

**COMMUNITY OPTIONS, INC.  
LOCAL SERVICE AREA  
PLAN UPDATE**

APRIL 1, 2022

# **LOCAL SERVICE AREA PLAN UPDATE**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Community Options, Inc. is to assure the provision of services and supports to people for the six counties of Region 10 who meet the definition of having a developmental disability. These services and supports are designed to enable the people served to:

1. Uncover and develop the unique gifts each has, so as to be able to more fully contribute to their family, their community, and society at large.
2. Establish and develop meaningful relationships throughout their community.
3. Enhance their capacity to make choices and learn from the consequences of their choices.
4. Enjoy life to the fullest.

### **AGENCY VALUES**

Community Options believes that:

- Everyone has something to contribute.
- Everyone needs meaningful relationships.
- People deserve the dignity of making choices.
- Life is meant to be enjoyed.

### **AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Provided quality Case Management/Service Coordination and a broad array of services and supports to over 400 area citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities and, in some cases, their families.
- Re-designated as a Community Centered Board (CCB).
- Developed and successfully implemented strategies related to the COVID-19 pandemic that were highly effective in keeping the people we support and our staff healthy and safe.
- Continued Case Management Redesign efforts with HCPF, Alliance, and other CCBs to bring Colorado into compliance with Conflict Free Case Management requirements and began facilitating a series of meetings with the Delta and Montrose County SEPs related to the future provision of Case Management services.
- Continued a leadership role with HCPF officials and other rural/frontier CCBs regarding the attrition of HCB-DD enrollments in rural areas that is impacting statewide access to services. Of the 667 appropriations we received twelve, but only had nine on the waitlist. All nine were enrolled in the DD waiver. Six were enrolled with Community Options and three with other providers.
- Continued efforts to bring Colorado and Community Options into compliance with the HCBS Final Settings Rules.
- Continued providing Person Centered Thinking training to an ever-increasing number of employees and community partners.
- In July 2021 Community Options began offering the Family Care Giver service model and now supports six families.
- Continued efforts to expand the provider choices available for people receiving services and their families, including the addition of Touch of Care, MLS Senior Service, Roots LLC, and Over the Rainbow Behavioral Services. There are now over 40 Program Approved Service Agencies with program approval in our area, but very few of them actually provide any services. In addition to Community Options and those mentioned above, those service agencies actually providing services in our area are Mosaic, Six Points, Ariel Clinical Services, Behavioral Services of the Rockies, and a wide array of EI and CES providers and independent contractors.
- Continued positive relationship and partnering with the Arc of West Central Colorado.
- Participated in the Alliance Summit.

- Participated in regular virtual meetings with Senator Coram and Representative Catlin providing legislative updates.
- Maintained positive working relationships with local offices of the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Departments of Health and Human Services, Mid-Western Colorado Mental Health Center, the Arc, local school districts and BOCES, hospitals and medical providers, law enforcement, and transportation providers.
- Maintained positive relationships with Joint Budget Committee (JBC) members and other legislators, as well as local elected officials.
- Submitted successful applications and grant requests for an array of supports including AEDs for facilities.
- Worked successfully with HCPF, the JBC, and the General Assembly to secure additional short-term funding to stabilize programs and operations utilizing under expenditures related to COVID occupancy and other restrictions.
- Continued membership in several other committees with Alliance.
- Held a highly successful 49th Annual Meeting which included a performance by the unified musical/dance group “Joyful Sounds”
- Worked collaboratively to present “Non Profit Collaboration Event” in Montrose.
- Successfully completed all Deliverables required by our contract with HCPF
- Continued efforts to effectively capture available revenues, including implementation of new funding methodology related Targeted Case Management (TCM) and CCB functions, and Medicaid and insurance reimbursements for EI services, as well as the new State General Fund allocation and billing methodology implemented in FY 22.
- Continued to post all required information on our website and meet all other transparency requirements related to SB-038.
- Continued successful fund-raising activities including obtaining a second grant award through the Colorado Dept. of Transportation that enabled us to purchase two more new vans to help replace some of our aging fleet.
- Continued efforts of our Public Relations/Fund Raising Committee of the Board of Directors, including a successful campaign to raise sufficient funds to cover the local match component of our CDOT grant.
- Participate regularly in meetings with Montrose County Commissioner Sue Hansen.
- Facilitated a successful virtual and in-person Satisfaction Survey/Public Forum questionnaire process through which we acquired input from 34 people. There were close to 85 clients in attendance at the public forums.
- Continued a sponsored spot on public radio KVNF.
- Continued efforts to examine and modify service models in an effort to identify efficiencies and cost-effective strategies to promote long-term viability.
- Continued collaborative relationships with the Montrose High School National Honor Society and Key Clubs, the All Saints Episcopal Church, and a wide variety of community volunteer opportunities.
- Continued publication of an informative quarterly agency newsletter.
- Continued efforts focused on work safety and risk management that resulted in maintaining our Cost Containment Certificate.
- Continued efforts to update and enhance technologies and systems capacities, transportation capacities, and facility upkeep and maintenance as revenues have allowed.
- Maintained all necessary information to continue participation on the ColoradoGives.org website, enhancing our visibility and transparency and allowing us to continue participation in Colorado Gives Day.
- Overall delivery of services by the EI/Children’s team continues to be stable and timely despite continuing COVID restrictions.

- EI Coordinator, SCs, and DI actively participate in ongoing Technical Assistance calls and webinars to ensure they remain up to date on information.
- EI Coordinator will be submitting RFP for Community Options to complete evaluations.
- Family Support Manager coordinates the Family Support Council.
- CM Director attends State CM Director meetings to stay abreast of the latest information related to Case Management Redesign and engage as an active stakeholder.
- Continued to maintain the agency waitlist and enroll individuals as appropriate.
- CM Director is a Person-Centered Thinking trainer and provides trainings on the Western Slope to Community Options and other providers as requested.
- Continued to participate in Quality Improvement Strategy and Performance Reviews for Case Management.
- Will be participating in the Soft Launch of the new statewide Care and Case Management system and then will prepare for Go-Live in the fall.
- Case Management continues to assist in the work needed for the National Core Satisfaction Survey.

## **IDENTIFIED NEEDS OF ELIGIBLE PERSONS**

- **Need:** The world and our work have changed dramatically over the past years in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. So the over-riding need is for the people we support and our staff to stay safe and healthy. **Plan to Address:** The details of the plan were submitted to HCPF in our Business Continuity Plan. Additionally, Community Options has submitted On-Going Vaccination Plans for licensed facilities. In order to implement those plans and on-going revisions, we attended an endless array of HCPF and CDPH&E webinars, underwent successful CDPH&E Infection Control Surveys, and continued never-ending programmatic efforts to address new information, new issues and new concerns and implement new guidance.

Now that the world is beginning to at least resemble our previous “normal”, the following needs of people eligible for services in our area present themselves:

- **Need:** To finally address the ever-growing waiting list of people needing and wanting HCB-DD services. **Plan to Address:** The collaborative effort led by Alliance to End the Wait resulted in the receipt of 12 resources. We will continue to work collaboratively to increase provider capacities and have available services in the event more resources are released.
- **Need:** To address the shrinking service capacity and availability related to the on-going attrition of HCB-DD enrollments. **Plan to Address:** We will continue in a leadership role in working with HCPF and other rural/frontier CCBs and service agencies to develop strategies to stabilize service capacity and availability in those areas. We will continue to participate in the Direct Care Workforce Collaborative meetings.
- **Need:** To continue providing and developing a wide array of quality services and supports in accordance with people’s needs and choices, and with our mission and values. **Plan to Address:** We will continue working with both internal and external provider agencies to encourage growth and development of quality services and supports. This includes continued efforts at recruitment and retention of residential and day program staff, therapy providers, host home providers, and respite providers, all of which are needed.
- **Need:** To continue efforts to develop and diversify community employment and volunteer opportunities and meaningful day activities, and to come into compliance with the HCBS Settings Rules. **Plan to Address:** We will continue working with both internal and external provider agencies to encourage growth and development of quality services and supports. Additionally, we will work with community resources to develop opportunities.

- **Need:** To continue developing a broad range of leisure, social, experiential, educational, recreational, and exercise activities, both in our facilities and in community settings in accordance with the HCBS Settings Rules. **Plan to Address:** We will continue working with both internal and external provider agencies to encourage growth and development of quality services and supports, particularly with regards to expanding access to Supported Community Connection services. We will continue to access our community for resources to support this development.
- **Need:** To increase the availability of mental health services for the people we support. **Plan to Address:** To continue working with local mental health agencies such as The Center for Mental Health and on a broader systemic level to assure that people with IDD have access to necessary mental health services and interventions.
- **Need:** To assist people engaged in sub-minimum wage employment in transitioning to competitive employment, volunteerism, or other services. **Plan to Address:** To continue to work collaboratively with HCPF on transition plans, support staff in completing WISE Training, and provide valuable stakeholder feedback about the future and needs of SE.
- **Need:** To continue developing collaborative relationships with community partners such as the local high schools, service clubs, advocacy organizations, Colorado Mesa University, local city and county governments, and the local business community, as well as efforts aimed at public awareness and education. **Plan to Address:** We will continue to seek opportunities to engage in collaborative efforts with all of these entities, and take opportunities to participate in community events.
- **Need:** To continue efforts to maintain, upgrade, and replace aging vehicles, facilities, and infrastructure as is financially feasible. **Plan to Address:** Within our agency, we will continue our fund-raising efforts, continue to write grants, and seek other sources of funding in order to support the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the people we serve. We will continue to evaluate the cost vs. benefits of current settings

## **LOCAL ISSUES IMPACTING THE DESIGNATED SERVICE AREA**

The reality is that the vast majority of issues impacting our designated service area are not local issues, but rather systemic, external issues over which we have little control, and that have major impacts on the people we serve and their families, the CCB, service providers, and employees. As stated previously, all of these issues have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, which remains the overriding issue and has implications for each of the following.

- **Issue:** The continued financial viability of the CCB/CMA and primary service provider in this six-county area. **Plan to Address:** To continue working with HCPF, the JBC, and the General Assembly on the many systemic funding issues. On an internal basis, we have eliminated our debt; continued to write grants and seek other fund-raising opportunities; implemented a partially self-funded health insurance plan that uses a “cutting-edge” Reference Based Pricing model to help contain mandated health insurance costs; and continued to examine service models for other possible efficiencies or other opportunities to decrease expenses.
- **Issue:** As stated previously, to continue to address the ever-growing waiting list of people needing and wanting HCB-DD services. **Plan to Address:** The collaborative effort led by Alliance to End the Wait has encouraged and assisted with the release of 667 resources for this waiver. We will continue to collaborate with all parties in this effort and assess service model needs.
- **Issue:** The need for the state to address compliance with federal Conflict Free Case Management requirements in a way that minimizes the impact on people receiving services and their families, Case Management Agencies, Direct Service Providers, and employees, especially given the complexities and lack of service capacity in rural/frontier areas of the state, and which provides choice and respects those choices. **Plan to Address:** To continue to

be actively involved with HCPF to better understand the implications of a rural exception and CCB Designation; and participate in the promulgation of rules and regulations related to the implementation of CFCM that will minimize the impact on people receiving services, their families, and our agency.

- **Issue:** The lack of service capacity in our rural area that has been exacerbated by inadequate rates and poor access to providers. **Plan to Address:** To continue encouraging service providers to expand the scope of their services and continue working with HCPF and the JBC to increase rates to where they actually cover the cost of providing services and support the acquisition of quality providers.
- **Issue:** The ever-increasing complexity and volume of work expected of our agency and staff, including the new billing requirements in the Early Intervention program, which has dramatically complicated that program. This situation is also exacerbated by years of inadequate administrative funding that does not allow us to increase FTE to deal with these additional requirements, but rather, we keep piling additional demands onto already overworked employees. **Plan to Address:** To continue working with our state partners at HCPF, CDPH&E, and DHS to seek administrative relief, avenues to simplify our service system, and funding to cover the costs of these ever-increasing responsibilities.
- **Issue:** The overly-aggressive service caps in Day Services have significantly decreased the amount of services that people are able to receive. The cap in the number of Day Program units has led to a reduction of one day/week of service, placing major hardships on many families and HH and FCG providers, and drive significant unfunded expenses onto residential service providers. **Plan to Address:** To continue to work with HCPF to modify and/or remove these service limitations in future Waiver amendments.
- **Issue:** The compression of salary structures due to increases in the Minimum wage and stagnant rates that have led to a pay increase of \$7+/hour over the past 5 years for DSPs, while there has been no funding available to increase the wages of mid and upper management staff. **Plan to Address:** To continue working with HCPF and the JBC to increase rates to where they actually cover the cost of providing services, provide valuable stakeholder feedback as to what is the cost of good program management which in turn means good quality services.
- **Issue:** High turnover that impacts continuity of care, and the need for rates that actually cover the cost of providing services and that would allow the CCB and service agencies to recruit and retain quality employees and contractors. This has been exacerbated by the increases in the Minimum Wage and the fact that we have some of the highest health insurance costs in the nation, both of which have dramatically increased payroll expense, with minimal corresponding increase in rates/revenues. **Plan to Address:** To continue working with HCPF and the JBC to increase rates, and to continue to explore other avenues to improve recruitment and retention including improved staff training.

## **PROCESS TO SOLICIT LOCAL INPUT**

Constituency and other input into this Plan Update was obtained through the following sources:

1. This year two in-person public forums were held. One in Montrose and one in Cedaredge. There were approximately 80 + persons in services present for these. A Satisfaction Survey/Public Input survey was available on our website - parents/guardians/family members, providers, allied human service agencies were notified via email and phone. Also distributed to people receiving services were Service Satisfaction Surveys.
2. A Semi-Annual Monitoring Review process was utilized whereby we review the following for trends and concerns: Incident Report tracking; Complaint Logs; Human Rights Committee recommendations; Allegations of Mistreatment, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation; Critical Incidents; On-site Programmatic Monitoring; Personal Needs Audits; and Satisfaction Survey results. Additionally, information submitted for all required Contract Deliverables was analyzed and utilized.

## **AVAILABILITY OF THIS PLAN UPDATE DOCUMENT**

A copy of our Plan Update and the attached documents will be posted on our website, and copies will be made available free of charge to staff, the Board of Directors, Family Support Council, Human Rights Committee, elected officials, allied human service agencies, and anyone else who indicates an interest.

Attachment:

Sample Satisfaction Survey/Public Input questionnaire