



Joint Technology Committee
Chairperson Brianna Titone
200 E. Colfax
Denver, CO 80202

March 1, 2022

Dear Chairperson Titone and Members of the Joint Technology Committee:

On behalf of the Colorado Human Services Directors Association and Colorado Counties, Inc., we are writing to request the Committee consider supporting the integration of The Work Number into the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS) for human services benefit programs, and forward a favorable recommendation to the Joint Budget Committee to prioritize and fund this integration project in FY 2022-23. We believe implementing this recommendation 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 the purposes of determining eligibility for human service 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.

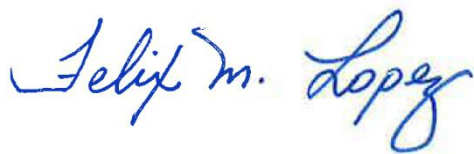
The Colorado Department of Human Services currently withholds County Administration fund dollars from each county that uses The Work Number in order to pay for the service. Therefore, not all counties have chosen to forego County Administration dollars for this purpose. However, if the state executed the integration of The Work Number into CBMS with General Fund dollars, all 64 counties would have more equitable access to this verification system. 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 CHIP eligibility determination and redetermination as part of the 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 services programs it oversees.

As the Committee continues to investigate additional means of modernizing the state's IT system, we would like the opportunity to present to the JTC details about how counties use The Work Number today, and how integration into CBMS would benefit all 64 Colorado counties and those applying for vital human service benefits.

Please let us know when this may be feasible given the Committee's busy schedule and feel free to reach out to Gini Pingnot 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