COLORADO CALL FOR INNOVATION:
ONE PAGE SUMMARY OF THREE FINALIST PROJECTS, PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Colorado Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) received 61 proposals through the 2017 Call for Innovation (CFI), all aimed at improving measurable outcomes for young Coloradans involved or at high risk of involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Over the past several months, OSPB, in close coordination with the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and other state agencies and subject-matter experts, has led a multi-step review of these proposals. We identified a short list of three of the strongest and most feasible projects for prioritized funding and implementation, which are summarized below. Additional information about the CFI, including details about the review process, these three projects, and next steps, can be found in a longer attachment accompanying this summary. That document also lists several additional proposals OSPB and CDHS see either as projects that could move toward implementation in the next budgetary cycle after they are further refined, or as additional targeted opportunities for collaboration outside the official CFI process.

The three prioritized projects for implementation are:

1. Denver Collaborative Partnership (DCP): The City and County of Denver application, jointly submitted by 9 local government and provider partners, is a bold proposal to help catalyze systemic change by emphasizing targeted prevention across the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It aims to provide alternatives to detention for youth, short-term respite care for caregivers, and a rapid response team to reach out and connect youth and their families with effective services when they first become involved in the system. OSPB is working to connect DCP with other CFI applicants, namely Colorado Youth for a Change, Children’s Hospital, and Fostering Healthy Futures, for potential collaboration. These potential collaborators are discussed further in the longer attachment.

2. Jefferson County Public Schools and Jefferson Child Youth Leadership Commission (CYLC): Jefferson County Schools, Jefferson Human Services and the CYLC jointly submitted an innovative plan to improve educational outcomes for foster youth. The proposal targets low on-time high school graduation rates for these youth by funding specialists to better serve their unique needs, putting in place a system for tracking youth across placements, and providing additional “social capital” supports. The proposal builds on a small pilot that has served 30 Jefferson youth since 2015, and shown promising initial results. As part of this proposal, Jefferson County has partnered with the University of Northern Colorado to preliminarily design a randomized trial to scale and rigorously test this approach. If we can show its efficacy, we hope this intervention could expand to help foster youth in other Colorado communities.

3. Southern Ute Community Action Programs, Inc. (SUCAP) and the Center for Effective Interventions Expanded Rural MST Pilot across Multiple Counties. Southern Ute Community Action Programs, Inc. (SUCAP) proposed a substance abuse adaptation of its Multisystemic Therapy (MST) intervention in Archuleta and La Plata counties, where it serves families on and off the Southern Ute Reservation. OSPB and CDHS want to build substantially on this proposal, and on a separate proposal from the University of Denver’s Center for Effective Interventions (CEI), to scale SUCAP’s adaptation of MST across multiple rural Colorado counties facing a recent spike in substance abuse. Through this expansion, we hope to serve enough families in enough communities to, for the first time, rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of MST and MST-Substance Abuse in a less urban environment.
CALL FOR INNOVATION UPDATE
July 2017

This update contains a more detailed overview of Colorado’s Call for Innovation review process, announces the three finalists that were selected by the Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) and the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) to move forward in the Call for Innovation (CFI) process, and lists next steps for finalists. A one page summary of these finalists is attached. This update also contains an overview of other notable proposals and recommended next steps for these applicants, as well as opportunities beyond the CFI process for select applicants.

Overview and Background
In January 2017, OSPB released a Call for Innovation (CFI), designed to accompany its ongoing Pay for Success feasibility study assessing the viability of linking government funding to rigorously measured results. The CFI sought proposals from community stakeholders on how to improve outcomes for youth involved in Colorado’s child welfare or juvenile justice systems. In addition to reducing child welfare and juvenile justice placements, OSPB asked applicants to focus on additional key outcomes, such as educational attainment, behavioral health, and placement stability for Colorado youth.

The Call for Innovation was intended as a call to action—and Coloradans answered the call. Local governments, nonprofits, service providers, faith leaders, universities, and other stakeholders submitted 61 proposals through this process. Collectively, the submissions highlight ongoing good work across Colorado, identify gaps in service, and propose a range of compelling programs and service alignments to fill gaps. Taken together, the 61 proposals build a compelling case that we can do more as a state to improve outcomes for our youth. Thank you to all who participated.

OSPB, in coordination with CDHS, led a multistep review of these proposals. Several readers assessed each application based on the criteria identified in the Call for Innovation. Subject matter experts within the Governor’s Office scored proposals using a rubric based on the application criteria. For applications that scored highly, OSPB subsequently sought feedback from officials representing CDHS and six additional state agencies, each involved in serving youth and families throughout Colorado, as well as from select experts outside of government.

OSPB and CDHS chose three of the strongest and most feasible proposals during the multistep review process to support going forward. These proposals are described in detail below. We also identified other applicants that may be able to collaborate with the finalists to support their efforts. OSPB and CDHS are enthusiastic about the potential of these proposals and are committed to working with local governments and community stakeholders to launch these ideas.

Finalists:

1. Denver Collaborative Partnership (DCP): The City and County of Denver submitted a joint application led by the DCP and including Denver’s Juvenile Services Center, Senate Bill 94 Coordinator, Juvenile Probation Department, Department of Human Services, District Attorney
(DA) Juvenile Diversion Program, Denver Public Schools, Denver Public Safety Youth Program, and Savio House, a partner provider.

Denver’s bold proposal intends to catalyze systemic change within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It aims to do so by providing targeted prevention services to youth and their families, including alternatives to detention for youth, co-located evidence-based programs, a rapid response team to engage youth and families involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems earlier in the process, and a streamlined referral process for these services.

DCP aims to serve the following target populations:

- Youth in the juvenile justice system in need of alternatives to detention;
- “Crossover Youth,” or youth that are involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems; and
- Youth at high risk of becoming deeply involved in child welfare or juvenile justice, such as youth referred to the Child Welfare Prevention Unit or designated as Beyond Control of Parent (BCOP).

For the youth and families described above, DCP plans to deploy a rapid response team of family advocates with experience navigating the juvenile justice, mental health, education, and human service systems to respond to their needs within 48 hours. This approach will address transportation barriers by meeting youth and families where they are to develop individualized service plans. In addition to a rapid response team, DCP also proposes to provide respite beds for youth. Respite beds may be used for youth in need of short-term alternatives to child welfare or detention placements, co-located evidence-based programs, or longer-term evidence-based programs such as Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), or Strengthening Families.

During the CFI review process, OSPB and CDHS identified CFI applicants that may be able to collaborate with DCP. We intend to work with DCP to meet with these possible collaborators and identify opportunities for integration and refinement.

- **Colorado Youth for a Change (CYC):** CYC offers specialized, intensive support for youth who have dropped out of school, and are working to target their services to youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Given DCP’s interest in school attendance, high school graduation rates, and youths’ successful transition from juvenile justice or child welfare to school, we believe that CYC could help serve DCP’s target populations and benefit from being rigorously evaluated.

- **Children’s Hospital Colorado’s Adolescent Medicine Center:** Children’s Hospital submitted a proposal to create a “medical home,” or a service delivery center that coordinates and delivers comprehensive services to youth referred from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. We believe that Children’s Hospital could provide co-located services to DCP’s target populations and benefit from being rigorously evaluated.

- **Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF):** FHF is a mentoring program for youth in foster care. The program, developed and tested in Colorado, has been rigorously evaluated and demonstrated to improve behavioral health and placement outcomes for youth. Currently,
program creator Dr. Heather Taussig is working to pilot an adaptation of FHF, Fostering Healthy Futures for Teens (FHF-T), which targets teens at risk of juvenile justice system involvement. FHF-T could benefit DCP’s target populations, and would also benefit from being rigorously evaluated.

2. Jefferson County Public Schools and the Jefferson Child Youth Leadership Commission (CYLC): Jefferson County Public Schools submitted a joint application with CYLC. CYLC includes 22 youth-serving partner agencies, including the Jefferson County Human Services Department. The proposal advocates the use of a multipronged intervention called Fostering Opportunities that aims to serve youth in foster care enrolled in 7th to 10th grade at the time of entry into the intervention. As part of this proposal, Jefferson County has partnered with Dr. Elysia Clemens and her colleagues at the University of Northern Colorado to preliminarily design a randomized trial which could scale and rigorously test this approach.

In Jefferson County, the on-time high school graduation rate for foster youth is 33.7 percent, a low number that mirrors the broader state’s graduation rate for youth in foster care. Jefferson’s proposal aims to improve on-time graduation of youth in foster care by funding specialists in Jefferson Public Schools. These specialists will provide intensive, customized, and trauma-informed case management services to foster care youth, focusing on their unique needs. Jefferson also puts in place a tracking system for youth across placements, and implements support structures to build social capital strategies for these students, with the goal of improving academic outcomes. There is the possibility this approach could help avoid deeper future involvement in the child welfare system and it could reduce the probability these children subsequently become involved in the juvenile justice system. Elements of Jefferson’s plan align closely with evidence-based models such as Check & Connect, School-based case management, and other comparable approaches that have been evaluated.

Jefferson’s Fostering Opportunities is based on a pilot program that has served approximately 30 child welfare-involved youth placed in out-of-home care in Jefferson County over the past two years. The pilot, funded by the Casey Family Programs, has yet to undergo a rigorous evaluation but has demonstrated that 78 percent of students participating showed improvement in academic performance, trauma related behavior, or both. These findings help support Jefferson’s proposal and highlight the need for a randomized controlled trial to evaluate Fostering Opportunities. Through their experience administering the pilot program over the past two years, Jefferson has built capacity (i.e. staff, materials, data sharing agreements) to operate Fostering Opportunities.

Jefferson is willing to further develop their proposal, and to provide assistance to other Colorado jurisdictions interested in piloting Fostering Opportunities. If the effectiveness of this model is demonstrated in Jefferson County, OSPB and CDHS may work to expand and scale this approach throughout Colorado.

3. Southern Ute Community Action Programs, Inc. (SUCAP) and the Center for Effective Interventions (CEI): SUCAP is a human services organization that serves La Plata County, Archuleta County, and the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. For over ten years, SUCAP has provided Multisystemic Therapy (MST), an evidence-based intervention that serves youths and families at-risk of juvenile justice system involvement. In response to a local increase in youth substance abuse, SUCAP submitted a proposal to pilot a variation of MST, Multisystemic
Therapy–Substance Abuse (MST-SA), an evidence-based intervention that serves youths and their families that are at-risk of substance abuse.

SUCAP partners with CEI, an organization housed at the University of Denver’s Graduate School of Social Work, to administer MST. CEI specializes in providing technical assistance and training to MST caseworkers, often remotely. Serendipitously, CEI submitted a separate proposal advocating an expansion of MST across multiple counties in Colorado.

In rural counties across Colorado, there has been a spike in youth substance abuse and adjudication, and local officials expressed concern during the CFI process about a lack of funding for intensive services. One central challenge SUCAP identifies in its proposal – the low number of program referrals – is a challenge for many rural Colorado communities, which often struggle to secure funding to pilot, test, and evaluate rural adaptations of interventions, precisely because the relatively small populations in these area make it difficult to achieve statistically significant results.

OSPB, in partnership with CDHS, proposes to integrate and expand the SUCAP and CEI proposals by developing a pilot program to provide a rural adaptation of both MST and MST-SA across numerous rural communities in Colorado. We believe we can leverage both CEI’s expertise and SUCAP’s experience providing MST in a less populous region of the state to substantially expand MST and the availability of services across Colorado. We will engage stakeholders in rural communities, targeting counties with the highest levels of need based on available research. By integrating and expanding the models proposed by SUCAP and CEI, we will work to bring down the average cost of service by leveraging economies of scale. Further, OSPB will explore piloting telehealth approaches to provide select aspects of MST and MST-SA remotely, further lowering costs, while evaluating telehealth approaches to ensure they do not adversely affect the efficacy of either program. Key goals of this project include onboarding and training caseworkers, and scaling both MST and MST-SA to enough communities so that a rigorous evaluation can be completed.

- We also see Generation Schools Network, currently providing educational and drop-out prevention services in schools and rural communities across southern and south-central Colorado, as one possible additional collaborator on this initiative, given the organization’s many inroads in this region of the state. Generation Schools Network submitted a separate proposal through the Call for Innovation.

Next Steps for Finalists

In the coming months, OSPB and CDHS will work with finalists to:

- Refine each proposal.
- Develop and finalize the budget and implementation plan for each proposal.
- Further analyze data related to each proposal’s target population(s).
- Develop evaluation plans for each proposal that measure the short- and long-term impacts on youth and families served.
- Convene meetings with key stakeholders to ensure timely progress on the steps listed above.

In the case of the SUCAP and CEI proposals, OSPB and CDHS will work to:

- Identify potential rural counties to participate.
- Convene key stakeholders in potential rural communities to assess interest and feasibility.
A note on funding: As emphasized throughout the CFI process, state funding is not guaranteed, appropriated, or immediately available for proposals. Nevertheless, OSPB and CDHS leadership are committed to working to further develop, fund, and launch CFI finalists’ proposals. This includes working to identify state and local funding opportunities in addition to funding opportunities offered by foundations, philanthropists, and/or other external funders. OSPB is committed to exploring several possible funding models to launch these projects, including Pay for Success, or other related financing models that link government payments to measurable outcomes, savings, and results.

Other Notable Proposals and Next Steps
In addition to the three finalists listed above, we would like to recognize the following proposals:

- **El Paso County:** Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families, in Partnership with El Paso County’s Reach Collaborative Management Program and other community partners, proposed a school-based referral model to provide high-fidelity wrap around to youth and families at high risk of future system involvement, substantially expanding services currently provided through El Paso County’s System of Care grant.

- **Weld County:** Youth and Family Connections submitted a joint application on behalf of the Weld County Collaborative Management Program, the Weld County Department of Human Services, Greeley School District 6, United Way of Weld County, Zero Dropouts, and other community collaborators. Similar to El Paso County’s proposal described above, Weld County proposed a school-based referral model to provide high-fidelity wrap around to youth and families at high risk of future system involvement, building on their current System of Care.

- **Pueblo County:** The Pueblo County Department of Social Services, with support from Pueblo County’s Interagency Oversight Group (the county’s Collaborative Management Program administrator), Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pueblo, Pueblo County School District 70 and several additional local partners, submitted a proposal with elements of many of the interventions described above. Pueblo County’s proposal identified services for out-of-home placed and justice-involved youth and families, including fulltime community coaches, the evidence-based Strengthening Families Program (SFP) for high school students, and a “one stop youth center” for co-located services.

All three of these proposals identified clear gaps in services and high levels of need in their communities, and elements of each proposal were compelling. All three proposals also have components that, in the opinion of OSPB, CDHS and other state-level readers, should be further refined. We will follow up with these three applicants to offer further feedback on possible modifications to each proposal. We would also like to work with the El Paso, Weld, and Pueblo county applicants identified above on a revised set of proposals, hopefully with the goal of moving forward with funding, implementation, and launch of a revised version of these projects in a subsequent “second wave” of projects in the state’s next budget cycle.

Opportunities beyond the CFI Process for Select Applicants
OSPB and CDHS would like to highlight two proposals, as an opportunity exists for these applicants to move forward with their ideas beyond the CFI process.
- **Aurora Mental Health Center (AuMHC) and the Division of Youth Service’s Foote Detention Center:** AuMHC and the Foote Detention Center jointly proposed a partnership to provide mental health services to youth leaving secure detention and trauma-informed support to staff (based on the “HEARTS” intervention used in Aurora Public Schools) at the Foote Detention Center located in Aurora. Given the contractual arrangement between the Division of Youth Services and the Foote Detention Center, OSPB believes a partnership between AuMHC and the Foote Detention Center should be pursued in conversations with CDHS, separately from the CFI process, as CDHS is committed to moving this proposal forward outside the CFI timeline.

- **Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF):** There is an opportunity for the evaluators of FHF to work with state departments to track long-term outcomes for participants in FHF’s initial randomized controlled trials. Using administrative data from departments such as CDHS, the Department of Education, and Health Care Policy and Financing may allow us to track outcomes such as educational attainment and juvenile justice placements, giving us insight into the long-term efficacy of FHF.

- **16th Judicial District’s M.A.P. (Motivation, Achievement, Power):** There is an opportunity for the 16th Judicial District to use administrative data to assess the short- and long-term outcomes associated with truancy court pilots. OSPB is working to partner the Colorado Department for Public Safety (CDPS) with the 16th Judicial District on this effort, as CDPS is already working to collect and use data on truancy courts across the state.