Changing Hats While Managing Change

*Employment First ABAWD Conference 2015*

September 1–4, 2015

KEYSTONE Lodge & Spa

22010 US-6

Keystone, Colorado 80435
Welcome to the 2015 Employment First ABAWD Conference! “Changing Hats While Managing Change” speaks to the many changes facing Colorado’s Employment First program in 2016. New counties will be coming on board, and many others will be adapting their programs to align with the federal waiver. Change is exciting, and provides an opportunity to innovate and refocus, but only if you have the tools and resources to navigate it. This conference will provide you with those tools and resources; we’ve developed a tailored agenda to support you, no matter what hat you wear.

We are looking forward to sharing the next few days with you, as we dust off some hold hats, try on new ones, and learn together about how to administer an exceptional Employment First program! Welcome!

The Employment First Team
Orientation to Employment First for New Counties
(Arapahoe/Divide)
Jessica Valand, Roberta Montoya, Carolyn Homer, and Neal Christensen

This in-depth Employment First program overview is geared toward directors and administrators from counties that will be developing a new Employment First program as a result of the federal ABAWD waiver change, coming into effect January 1, 2016. In this session, we will review the origins of the SNAP E&T program, as well as the federal ABAWD waiver provisions; federal, state statutory and regulatory requirements; local plan elements; program components for work-registrants and ABAWDs; sanctions, time limits, and exemptions; and county funding, budgeting, and staffing considerations. New county administrators are strongly encouraged to attend.

Hat Check! Registration Opens & County Showcase
(Gallery)

Counties with experience serving ABAWDs will be showcased in the Gallery, by the registration table. Come enjoy a light snack after you check-in, and see what your peers are up to around the state!
Workshop Descriptions
Wednesday, September 2, 2015

8:15—9:00am

Changing Hats: Welcome and Opening Remarks
(Arapahoe/Divide)

Barry Pardus

In life, the only constant is change! This welcoming session will orient all attendees to the federal ABAWD waiver changes and the anticipated shifts to Employment First as Colorado welcomes 19+ new counties into the fold. We will provide the state’s strategic vision for the Employment First program, and set the stage for 3 days of learning, growth, and fun!

9:15—11:00am

Employment First 101: Return of the ABAWD: Understanding Program Opportunities and Change (Ten Mile)

Roberta Montoya

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) is an acronym that gets used a lot in Employment First, but you may not know as much about this group as you’d like. If you’ve found yourself asking “Who are ABAWDs? What do you need to know about time-limits and tickets? How on earth will I find 80 hours of activities in a month for all my ABAWDs?”, then this session is for you! In this interactive workshop, attendees will learn who the ABAWD population in our state is, how the EF program is oriented to serve them, and what program requirements should be understood by all Employment First workers statewide. With the waiver ending in 2015, now is the opportune time to learn about ABAWDs in depth! This is part of the ‘Employment First 101’ series, and is a foundational program session.
**Employment First 101: From Workfare to Work: Program Design that Supports Employment Outcomes**  
*(Silvers)*

Robert Andrews

Workfare sometimes gets a bad rap, but this exciting session will help you learn how to make the most of the workfare experience for your participants, as well as for your program budget! Come and discover what workfare really has to offer, and how to build opportunities in your community to maximize the benefit of this central program component. Attendees will learn how to approach workfare sites, what to consider in placing a participant, develop and practice a “pitch” for possible sites, and discover how to message the true value of workfare to Employment First participants. You’ll learn about how initial and continual assessment can really maximize the workfare experience, hone skills and getting participants into employment. This is part of the ‘Employment First 101’ series, and is a foundational program session.

**Employment First 101: Assessment Success: Supporting Customers, Promoting Results**  
*(Suns)*

Demareo Pruitt

Did you know that assessment is a noun and verb? So much more than collecting a form, assessment is the first step toward working with participants in a way that leads to meaningful results. Assessment is a basic program component, and doing it right is critical to the success of participants in the Employment First program! This engaging, interactive session will give you the opportunity to practice your assessment skills, and develop strategies for service that are individualized and tailored to your participants, greatly enhancing their likelihood of success. Come learn about the art of assessment, guaranteed to improve the quality of your case management and the experience of your customers! This is part of the ‘Employment First 101’ series, and is a foundational program session.
Workshop Descriptions
Wednesday, September 2, 2015

9:15—11:00am
Employment First 101: Pulling Dollars Out of Your Hat: Understanding Federal Funding
(Arapahoe/Divide)
Chad Imker and Jim Cross, FNS
One of the most nuanced aspects of Employment First is funding. Come learn about the strategies to maximize your EF budget, generate new resources, and incentivize meaningful outcomes from the horses' mouth: our federal partners! This session will delve into the unique funding components of SNAP E&T, including in-kind matching, 50/50 funds, and enhanced funding. FNS will help you explore what resources are available to your EF program, and develop strategies to stretch your dollars. This is part of the 'Employment First 101’ series, and is a foundational program session.

12:15—2:00pm
Employment First Olympics
(Lodge/Terrace/Edgewater Café)
Stretch your legs and your minds with Employment First Olympics! After a full day of sitting and absorbing program fundamentals, come and enjoy this optional opportunity to put your knowledge (and your golf skills) to use! You’ll work with your peers from around the state in this fun, interactive session!

2:15—4:00pm

4:00—5:00pm

4:00—5:00pm
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15—10:00am</td>
<td>Employment First 101 Sessions</td>
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<td>For rooms and descriptions, please see pages for Wednesday, September 2nd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15—11:45am</td>
<td>Executive Functioning: Understanding the Brain Science of Poverty (Arapahoe/Divide)</td>
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<td>Jessica Valand</td>
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<td>Emerging brain science is reframing the world of social services, informing our understanding of poverty and brain development, and challenging those serving low-income populations to think differently about programs, how we use goal setting, and what strategies will get results. This group session will introduce the concepts of executive skills, and share the latest research on the impacts of poverty on the brain. We will explore evidence-based strategies for targeting and building brain strength and executive functions, both for our participants and ourselves!</td>
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<td>1:00—2:30pm</td>
<td>Employment First 201: Critical Conversations- Supporting Staff and Customers in Managing Change (Ten Mile)</td>
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<td>Kevin King</td>
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<td>Difficult conversations are a part of life, but the key to making those conversations worthwhile is having the skills to navigate them! This thought-provoking session will give you the tools to engage with others when the stakes are high, and emotions run hot. Come explore how to identify critical conversations, and practice strategies to navigate through these key moments in your professional and personal life. Course content will inform the vital role of case managers, but will be broadly applicable. This is part of the 'Employment First 201’ series, and is an enhanced program session.</td>
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### Workshop Descriptions

**Thursday, September 3, 2015**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:00—2:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Employment First 201: Soft Skills for Success- Building Executive Skills through Case Management</strong> (Silvers)</td>
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<td><em>Jon Gallegos</em></td>
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<td>Employers and customers alike recognize the crucial role that ‘soft skills’ play in workplace success. You may have identified strong soft skills as the key ingredient for your customers, but what is your role in building and supporting the development of the skills? In this dynamic session, you’ll explore the scope and special role of a case manager in promoting the development of soft skills, as well as explore and get familiar with some exciting tools available to you through the Employment First program. This is part of the ‘Employment First 201’ series, and is an enhanced program session.</td>
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<td>2:45—4:15pm</td>
<td><strong>Employment First 201: Community Partnerships- Leverage Community Assets to Serve Customers</strong> (Suns)</td>
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<td><em>Robert Andrews, Erica Porter, and David Wareikis</em></td>
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<td>It takes a village to operate a successful Employment First program! EF programs can benefit greatly from developing local-level partnerships with other agencies that offer enhanced or wrap-around services for low-income members of the community. But if you’re just starting, where do you start? This panel discussion will help you develop the skills to identify who is in your community, the messaging for approaching new partners, and the ongoing framework for building and growing existing relationships. A panel of community partners will help inform your understanding of EF from the partner perspective, and give you tips and tricks for growing your village! This is part of the ‘Employment First 201’ series, and is an enhanced program session.</td>
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<td>6:00—9:00pm</td>
<td><strong>Hat’s Off! Dinner &amp; Celebration</strong> (Arapahoe/Divide)</td>
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<td>As Colorado on boards 19 new counties into Employment First, we also want to pause to celebrate the great successes of established EF programs around the state. This celebratory dinner will reinforce conference learning in an entertaining way—plan to join us! You will be sure to enjoy this special evening event! Dress is business casual, and dinner will be provided.</td>
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Engaging Non-Custodial Parents: Lessons from Child Support
(Arapahoe/Divide)
Ray Washington and Dan Welch

A national shift in the world of child support has provided fascinating insights on how to best serve non-custodial parents who want to keep their financial commitment to their kids, but aren’t able to so because of lack of a good paying job. Many of these parents rely upon SNAP to help make ends meet, and non-custodial parents are a big segment of the EF population. This group session will inform your understanding of child support and low-income job seekers as parents, as well as highlight promising practices and lessons learned in connecting these customers with meaningful employment.

Employment First 301: Employment First Financials- Planning and Budgeting for Supervisors
(Silvers)
Neil Christensen and Carolyn Homer

One of the more complex elements of Employment First is the budget; this session will provide a detailed dive into the financials of EF from a county perspective. Targeted toward supervisors or administrators who have budget responsibilities, this session will help counties explore the budget of employment first, provide clear expectations on the county role vs. the state role in EF financials, and give you tools and tips for managing the complexities of Employment First funding. Attendees will benefit from having attended the FNS presentation on SNAP E&T funding, and bringing along their notes and questions. This session is limited to staff with a direct budget responsibility in the EF program.

Employment First 301: Small County Inspiration
(Suns)
Small counties are special: you know everyone in town, have a deep sense of community, and often, limited resources. If necessity is the mother of invention, small counties are pros at it! This quick-paced session, styled after the TEDTalk platform, will give small county staff the opportunity to learn from three small EF counties, and what they’ve leveraged as a promising practice to build their Employment First program. Presenters will share for 10 minutes, followed by audience Q&A. You are sure to learn at least one inspiring tip! This session is limited to staff from small counties.
Employment First 301: Medium County Inspiration
(Ten Mile)

Medium counties have a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Not small enough to be a one-person operation, but not big enough to have unlimited community resources, medium sized counties must navigate a middle ground in the EF landscape. This quick-paced session, styled after the TEDTalk platform, will give medium county staff the opportunity to learn from three medium EF counties, and what they’ve leveraged as a promising practice to build their Employment First program. Presenters will share for 10 minutes, followed by audience Q&A. You are sure to learn at least one inspiring tip! This session is limited to staff from medium counties.

Employment First 301: Large County Inspiration
(Arapahoe/Divide)

Our metro communities deal with significant volume in their Employment First programs, and see a huge spectrum of customers come through the door, from the homeless or justice-involved, to individuals with graduate degrees who have exhausted UI. This quick-paced session, styled after the TEDTalk platform, will give large county staff the opportunity to learn from three large EF counties, and what they’ve leveraged as a promising practice to build their Employment First program. Presenters will share for 10 minutes, followed by audience Q&A. You are sure to learn at least one inspiring tip! This session is limited to staff from large counties.

Final Hat Trick: Closing Remarks
(Arapahoe/Divide)

For many attendees, the end is just the beginning! Many counties now begin the hard work of either developing an Employment First program, or returning to their county to apply the lessons and tips learned through the conference. This send-off will provide you with guidance for your next steps, and a boxed lunch as you head home.
Facilitator Bios

Robert Andrews
Robert Andrews is a native of Colorado and has worked in Employment First for 4 years. Robert started as a workfare coordinator. As the workfare coordinator Robert was able to expand community outreach and develop strategies to increase enhanced funding. Robert then moved to the manager role where he worked to help create and implement the first opportunity fair. Robert working in two counties as a case manager, workfare coordinator and as a program manager gives him vast knowledge of program practices.

Neal Christensen, CPA, CGMA
Financial Consultant and Sole Proprietor CPA Neal Christensen, owns and manages a financial consulting business since he retired from the State of Colorado in 2007. He specializes in Colorado Human Services accounting and auditing. Neal's main service is training; one-on-one training plus small and large group training. Neal worked for 22 years as an Auditor, Audit Manager and Contract Manager with the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Audit Division from 1985 to 2007. His main focus was on County Human Services. Neal wrote the Volume V financial rules that were in effect from May 2004 through June 2013. He graduated with a degree in Accounting from Iowa State University in 1979. Neal has been licensed as a Certified Public Accountant in Colorado since 1987.

Jim Cross
Jim Cross has been with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service since August 2014. He is currently a Senior Program Specialist with the Mountain Plains Region focusing on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training program and Electronic Benefit Transfer. Prior to FNS, Jim worked for the State of Michigan (SOM) Office of Workforce Development and Training as a Policy Analyst and began his SOM service as an Eligibility Specialist. Jim resides in Denver with his wife and 2 children.
Facilitator Bios

Jon Gallegos

Jon Gallegos has been a State Field Staff Representative for over three and a half years in the Employment First program at the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Office of Economic Development. Prior to coming to CDHS Jon worked on a variety of three and five year education and prevention grant initiatives at a nonprofit, school district and the State Health Department while working on a Masters of Public Administration degree which he obtained in 2006 from the University of Colorado Denver. Jon started his career at a Denver Metro County Human Service Agency using his Bachelors of Social Work Degree he earned from Colorado State University as a caseworker in the child care subsidy program. Eventually Jon became a supervisor at the county’s Human Service agency and then the county’s Workforce Center concurrently overseeing several self-sufficiency programs that included Employment First. Jon participates on community service advisory boards on his own time, enjoys playing tennis as much as possible and being with family and friends.

Chad Imker

Chad Imker serves as an Employment and Training (E&T) Specialist and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) specialist for the Mountain Plains Region of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Chad came to the USDA from the Department of Labor, VETS Midwestern Regional Office where he served as the grants management lead for employment and training grants to assist Veterans in overcoming barriers to employment, gaining meaningful employment, retaining employment and gaining a higher quality of life. Prior to that Chad worked for the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment as a business outreach specialist with the Veterans department. Duties included networking with local businesses, chambers of commerce, workforce investment boards and other community organizations to make them aware of the benefits of hiring Veterans.
Facilitator Bios

Kevin L. King

Kevin L. King, MBA, Ph.D. (abd) Founder & CEO Kevin is a certified Birkman Method® consultant and management consultant with over twenty-five years of experience facilitating teams in defining solutions to business challenges, developing leaders, leading teams, improving organizational performance, implementing business solutions, and managing strategic organizational change. He is the author of THINK! Change Your Story, Change Your Life which is focused on achieving sustainable personal and organizational change in the areas of innovation, employee engagement, and leadership effectiveness.

Roberta Montoya

Roberta Montoya is a Colorado native and has worked with the State of Colorado for eighteen years in a variety of positions. As the Supervisor for Colorado Employment First Program, Roberta provides technical assistance regarding CBMS and trainings to contracting agencies. Roberta has a vast knowledge of Employment First as she has worked at every level. Roberta was a case manager and supervisor in Denver County before making her transition to the Employment First State Unit.

Erica Porter

Erica Porter is the volunteer coordinator for arc Thrift Stores for the state of Colorado. She has been running their program and partnering with various other agencies in the state for the past two years. In her position she has worked to strengthen the relationship of those partnerships and educate arc Thrift Store’s management team on the interests of each program to create stronger associations. She earned a B.A. from the University of Colorado and is a Colorado native.
Facilitator Bios

Barry Pardus

Barry Pardus is the Deputy Director for the Office of Economic Security for the Colorado Department of Human Services. Mr. Pardus came to Colorado Department of Human Services by way of the Colorado Department of Corrections where he was the Assistant Director of Business Operations and was responsible for procurement, contracting, accounting and warehouse functions. Mr. Pardus has over 12 years of experience working for the State of Colorado. Having a Bachelor’s degree in Geology and a Master’s degree in Business Administration, Mr. Pardus started his career with the state in 2002 in the Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budgeting. Mr. Pardus went on to serve as the Assistant Director of Clinical Services for the Department of Corrections and the Assistant Director of Finance and Administration for the Division of Parole. Prior to his career in state government, Mr. Pardus served in several capacities to include information technology, business process reengineering, organizational and management consulting and financial management. Mr. Pardus is committed to providing progressive and fiscally responsible leadership in state government; emphasizing innovation in programs and services, staff accountability and evidence based practices.

Demareo Pruitt

In his 4 years with the Employment First program on both the county and state level, Demareo has served in a variety of capacities including; Case Manager, Facilitator, Workfare Coordinator, Community Liaison, Job Developer, and now CBMS specialist. FDIC certified financial instructor using his finance background to empower the undeserved of the Denver Metro area as well as Colorado Springs. He brings with him his personal mission of “being the impact that you wish to see in others by providing tools to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity.” Demareo received his Bachelor’s in Finance and a minor in Economics from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jessica Valand

Jessica Valand is the Employment & Training Manager with the Colorado Department of Human Services, and oversees public assistance work programs. Jessica has a decade of experience in government programs for low-income and vulnerable populations, and has worked at the federal, state and local levels. In Colorado, Jessica has worked in workforce development as well as human services in a variety of roles, and is also a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. Jessica holds a master’s degree in economic development from the University of Denver, and is passionate about creating economic opportunity, and building systems and programs that are efficient, effective and elegant for everyone who comes into contact with them.
Facilitator Bios

David Wareikis

David Wareikis is founder and CEO of Blue Jay Wireless, LLC. Mr. Wareikis has over 15 years of experience building, running and advising telecom companies and is an advocate for low-income consumer wireless and broadband needs. David began his career with Banc of America Securities media and telecom investment banking group. Over the years, Mr. Wareikis has served as adviser to such prominent companies as Belo Corp., Cablevision, Charter Communications, Comcast, Conterra Ultra Broadband, Rainbow Media Group, Radio One and Time Warner Entertainment, among others. Mr. Wareikis is a member of the Board of Directors at The Samaritan Inn, a non-profit organization based in McKinney, Texas which is the largest homeless shelter program in Collin County. Mr. Wareikis earned a Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Ray Washington

Ray Washington is a Fatherhood Educator with the El Paso County Department of Human Services and the Jefferson County Responsible Fatherhood Program. He is a certified Mediator, a Master Trainer for the Partners for Fragile Families Fatherhood Development Curriculum, and has trained in the Quenching the Father Thirst, Developing Dads, Caring Dads and 4/7 Dad curriculums. In 2008 his fatherhood program “DAD-UP” (Denver Area Dads – Understanding Parenting) was awarded Program of the Year by the Colorado Department of Human Services. In 2009, Ray was honored with the Commitment to Excellence award by the Jefferson County Department of Human Services and recognized by the Colorado Responsible Fatherhood Initiative as an Outstanding Individual of the Year. Ray also received the 2012 Colorado Family Support Council Excalibur Award for his fatherhood work in Jefferson County, which has fundamentally changed the relationship between non-custodial parents and Child Support Services. In 2012 he was honored with the Liberty Bell Award, by the First Judicial Bar Association. He has over two decades of experience working closely with the Colorado Department of Corrections and the Department of Youth Corrections. Three Strands Mediation and Family Services is a provider of wrap-around reentry services to young fathers in the Denver Metro. Ray is considered by many to be an expert in the Responsible Fatherhood realm and is extremely passionate about the work he does and the families he serves.