultation in the state. Expected outcomes are improved children's behavior, decrease in parental stress, fewer expulsions, fewer days parents miss work, and availability of high-quality childcare.

Workforce Development

A SSUF grant of \$200,000 was awarded to the **Colorado Youth Corps Association**. 382 TANF-eligible youth/young adults were enrolled in the Green Collar Jobs Initiative in six conservation corps (northwest, southwest, metro Denver, southern Front Range, Western Slope, and the San Luis Valley) to receive education and job-readiness training. 228 low-income youth received intensive, wrap-around services to support their success. Additionally, 128 TANF-eligible Corps members earned AmeriCorps Education Awards between \$1,000 and \$4,725 for a total of \$221,361 in scholarships for use at college, trade school, or school loans.

Lutheran Family Services received a SSUF grant of \$264,609 to deliver job preparation and employment services to TANF eligible refugees. The Refugee and Asylee Project served 1,132 adult refugees in Metro Denver, El Paso, Pueblo, Morgan, and Weld Counties via coordinated workforce development services. Employment developers and employment navigators were used to support refugees' unique employment needs. At the conclusion of the project, 215 participants had been placed into jobs. The average wage of all jobs obtained by SSUF participants was \$9.36 per hour. 72% of the jobs offer health insurance; 92% are full-time.

A SSUF grant of \$296,677 was awarded to **The Road Called STRATE** to provide assessment, job readiness and hard skills training, job placement assistance, and various supportive services to TANF eligible families in Metro Denver. Through the course of the project, 76 families,

many of whom are headed by ex-offenders, received services with the goal of self-sufficiency through employment.

The **Motherhood Project**, coordinated through the Dept. of Labor & Employment, received \$1 Million to provide employment and related supportive services for women offenders transitioning from prison. The project was designed to address the specific workforce challenges facing female ex-offenders in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Metro Denver via gender-specific employment and wrap-around services. Through the course of the project, 340 participants were served: 100% received life skills and work readiness training, and more than 50% received vocational training. 194 participants became employed, with an average wage of \$9.62/hour. 48 women regained care of their children. Finally, the recidivism rate for participants was 2.5%, significantly below the average state recidivism rate of 60-70%.

Youth Development

Passage Charter School, a unique school for pregnant and parenting teens on the Western Slope, was awarded a \$51,600 SSUF grant to expand programs for teen students and their children. The grant was focused on supporting teen parents and their children via enhanced programming in science and math education, as well as relationships, health, and employment skills. All students at the school participated. Students demonstrated measurable increases in self-esteem, conflict resolution, and reproductive health knowledge. Additionally, the school documented increased attendance rates and higher rates of completed coursework.

A \$70,000 SSUF grant was awarded to **Sisters of Color United for Education** to provide pregnancy prevention education to low-income Latino youth, of both genders, in Metro Denver. Participating youth received culturally appropriate, gender-specific services, along with an orientation for parents and other adult allies. 34 youth completed the program. Additional training was provided to community partners, with demand exceeding capacity, despite the infusion of grant funds. 13% of the young adult participants (many of whom are parents) stated that their parents had never talked to them at all about sexuality. The most urgent issue reported by both teens and young adults was how to tell whether a relationship is “good or bad for me.”

The **Weld County Juvenile Assessment Center** received a SSUF grant of \$139,858 to coordinate services for youth engaged in high-risk behavior in Weld County. Services were designed to promote self-sufficiency of young parents, encourage teen parents to continue their education, enhance parenting skills, sustain and nurture positive infant care, and reduce the potential for additional pregnancies. The SSUF grant resulted in 441 youth referred to education-based pregnancy prevention services, with an 86.6% completion rate. 98.8% of all youth who participated in the project have remained or re-engaged in school, far surpassing the proposed goal of 75%. This project was refunded in Round III.

Colorado Youth at Risk received \$143,441 in SSUF grant funds to expand its proven mentoring program into rural Colorado in order to reduce the number of high school dropouts. Services were delivered via one-on-one mentoring relationships in Elbert and Logan Counties. Through the project, 75 youth were paired with adult mentors. 94% of the mentoring relationships are continuing beyond the SSUF grant period. Participants reported a 47% increase in grade point average and a 47% increase in school attendance.

A \$300,000 grant was awarded to **Alternatives Pregnancy Center** for a collaborative project to support at-risk adolescents and young families across Colorado. Comprehensive, wrap-around services, including financial assistance, academic recovery, college and career preparation, relationship workshops, support groups, and mentorships were provided to youth in Adams, Archuleta, Pueblo, and Denver Counties. At the conclusion of the grant-funded project, 626 youth had participated in the psycho-social skills curriculum, with 72% completing a minimum of 15 contact hours. More than 85% of participants reported measurable behavioral change. Additionally, 93% of participants agree or strongly agree on having good relationship skills; 72% made a commitment to move on to college.

The **Aurora Mental Health Center** received a SSUF grant of \$313,450 to support at-risk teens, via a risk and protective factor framework, to decrease substance abuse, violence, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school drop out. Working through the schools, 789 youth were served through the project at an average cost of only \$157 per youth. 500 community gatekeepers were trained to identify and support youth. Additionally, youth were actively involved as project partners, including designing and maintaining the website, developing a project logo, helping to design the Safe Space and Learning Lab areas, volunteering in the office, and more.

The **San Luis Valley Mental Health Center** received a grant of \$460,000 as the lead agency in a collaborative project to support homeless and at-risk youth in Alamosa, Garfield, Huerfano, Moffat, Montezuma, and Montrose counties. This is a related and complementary project to the SSUF Round II grant awarded to the Huerfano County Dept. of Social Service. Youth learned a variety of survival and community attachment skills in order to pursue education and increase employment. Additionally, community agencies were educated about the issue of rural youth homelessness and engaged in developing viable strategies to aid housing-challenged youth. 203 rural youth received services. Participating counties report enhanced community partnerships, including increased referrals, information sharing, and communication. Sites have also developed new policies and practices to improve services to homeless/runaway youth.

The **Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment** received \$1 Million in SSUF grant funds to deliver innovative, evidence-based programs across Colorado to support positive youth development via 1) prevention of youth crime and violence; 2) parenting classes to reduce abuse and neglect; and 3) development of an infrastructure to promote collaboration between youth and youth-serving professionals. SSUF grant funds supported a wide array of services and activities in 28 counties resulting in a number of positive outcomes. For instance, 1,878 parents and their children, ages 0-3, in southwestern Colorado received home visits, parenting classes, and/or family support groups. 119 families in eastern and northeastern Colorado received services from the Nurturing Parents Program. 34 children/youth, ages 6-14 throughout Garfield County were matched with 34 adult mentors, meeting for a minimum of 2-3 hours per week over the course of a year.

Round II

For the second round of SSUF grants, 93 organizations submitted applications requesting more than \$43 Million in grant funds. Grants totaling \$9,718,524 were awarded to 22 organizations across the state. Contracts began in September 2009, and will run for 22 months, through June 30, 2011. Grants are delivering services to TANF eligible families, as described below:

Domestic Violence

The **University of Colorado at Denver** received a SSUF grant award of \$759,517 to train school staff in low-income districts across Colorado to identify and serve children who have witnessed violence in their homes. 28 schools (six districts) serving 15,000 students are participating in the E.N.D. Violence project. 232 counselors, teachers, and administrators in the schools have been trained. Following training, data shows significant increased awareness and understanding of issues related to students witnessing domestic violence.

Family Support

A SSUF grant of \$265,058 was awarded to **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pueblo** to increase parenting skills, improve mental health outcomes, and increase overall family stability in Pueblo, Fremont, and Crowley Counties. As of December 2010, 141 families with 214 children in Pueblo and Crowley Counties have received family strengthening services, 47 teen fathers graduated from parenting classes, and 50 families received mental health services.

A SSUF grant of \$308,932 was awarded to **Rural Solutions** to work directly with impoverished families in 10 counties in northeast Colorado. The project intends to serve more than 90 rural families via situational analysis, a family stabilization plan, and building familial and community relationships. As of December 2010, 79 clients had been served. Additionally, new relationships have been developed with area domestic violence, health, human services, and ex-offenders providers to enhance services to struggling families.

The **Foundation for Public Health & the Environment** received a SSUF grant award of \$317,491 to create family resource guides to present the array of health and human services programs/funds available to support struggling families across Colorado. As of December 2010, initial advocacy work was completed in the six pilot communities who had explored resources, collaboration, and fiscal integration of services. Draft guides for fiscal coordination and family advocacy are being reviewed by the Colorado Works program in preparation for statewide training on fiscal coordination.

The **Denver Indian Family Resource Center** was awarded a SSUF grant of \$324,905 to provide Family Preservation services to prevent Native American children living in the Metro Denver area from being removed from their homes. As of December 2010, the project has completed development of its culturally-congruent family preservation and case management models. To date, the model has been implemented with 19 families containing 56 children.

A SSUF grant of \$342,513 was awarded to the **Mile High Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse** to develop a parenting program for victims of domestic violence in Metro Denver who are experiencing substance abuse. Services include case management, parenting education, behavioral health counseling and treatment, and training/employment support. To date, 92 families have received strength-based case management, wrap-around services, and family advocacy via collaboratively developed Family Support Plans. 13 adults have successfully obtained employment as a result of program participation. Additionally, 265 hours of parenting skills have been delivered to 72 adults. 61 children have participated in counseling sessions designed to boost self-esteem.

The **Mountain Resource Center** was awarded a \$785,443 SSUF grant to support and strengthen families in Park, Summit, Teller, and rural Jefferson Counties. Employer outreach has increased the number of employer interest and referrals throughout the region. As of December 2010, nearly 100 people have received workforce development services. Additionally, families comprised of more than 200 children are receiving parenting education.

Housing/Homelessness Prevention

Family Tree was awarded a SSUF grant of \$465,644 to provide housing and family support services to homeless families living in motels in Jefferson and Denver Counties to stabilize their housing. Services include intensive case management, housing/utilities assistance, and referrals for medical, mental health, and substance abuse services. As of December 2010, 158 families had been referred to the program; 59 families have been moved from motels into rental units.

Mental Health

A SSUF grant of \$381,800 was awarded to the **Second Wind Fund, Inc.** to build capacity and deliver mental health services to low-income youth who are at-risk for suicide. Mental health services are delivered to uninsured/underinsured suicidal youth via unique relationships with private therapists who are typically able to arrange a counseling session within hours of a school counselor's call. Through the course of the project, all nine affiliates have received increased referrals for services. Affiliates are finding that they are the "go to" mental health resource for schools and other youth-serving organizations.

The **Mental Health Center of Denver** was awarded a SSUF grant of \$519,342 to create a statewide network of mental health providers to meet the unique needs of low-income deaf and hard-of-hearing populations. The project is designed to increase access to mental health and substance abuse services for deaf/hard-of-hearing people who face disparities in accessing needed services due to linguistic, communication, and cultural barriers. To date, a four-hour clinical training module has been developed and implemented, consumer and family leadership training modules have been developed and are being piloted, and evaluation and sustainability plans are ongoing.

Transportation/Work Support

The **Good Neighbor Garage** received a SSUF grant award of \$312,903 to repair and provide reliable cars to eligible, low-income families in order to enhance employment success and aid struggling families. As of December 2010, diagnostic equipment had been purchased and 50 cars have been repaired and placed with TANF eligible families. Additionally, the SSUF grant has allowed the organization to connect with thousands of county and non-profit agencies. 2,000 brochures have been distributed in the front range and mountain communities; vehicle donations are near all-time highs.

Workforce Development

A SSUF grant of \$292,250 was awarded to the **Jefferson County Workforce Center**. The WorkLife project is a unique employment support program that works directly with TANF eligible employees and their employers, inside participating companies. The project will bridge gaps in services to under-employed parents, linking them to training and supportive services faster, helping them to overcome barriers and remain employed, while aiding employers to better understand how to support their low-income employees. Six employers are participating in the program. 146 employees have been served by WorkLife, including 290 hours of job-enhancement training; 85% of participants have retained their jobs.

The **Durango Adult Education Center** was awarded a SSUF grant of \$415,538 to enhance digital literacy skills among low-income populations in southwestern Colorado. The project is providing academic, financial, digital, and professional literacy services to adults in La Plata, San Juan, and Montezuma Counties, including the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute reservations. The project's goal is to support pursuit of postsecondary education and careers via enhanced knowledge and training. To date, 120 students have enrolled in classes; 73% completed the modules, with 76% demonstrating learning gains of more than 80%. 41% of participants obtained a job, increased their income, or entered post-secondary education.

Mi Casa Resource Center was awarded a SSUF grant of \$451,585 to expand workforce development services, focusing on sector-based job training strategies. Mi Casa and its collaborative partners are developing an innovative, employer-driven system focused in the Energy/Construction, Financial Services, and Health sectors. As of December 2010, 21 individuals participated in Green Energy/Construction training, with a graduation rate of 81%; 18 people participated in the Bilingual Bank Teller program, with a graduation rate of 94%. Nearly 50% of program participants report average wages of \$11/hour or more. The Nursing Program is now enrolling students via a new partnership with the Community College of Denver.

The **Community College of Denver/Office of Professional Development** was awarded a SSUF grant of \$657,889 to provide educational stipends for child care providers, thereby increasing their level of education, employment, and commitment to the early child education field. Furthermore, the project will ensure that early childhood professionals have the knowledge, skills, and support to work effectively with and on behalf of families and children under their care. To date, the project has partnered with 29 Early Childhood Councils, serving 62 counties in Colorado. 174 TANF-eligible individuals have completed early childhood coursework and have received a stipend. This grant-funded project was the first opportunity for 45% of these participants to take college coursework related to their early childhood careers.

Youth Development

The Conflict Center was awarded a SSUF grant of \$137,814 to provide soft skills training to youth and staff in transitional housing and Residential Treatment Centers in the Metro Denver area. As of December 2010, more than 200 youth and adults had been trained. Outreach continues among residential and transitional housing providers to host trainings.

A SSUF grant of \$190,046 was awarded to the **Otero County Department of Human Services** to expand a proven anti-poverty curriculum to support students' healthy choices in Otero and

Crowley Counties. Teachers in one middle school and two high schools in the two counties have been trained in the curriculum to teach it to students. As of December 2010, 23 students have completed the program. Training will be expanded to the Rocky Ford district in the next quarter.

A SSUF grant of \$256,964 was awarded to **Mesa County Partners**, serving as the lead agent for a statewide grant working with affiliates of the Partners Mentoring Association. Project goals are to reduce juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, and alcohol/drug use, while creating healthy attitudes about life choices. Participating youth are matched with a screened adult partner; each partnership spends at least three hours per week together. As of December 2010, 290 partnerships had been matched, exceeding the project's goal of 220 matches, with six months to go in the project.

The **African Community Center** received a SSUF grant award of \$345,055 to provide targeted services to refugee youth. The program is developing and delivering culturally and linguistically appropriate activities to promote academic achievement, successful cultural adjustment, and positive youth development. To date, 227 refugee youth have participated in programs and activities. The grantee reports that participants are enrolled in the program within 30 days of arriving in Colorado.

The **Boys & Girls Club** of Larimer County is the lead agent for a \$600,000 statewide SSUF grant aiding youth in 11 Boys & Girls Clubs serving 14 counties. Clubs are strengthening and expanding existing pregnancy prevention work, with the goal of delaying adolescent sexual activity. A variety of evidence-based curricula is used to positively impact youth's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to pregnancy and other high-risk activities, motivating them to make healthy choices. To date, 4,417 under-served youth have been served through programs; 998 youth have directly participated in teen pregnancy prevention programs.

A SSUF grant of \$629,468 was awarded to the **Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition** to train family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) childcare providers in Boulder and Weld Counties. The project's primary goal is to enhance literacy and school readiness of Latino children, birth to age five. As of December 2010, an average of 20 home visits had been completed in the counties each month. Participants reported a 117% gain in knowledge about early literacy and strategies for language development.

The **Huerfano County Department of Social Services** is the lead agent in a collaborative SSUF project that received a \$958,367 grant to provide youth and family leadership, community attachment, and education/employment services in 13 rural counties. This project is a related and complementary project to the SSUF Round I grant awarded to the San Luis Valley Mental Health Center. Through December 2010, 217 homeless and runaway rural youth have received an array of services, including case management, counseling, housing assistance, education, and family reunification. Overall, 413 youth and their family members have been served.

Round III

For the third round of SSUF grants, 105 applications were submitted, requesting more than \$50.6 Million in grant funds. In this round, the appropriation was cut by 60% just days before the grant applications were due. Following a very competitive review process, \$4,309,359 in grant funds

were awarded to 20 organizations across Colorado. Contracts began in July 2010 and will run for two years, through June 30, 2012. A wide array of services is being delivered to TANF eligible families, as described below.

Last year, SB 10-010 was signed, allowing the Department, in consultation with the Strategic Allocation Committee (SAC), to expend up to 2% of the annual appropriation for the Statewide Strategic Use Fund (SSUF) for an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs supported through the SSUF. This evaluation will provide important information on the effectiveness of the funded programs, as well as on the overall effectiveness of the SSUF in meeting statewide needs, addressing goals, and serving needy populations. Colorado State University was awarded \$80,000 in July 2010 to conduct a rigorous, scientific evaluation of the SSUF. The evaluation will gauge the effectiveness of both the grant-funded projects, as well as the SSUF as a means to reduce poverty in Colorado.

Child Welfare

A \$150,000 grant was awarded to the **Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center** to provide pro-bono legal assistance to families struggling with kinship issues or custody related to domestic violence in Metro Denver. This grant expands services developed through their Round I SSUF grant. This project provides intensive services to families, over a period of several months, in order to avert a custody-related crisis, mobilize resources, and promote stability. Families create individual action plans that include financial, health, education, and legal issues to be resolved. As of December 2010, the Prevention Partnership had served 75 families, involving 114 children. Additionally, 255 children were represented in 148 domestic violence cases.

The **American Humane Association** received a SSUF grant of \$400,000 to implement a statewide, cross-systems approach to reduce longstanding issues of disparities in the provision of child welfare services to TANF-eligible families of color throughout Colorado. This project is a continuation of their Round I SSUF grant. Current efforts are focused on working closely with a consortium of ten counties (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Jefferson, Larimer, and Prowers) in a collaborative, learning environment to create and sustain practice and policy improvements.

Child Care

The **Rural Resort Region Early Childhood Council** received \$175,919 in SSUF grant funds to increase access to high-quality, licensed early childhood programs in Eagle, Lake, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties. The City of Aspen is the fiscal agent for this project. The project's primary focus is to increase the quality and capacity of rural childcare programs via assessments, training, coaching, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. As of December 2010, 81 childcare providers had applied to participate. More than 900 hours of coaching will be provided to these providers. Currently, Qualistar assessments and training are being scheduled with the providers.

Domestic Violence

The **Domestic Violence Program** at the Department of Human Services was awarded a \$300,000 SSUF grant to continue the domestic violence co-location project conceived in their Round I grant. Working in ten counties (Larimer, Boulder, Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, Ouray,

San Miguel, Pueblo, Douglas and Elbert) in five regions of the state, the project co-locates domestic violence advocates at county departments of human services to better identify and serve domestic violence victims who are applying for benefits. Co-located services enable victims to simultaneously address their safety and self-sufficiency. The grantee has been streamlining human services rules, training providers, and completing a cost-benefit analysis of the project. Through December 2010, the county TANF offices have referred 424 victims to domestic violence agencies; 788 victims have been referred by domestic violence agencies to TANF offices. 146 TANF staff and 90 domestic violence staff have been cross-trained.

Family Support

The **Pinon Project** was awarded a \$40,000 SSUF grant on behalf of the **Montelores Early Childhood Council** to deliver the Family Leadership Training Institute to help families in Dolores and Montezuma Counties become advocates for their children and communities. The project aims to expand the capacity of parents as change agents for children and families, increase parent-child interactions, and improve child outcomes through enhanced parent involvement. To date, capacity has been developed, and 12 participants have started training.

A SSUF grant of \$130,856 was awarded to **Hilltop Community Resources** to expand the National Wraparound Initiative model into Montrose County. The project's will provide coordinated services to families, including assessment, case management, group sessions, home visits, community resources, and referrals. To date, 71 individuals, in 19 families, have received expanded case management services.

The **Upper Arkansas Council of Governments** received a \$350,000 grant to expand their Round I grant to provide direct services to needy families in the Lake, Custer, Fremont, and Chaffee Counties via community navigators. Services include GED preparation, job preparation, child abuse prevention, parenting skills, housing self-sufficiency, financial planning, and life skills training. As of December 2010, 128 people are enrolled in Navigator services; 43 people have completed a Life Skills class. 15 participants completed the financial success class; 19 people received individual financial counseling. 47 participants attended GED preparation classes, and 261 GED tests were administered.

Housing/Homelessness Prevention

A \$200,000 SSUF grant was awarded to **Urban Peak** to support homeless and runaway youth in Metro Denver through an infusion of life skills, interpersonal relationship skills, and other services at a drop-in center. As of December 2010, meals had been served to 2,217 youth at the drop-in center. 58 youth had participated in healthy relationship classes; 39 youth have attended bi-weekly life skills classes.

Mental Health

Mental Health America of Colorado received a SSUF grant of \$200,000 to increase access to mental health therapy to TANF-eligible people in the Glenwood Springs and Pueblo areas. The Pro Bono Outreach Program will provide mental health services to needy children and adults via volunteer counselors. As of December 2010, ten mental health professionals in the Glenwood

Springs area being trained as volunteer counselors. The Pueblo program is on track to start in the first quarter of 2011.

The **Mental Health Center of Boulder and Broomfield** was awarded a \$400,000 grant to provide early childhood mental health consultation services throughout Boulder and Broomfield Counties. The project aims to provide greater access to professional development for child care providers, and to establish a “warm line” whereby providers, parents, and community partners can receive consultation regarding concerning or challenging behavior of young children. To date, the project has successfully engaged six childcare providers. Additionally, the project has facilitated 19 consultation requests from school nurses, family doctors, childcare providers, community health clinics, Head Starts, and others. Many of the children referred for consultation were reportedly at risk of being expelled from their child care setting.

The **Mental Health Center of Denver** was awarded \$400,000 to pilot a unique model of infant/toddler mental health services, providing consultation and support for TANF eligible single parents and their infants/toddlers (0-3 years old.) This project is designed to improve caregiver-infant relationships and child development outcomes through the development and implementation of a best practice model of infant mental health services and support. As of December 2010, the partnership has been convened and 22 participant groups have been enrolled, including teen moms with postpartum depression, children exposed to serious domestic violence, children presenting PTSD symptoms, and a range of attachment disturbances.

Transportation/Work Support

Project Self-Sufficiency was awarded \$31,049 in SSUF grant funds to repair and provide vehicles for low-income families in Larimer County. Families use the vehicles to get to work, school, childcare, medical appointments, and other important destinations. Project Self-Sufficiency is able to assure that the families’ cars are safe and reliable and that participants can continue with their career goals. Through December 2010, five cars have been repaired and awarded to single parent families. Additionally, this project has enabled the repair of 15 cars owned by program participants.

A \$230,000 SSUF grant was awarded to **Good Neighbor Garage** to repair and provide reliable cars to eligible, low-income families in order to enhance employment success and aid struggling families. This grant is expanding their Round II project to develop a dedicated vehicle repair program to repair existing cars for TANF-eligible families. From July through December 2010, the grantee has repaired two to six vehicles per month for TANF-eligible clients. Demand is at an all time high, routinely receiving two or three requests for repairs per day.

Workforce Development

A SSUF grant of \$100,000 was awarded to **Advocates for Young Adults** to provide outreach and support to low-income families in northeastern Colorado in preparing their taxes and applying for and receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The grantee has been focusing on developing a communication plan and expanding capacity in rural counties to implement the project. Through December 2010, 14 of 21 volunteer tax preparers have been trained to assist low-income families at VITA sites. The outreach campaign is going strong.

Northeastern Junior College, a community college located in Logan County, received a \$133,510 grant to prepare college students who lack academic competency to succeed in college and succeed in careers. The project is redefining traditional education programs to what works with at-risk students. As of December 2010, two cohorts of students have been enrolled in math, reading, and writing classes. Meanwhile, targeted outreach to partners and curriculum-building activities continue.

The **Jefferson County Workforce Center** received a \$230,849 grant to expand employer partnerships that are being developed through their Round II SSUF grant. The project is designed to support struggling, TANF eligible employees to remain employed and increase wages. Services are targeted in Metro Denver, Clear Creek, and Gilpin Counties. Employees receive intensive case management to address barriers, while the employers learn how to understand the culture of instability that can cause problems for employees at work and how to better support their employees. The project's goal is to engage 15 major employer partners.

Youth Development

Passage Charter School, a unique school for pregnant and parenting teens on the Western Slope, was awarded a \$104,506 SSUF grant to strengthen the comprehensive education program developed in their Round I grant. This project will expand the math curriculum, offer more experiential science projects, enrich on-site childcare programs, and provide programs to prepare youth for postsecondary education and careers. Laboratory and greenhouse equipment to enhance the Biology and Ecology curriculums was purchased; this semester, the average grade in Biology was 92%. Each student has taken the Barriers to Employment Success Inventory as a pre-vocational assessment; the class is working on pre-employment portfolios, interview skills, and job skills. Additionally, positive health and safety changes have been made in the on-site childcare center.

The **Boys and Girls Club of Northwest Colorado** received a SSUF grant of \$182,670 to provide comprehensive, year-round pregnancy prevention outreach with a strategic focus on preteens and teens not currently served by Boys and Girls Clubs. Services are targeted in rural Colorado, including a Native American Reservation. As of December 2010, outreach events have been conducted in all of the proposed clubs: 31 youth have received direct services and 101 youth have received indirect services. Collaborative partnerships, customized to each community, are being developed in order to enhance and sustain services.

The **Weld County Juvenile Assessment Center** was awarded a \$200,000 grant to prevent teen pregnancy and support pregnant and parenting teens. This project is expanding services developed in their Round I grant to prevent unintended pregnancy, provide nurturing infant care, enhance parenting skills, reduce the number of additional pregnancies, promote self-sufficiency for teen parents, and encourage teen parents to continue their educations. As of December 2010, 119 youth at-risk of becoming pregnant or parenting out-of-wedlock completed a needs assessment and were referred to education-based prevention services. Seven pregnant teens received prenatal health care. 24 pregnant or parenting teens in the program are remaining in or enrolling in school.

A SSUF grant of \$350,000 was awarded to the **Aurora Mental Health Center** to expand their Round I project to provide positive youth development to 1,000 youth in Adams and Arapahoe

Counties. The project uses a system of community “gatekeepers” to identify and support high-risk youth by identifying and decreasing risk factors related to problem behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school drop out, while increasing protective factors. In total, 454 youth nominees have been received from community gatekeepers. An additional 111 community gatekeepers have been trained.