



Joint Budget Committee
Chairperson Julie McCluskie
200 E 14th Avenue, #300
Denver, CO 80203

March 1, 2022

Dear Chairperson McCluskie and Members of the Joint Budget Committee:

On behalf of the Colorado Human Services Directors Association and Colorado Counties, Inc., we are writing in support of the Committee providing funding to expand counties' access to The Work Number in FY 2022-23 for human services benefit programs. We specifically support prioritization and funding for the integration of The Work Number into the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS) and inclusion of Colorado Department of Human Services General Funds to support the cost of the service. We believe implementing these recommendations will help improve county caseworker efficiency, increase automation, support equitable access to human services benefits, and reduce improper payments.

By way of background, 43 of the state's counties currently use The Work Number via a web portal for purposes of determining eligibility for human services programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Work Number helps our county caseworkers quickly, securely, and automatically verify an applicant's current employment and income information. Today, the service provides access to over 136 million active employment records from 2.5 million employers nationwide. This employment and income data is provided by employers in real-time every pay period. By moving from a web-based application to an integrated approach, Counties will have more equitable access to The Work Number, therefore delivering increased efficiencies for all caseworkers and expediting the delivery of benefits to applicants.

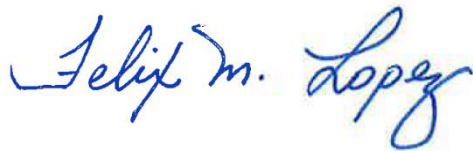
The Colorado Department of Human Services currently withholds County Administration fund dollars from each county that uses The Work Number in order to pay for this service. Therefore, not all counties have chosen to forego County Administration dollars for this purpose. However, if the state executed the integration of The Work Number into CBMS and supported the cost of the service with General Fund dollars, not by withholding county dollars, all 64 counties would have more equitable access to this verification system, and counties could retain County Administration dollars for other vital purposes. It is estimated that use of this service delivers nearly \$12 million in annual operational efficiency and over \$9 million in improper payment avoidance.

It is important to note that the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing currently funds the integrated use of The Work Number for Medicaid and CHP+ eligibility determinations and redeterminations as part of CBMS. The Department implemented this service statewide in 2021, and initial estimates project an annual savings of nearly \$50 million. We would like to see this operational efficiency replicated for CDHS and the human service programs it oversees.

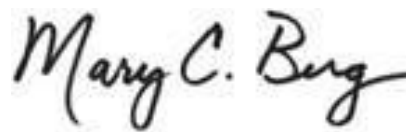
As the Committee proceeds with figure setting for executive agencies, we ask that you consider funding this integration and the cost of this service as a means of modernizing the state's IT system and supporting your county caseworkers and constituents who rely on vital human service benefits.

Please feel free to reach out to Gini Pingenot at 720-255-8941 with questions. We look forward to following up with you soon on this important topic.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Felix M. Lopez in blue ink.

Felix Lopez
Las Animas County Commissioner
CCI Board President

Handwritten signature of Mary C. Berg in black ink.

Mary Berg
Jefferson County Human Services Director
CHSDA Board President