

Testimony prepared for delivery in support of Document 4 - Modifications and Technical Clean-Up of the Colorado Works Program by Sarah Barnes, Director of Family Economic Prosperity Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign

State Board of Human Services

March 3, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

1575 Sherman Street, 8th Floor

Denver, CO 80203

- Chair and members of the State Board, my name is Sarah Barnes and I'm the Director of Family Economic Prosperity Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign.
- The Colorado Children's Campaign is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy, research and advocacy organization, committed to securing every chance for every child in Colorado since our founding in 1985. That includes advocating for the economic prosperity of Colorado kids and their families.
- Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of these proposed rules to implement HB22-1259.
- The Children's Campaign has been very proud to co-convene the TANF Coalition, a group of over 30 organizations, direct service providers, and directly impacted people working to improve the Colorado Works program.
- The TANF coalition supported HB22-1259 this past legislative session, which included policy changes to help improve many aspects of the Colorado Works program for families.
- These improvements include changes to the earned income disregard to smooth the cliff effect for families as they connect to employment and begin to get their feet under them, and a standardization of the process for when families need to request an extension of the time they are enrolled in the program.
- The proposed rules being considered today are in alignment with HB22-1259 and implement that legislation with fidelity to its intent.
- The Department facilitated an intentional, inclusive process to develop the proposed rules you have before you today. They convened a workgroup comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders, including advocates, community members, directly impacted people and county representatives. The Department also engaged the Family Voice Council in the development of the proposed rules.
- Chair and Commissioner Kefalas, in July, when the Board considered rules to implement the initial requirements of HB22-1259, you expressed the hope that all voices would have the opportunity to be heard in the development of the rules to implement this legislation. Due to the comprehensive process facilitated by the Department, this has indeed been the case.
- We commend the Department for their work and leadership, and we urge your support of the proposed rules. Thank you.