Evaluation of
Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations

Goal4 It!™:
Implementation Findings from the Evaluation of Employment Coaching

OPRE Report #2022-305 • December 2022

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Overview

This report summarizes the design and implementation of Goal4 It!™, a coaching model designed by Mathematica in partnership with researchers and human services practitioners. The Jefferson County, Colorado, Department of Human Services implemented Goal4 It!™ as an alternative to the traditional case management provided by Colorado Works, its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Colorado Works staff—called Career and Family Coordinators (CFCs)—provided either traditional case management or Goal4 It!™ coaching to TANF participants.

Goal4 It!™ is an evidence-informed, participant-centered framework for working with individuals to set and achieve goals. Through structured interactions with coaches trained in the Goal4 It!™ approach, participants (1) set goals, (2) break their goals down into manageable steps, (3) develop specific plans to achieve the steps, and (4) regularly review their goal progress. During each of these four steps, participants practice their self-regulation skills with the objective of improving their employment and self-sufficiency outcomes.

Goal4 It!™ is one of four coaching interventions included in the ***Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations.*** Sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, the evaluation aims to learn more about the potential of different coaching approaches in helping adults with low incomes become more economically secure. The evaluation includes an implementation study and an impact study. As part of the impact study, Colorado Works participants were randomly assigned between October 2018 and November 2019 to either a group that could access Goal4 It!™ or a group that could access traditional case management.

A future report will describe the effect of Goal4 It!™ on participants' self-regulation skills, employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and other measures of personal and family well-being.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This report answers the following research question:

- **How was Goal4 It!™ implemented?**
  - —What is the program's design?
  - —What factors appear to impede or facilitate implementation of Goal4 It!™ as designed?
  - —What were participants' experiences with coaching and what services did they receive?

PURPOSE

This report describes Goal4 It!™'s design and goals, the Colorado Works traditional case management and Goal4 It!™ processes, the focal population and study participants, and the implementation of Goal4 It!™. The findings are of interest to practitioners and policymakers considering implementing or supporting coaching interventions and will provide important context for understanding and interpreting the findings from the impact study. The findings will also support future replication of employment coaching interventions.

HIGHLIGHTS

Overall, Goal4 It!™ was implemented as designed. Key findings from the implementation study are:

- Goal4 It!™ CFCs largely delivered collaborative and nondirective coaching, including at times when participants were not making progress toward their goals.
- Goal4 It!™ CFCs used the process and tools associated with the intervention and reported they were valuable.
- Participants mostly described positive experiences with Goal4 It!™ and referred to their Goal4 It!™ CFCs in positive terms.
- Goal setting and action step development occurred during most contacts and more frequently under Goal4 It!™ than traditional case management.
- Significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed employment-related topics during coaching sessions than did traditional case management participants, and significantly fewer discussed topics related to basic needs and family and children services.
- Goal4 It!™ CFCs met with participants more frequently and for more total time than did traditional case management CFCs; however, program engagement for both groups dropped sharply after the first month and then continued to decline.
- TANF requirements and short periods of engagement with the program influenced coaching.

METHODS

The report is based on the following data sources:

- In-person interviews with Goal4 It!™ CFCs, traditional case management CFCs, and supervisors, and observations of Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management sessions (spring 2019);
- A staff survey (winter 2019);
- Participant demographic, economic, and educational information collected in a baseline survey when participants enrolled in the study (between October 2018 and November 2019);

- In-depth, in-person interviews with nine Goal4 It!™ participants (spring 2019);
- Video recordings of 15 Goal4 It!™ sessions (spring 2019);
- Service receipt data for Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management participants from the study tracking system (between October 2018 and November 2020); and
- Discussions with Goal4 It!™ CFCs and Colorado Works supervisors as part of technical assistance in implementing the evaluation (ongoing).

A Goal4 It!™ CFC and a participant engage in a coaching session.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

Executive Summary

Policymakers, program operators, and other stakeholders are interested in the potential of employment coaching interventions to help Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and participants of other programs designed for low-income populations to attain economic self-sufficiency. Coaching—in which trained staff members work with participants to set individualized goals and provide support and feedback as participants work toward their goals—has been shown to be an effective method for changing behaviors and improving self-regulation skills needed to find and maintain work for corporate managers and teachers, and has been applied in multiple settings. To explore the potential of employment coaching for low-income populations, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is sponsoring the ***Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations.*** The evaluation assesses the implementation of four coaching interventions and their impacts on the self-regulation skills, employment, earnings, and self-sufficiency of study participants. This report describes the design and implementation of one of the interventions—Goal4 It!™—implemented in Jefferson County, Colorado.

The Goal4 It!™ Program Model. Goal4 It!™ is an evidence-informed, participant-centered framework for setting and achieving goals. Michelle Derr (formerly at Mathematica and now at The Adjacent Possible) and other Mathematica staff designed the intervention in partnership with researchers and human services practitioners. None of the staff involved in its development worked on the evaluation. Through practice (1) defining goals, (2) planning how to attain them, (3) executing the plan to attain them, and (4) reviewing and revising goals as needed in collaboration with a coach, Goal4 It!™ aims to help TANF participants strengthen their self-regulation skills with the objective of improving their employment and self-sufficiency outcomes. The Goal4 It!™ structure involves four specific steps to set and achieve goals, which are applied consistently by all coaches, and are designed to be used by participants even when not being coached. Tools facilitate the steps. Goal4 It!™ can be applied in a variety of settings.

Jefferson County Department of Human Services (DHS), which operates Colorado Works (the state's TANF program), implemented Goal4 It!™ as an alternative approach to traditional case management provided by Career and Family Coordinators (CFCs). Mathematica trained a subset of traditional case management CFCs in Goal4 It!™. As part of the evaluation, Jefferson County DHS staff randomly assigned new Colorado Works participants with work requirements to a group that could access a Goal4 It!™ CFC or one that could access a traditional case management CFC.

Participants. All study participants were Jefferson County residents deemed eligible for Colorado Works and subject to work requirements. At the time of study entry, participants were, on average, in their early 30s with two children living with them. Over 90 percent of study participants were female. Almost half identified as White, non-Hispanic, and 40 percent identified as Hispanic. While some study participants worked in the 30 days prior to study entry, their earnings were low and many faced challenges to employment including child care, lack of transportation, lack of a valid driver's

A Goal4 It!™ CFC meets with a participant.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

license, and unstable housing. About one in five participants lacked a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate at the time of study entry. Because of random assignment, participants assigned to a Goal4 It!™ CFC had similar characteristics to those assigned to a traditional case management CFC.

Goal4 It!™ in Practice. Overall, Goal4 It!™ was implemented as designed. Key findings from the implementation study are:

- **Goal4 It!™ CFCs largely delivered collaborative and nondirective coaching, including at times when participants were not making progress toward their goals.** Discussions with Goal4 It!™ CFCs, supervisors, and participants, as well as observations of Goal4 It!™ sessions, suggest that Goal4 It!™ CFCs generally provided nondirective support to participants as they set their own goals and action steps. In contrast, interviews with and observations of traditional case management CFCs indicate they did discuss goals with participants but directed them if they were not making progress.
- **Goal4 It!™ CFCs used the process and tools associated with the intervention and reported they were valuable.** Analysis of video-recorded Goal4 It!™ CFC sessions and the staff survey show that Goal4 It!™ CFCs frequently used the Goal4 It!™ tools. The Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that the tools were useful in helping the participant identify goals, action steps, and a timeline for completing activities, and to track progress over time. Additionally, the Goal4 It!™ CFCs indicated the tools helped participants recognize and address challenges to meeting their goals.

- **Participants mostly described positive experiences with the intervention and referred to their Goal4 It!™ CFCs in positive terms.** Most participants interviewed for the study reported that they found the Goal4 It!™ tools useful and appreciated the goal setting support they received. Most had positive or neutral comments about their relationships with Goal4 It!™ CFCs.
- **Goal setting and action step development occurred during most contacts and more frequently among Goal4 It!™ participants than traditional case management participants.** While common among participants in both the Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management groups, significantly more Goal4 It!™ CFC contacts included goal setting (76 percent) than did traditional case management CFC contacts (70 percent). Additionally, significantly more Goal4 It!™ CFC contacts relative to traditional case management CFC ones included identifying action steps (72 percent and 67 percent, respectively) and discussion of the action step to take next (85 percent and 62 percent, respectively).
- **Goal4 It!™ participants discussed goals related to employment topics more than did traditional case management participants, and fewer discussed goals related to basic needs, family and children services, and work requirements.** Compared to traditional case management participants, Goal4 It!™ participants were significantly more likely to discuss goals related to employment in the first nine months after random assignment (84 percent versus 76 percent). Fewer Goal4 It!™ participants discussed a goal related to basic needs (62 percent versus 73 percent), family and children services (38 percent versus 48 percent), or health (39 percent versus 47 percent). Significantly fewer Goal4 It!™ participants than traditional case management participants discussed Colorado Works work requirements during the first nine months (53 percent versus 64 percent).
- **Goal4 It!™ CFCs met with participants more frequently and for more total time than did traditional case management CFCs; however, program engagement for both groups fell sharply after the first month and subsequently continued to decline.** Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants had on average 1.7 contacts in the first month after study enrollment and about three cumulatively in the first three months, significantly more than traditional case management participants did with their CFCs (1.2 contacts in the first month and about two cumulatively in the first three months). Over the nine-month period following study enrollment, Goal4 It!™ participants met with their assigned CFC 3.7 times, on average, significantly more times than traditional case management participants did with their CFCs (2.6). In the first two months after study enrollment, significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants engaged with their CFC than traditional case management participants. However, by the third month after study enrollment a similar share of Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management participants remained in contact with their CFC. Contact with both Goal4 It!™ CFCs and traditional case management CFCs declined significantly over time. By the ninth month after study enrollment, fewer than 20 percent of both groups remained in contact with their CFC.

- **TANF requirements and short periods of engagement with the program influenced coaching.** Some Goal4 It!™ CFCs stated that it is challenging to find a balance between the Goal4 It!™ participant-centered model and accountability. Even with a state-wide focus on engagement rather than activities that count toward the federal Work Participation Rate, Colorado Works still required participants to work toward their goals and action steps; failure to do so could result in sanctions. Short periods of participation in Colorado Works (about 4.4 months on average) may also have hindered Goal4 It!™'s ability to build CFC-participant relationships, develop participants' self-regulation skills, and improve employment and self-sufficiency outcomes.

What is Next. A future report will present information on the impact of Goal4 It!™ on participants' self-regulation skills, employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and other measures of personal and family well-being.

A Goal4 It!™ CFC guides a participant as she completes My Goal Plan.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

I. Introduction

Poverty and other chronic stresses can hinder the development and full use of the "self-regulation" skills that are needed to find and maintain employment (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013; Cavadel, et al., 2017). Self-regulation skills—sometimes referred to as soft skills or executive functioning skills—are the skills needed to finish tasks, stay organized, and control emotions (Nyhus & Pons 2005; Hogan & Holland 2003; Störmer & Fahr 2013; Caliendo, et al., 2015). Examples of self-regulation skills relevant to employment include, among others: grit and self-efficacy needed to continue at a task despite setbacks, time management necessary to show up to work on time, and emotional understanding and regulation needed when dealing with difficult coworkers or supervisors.

Research finds that goal setting and developing action steps to meet goals can help develop self-regulation skills (Locke & Latham 1990; Zimmerman, et al., 1992). Coaching—in which trained staff members work with participants to set individualized goals and provide support and feedback as participants work toward their goals—has been shown to be an effective method for changing the behavior and improving the self-regulation skills of corporate managers and teachers (Jones et al., 2015; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Coaching has been applied in several different settings, including financial management (Collins & Murrell, 2010; Theodos, et al., 2015), higher education (Bettinger & Baker, 2011), and health (Pirbaglou, et al., 2018).

Recently, there has been growing interest among a range of stakeholders, including policymakers and employment program operators, in how insights from research on coaching might be used to improve employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for participants in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other programs designed for low-income populations.

To explore the potential of employment coaching for low-income populations, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is sponsoring the ***Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations*** (Box 1). The evaluation assesses the implementation of four coaching interventions and their impacts on study participants' self-regulation skills, employment, earnings, self-sufficiency, and other measures of well-being.

This report describes the design and implementation of one intervention: Goal4 It!™ ™. The Jefferson County Department of Human Services (DHS) implemented the Goal4 It!™ coaching model as an alternative to traditional case management services in Colorado Works—Colorado's TANF program. Career and Family Coordinators (CFCs) provided traditional case management services, which also incorporated goal setting. Mathematica trained a subset of CFCs to provide Goal4 It!™. As part of the impact study, Jefferson County staff randomly assigned new Colorado Works participants who were subject to work requirements either to a group that could access Goal4 It!™ coaching or to a group assigned to traditional case management. Goal4 It!™ coaching involves helping program participants set meaningful goals, break goals down into manageable steps, develop specific plans to achieve them, and in the process, build self-regulation skills.

Box 1. About the Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations

The evaluation is assessing the implementation of four coaching interventions and, using an experimental research design, their impacts on participants' self-regulation, employment, earnings, self-sufficiency, and other measures of well-being. The coaching interventions are:

- **Family Development and Self-Sufficiency program (FaDSS)** in Iowa. Under contract to the state, 17 local human services agencies use grants from the Iowa Department of Human Rights to provide TANF participants with coaching during home visits. Seven of those 17 agencies are participating in the evaluation. Coaches address families' challenges to employment and job retention..
- **Goal4 It!™** in Jefferson County, Colorado. Goal4 It!™ is an employment coaching intervention designed by Mathematica and partners that is being piloted in a TANF program as an alternative to more traditional case management.
- **LIFT** in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City. LIFT is a nonprofit organization that provides career and financial coaching to parents and caregivers of young children. LIFT also operates in Washington, D.C., but that location is not participating in the evaluation due to its size and involvement in another evaluation.
- **MyGoals for Employment Success** in Baltimore and Houston. MyGoals is a coaching demonstration project designed by MDRC and partners that provides employment coaching and financial incentives to unemployed adults receiving housing assistance. It is operated by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City and the Houston Housing Authority, respectively.

For additional information about the evaluation and snapshots of each program, visit: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-coaching-focused-interventions-for-hard-to-employ-tanf-clients-and-other-low-income-populations.

Michelle Derr (formerly at Mathematica and now at The Adjacent Possible) and other Mathematica staff designed Goal4 It!™ in partnership with researchers and human services practitioners. As part of the evaluation, Dr. Derr provided background information on Goal4 It!™ development to the research team. However, she was not involved in data collection, data analysis, or determining conclusions for the impact or implementation study.

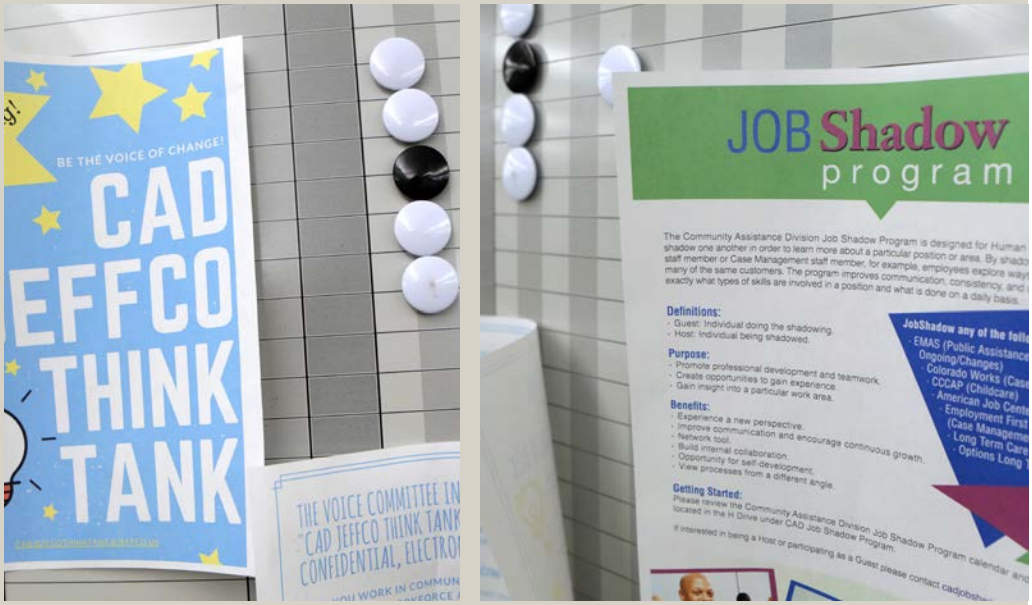
EMPLOYMENT COACHING

Employment coaching helps participants practice self-regulation skills needed to find and keep a job.

Although there are varying definitions of coaching, this study defines it as an approach that (1) includes goal setting and developing action steps for meeting the goals; (2) is collaborative and not directive; (3) is individualized; (4) helps participants learn the skills to set goals on their own and work toward meeting those goals; (5) attempts to increase participants' motivation to meet goals; and (6) holds the participant accountable for outcomes. Employment coaching, for purposes of this study, is coaching in which goals are related directly or indirectly to employment.

Employment coaching helps participants practice self-regulation skills needed to find, keep, and advance in a job, and use them after leaving the program. It is distinct from case management, the traditional method for helping TANF and other program participants find and maintain employment, in that it is not directive but rather involves a collaborative relationship between coach and participant. That is, the coach works in partnership with participants to help them set goals, determine action steps, and assess their progress toward those goals, rather than directing participants as to which goals they should pursue and how they will attain them (Joyce and McConnell, 2019).

A bulletin board displays opportunities for participants.



(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

Despite the interest in employment coaching interventions for low-income adults, there are few rigorous tests of their effectiveness (Martinson et al., 2020). This evaluation builds that research base by testing various employment coaching interventions specifically for low-income populations.

DATA SOURCES

The primary data sources for this report are:

- In-person interviews with staff providing Goal4 It!™, staff providing traditional case management, and supervisors, and observations of Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management sessions (spring 2019);
- A survey of seven Goal4 It!™ CFCs, nine traditional case management CFCs, and two supervisors (winter 2019);
- Participant demographic, economic, and educational information collected in a baseline survey when participants enrolled in the study (between October 2018 and November 2019);
- In-depth, in-person interviews with nine Goal4 It!™ participants (spring 2019);
- Video recordings of 15 Goal4 It!™ sessions (spring 2019);
- Service receipt data for study participants (both those receiving Goal4 It!™ and those receiving traditional case management) from the study tracking system (between October 2018 and November 2020); and
- Discussions with Goal4 It!™ staff and supervisors as part of technical assistance in implementing the study (ongoing).

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Section 2 of this report explains the Goal4 It!™ model and the context in which it operates. Section 3 summarizes study participant characteristics. Section 4 describes Goal4 It!™ as implemented in practice. Lastly, Section 5 discusses the main takeaways from the implementation study of Goal4 It!™.

Appendix A describes the design of the evaluation, including more information on the evaluation of Goal4 It!™. Appendix B provides detailed tables describing staff and participants' characteristics.

A participant completes the Stepping Stones to Success tool.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

II. The Goal4 It!™ Model

Goal4 It!™ is an evidence-informed, participant-centered framework for setting and achieving goals. It aims to improve participants' employment and self-sufficiency outcomes while developing their self-regulation skills. Through structured interactions with coaches trained in the Goal4 It!™ approach, participants follow a four-step process to set goals, break goals down into manageable steps, develop specific plans to achieve the steps, and regularly review goal progress. Each step of the process involves activities that provide participants practice in self-regulation skills.

Developed by Mathematica in partnership with researchers and human services practitioners, the Goal4 It!™ model draws on work from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University and literature on goal setting (Cavadel et al., 2017; Derr, McCay, and Kauff, 2019; Center on the Developing Child, 2016). Mathematica worked with practitioners, many of them TANF providers, to implement and test the model, and made adaptions based on practitioner experiences.

First implemented in 2015 by the agency administering TANF in Ramsey County, Minnesota, Mathematica subsequently trained TANF agency staff in 10 states, although the states vary in the extent to which Goal4 It!™ is implemented.

Jefferson County DHS, which operates Colorado Works in the county, implemented Goal4 It!™ as an alternative to services provided by traditional case management CFCs. Jefferson County was the second county in the state to implement Goal4 It!™, joining Larimer County.

ORIGIN OF GOAL4 IT!™ IN JEFFERSON COUNTY COLORADO WORKS

Jefferson County DHS implemented Goal4 It!™ as an alternative to services provided by traditional case management CFCs.

In 2016, the Colorado Department of Human Services launched the Colorado Works Innovative Initiative (CWII) to foster new approaches to promote participant engagement in Colorado Works services and ultimately improve the program (McCay et. al., 2017). CWII was part of a larger state-level effort to advance a person-centered approach to working with Colorado Works participants, including emphasizing engagement in activities that promote self-sufficiency rather than focusing on employment activities countable toward the federal Work Participation Rate (WPR).[1] Jefferson County was one of 15 counties that completed the CWII.

In 2017, Jefferson County DHS leadership and staff began working with Mathematica to tailor Goal4 It!™ to the county's Colorado Works program. Jefferson County Colorado Works supervisors selected six traditional case management CFCs to implement Goal4 It!™ as part of a pilot. In selecting CFCs for Goal4 It!™ training, supervisors aimed to create two groups of CFCs (Goal4 It!™ CFCs and traditional case management CFCs) with similar skill levels and experience. For example, high-performing CFCs were split between groups rather than assigned to one group.

After the pilot ended in August 2018, DHS selected two additional traditional case management CFCs to implement Goal4 It!™, for a total of eight Goal4 It!™ CFCs.

[1] For more information about the federal WPR, see https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title04/0407.htm.

Mathematica trained (or retrained) all eight in Goal4 It!™ for the Employment Coaching study. The remaining nine CFCs continued to provide traditional case management services.

Between October 2018 and November 2019, Jefferson County Colorado Works staff randomly assigned Colorado Works participants who consented to be in the study either to Goal4 It!™ or to traditional case management. Following random assignment, staff paired participants with a Goal4 It!™ CFC or with a traditional case management CFC, depending on their group. Colorado Works participants who did not consent worked with traditional case management CFCs and were not included in the study.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

Jefferson County is adjacent to Denver County. The county is mostly urban but stretches into the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains and has a few rural areas. The largest cities are Lakewood, Arvada, Westminster, and Littleton.

During the study enrollment period, Jefferson County had a strong economy. In 2019, the county had lower unemployment (2.5 percent) and poverty (7.1 percent) rates, and higher median household income ($82,986), than the State of Colorado and the United States (Box 2). Demographically, Jefferson County is predominantly non-Hispanic White (78 percent), with 15 percent of residents identifying as Hispanic (Box 2).

Data collection for this report occurred prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of COVID-19, Jefferson County made changes to how it implemented both traditional case management and Goal4 It!™ (see Box 3).

Box 2. Jefferson County Economic and Demographic Characteristics (2019)

Economic Characteristics

- Jefferson County's unemployment rate in 2019 was 2.5 percent, lower than the rate for the state of Colorado (2.9 percent) and the United States (3.4 percent).
- The estimated poverty rate in Jefferson County was 7.1 percent. This rate was lower than the state average (10.3 percent) and the national average (13.4 percent).
- Median household income in Jefferson County in 2019 was $82,986, higher than the state median ($72,331) and the national median ($62,843).

Demographic Characteristics

- Jefferson County has a population of 574,798. It is the fourth-largest county in the state by population.
- 78 percent of the population is non-Hispanic White, 15 percent is Hispanic, 3 percent is Asian, and 1 percent is Black.

Source: American Community Survey 2019.
https://data.rgj.com/american-community-survey/jefferson-county-colorado/labor-statistics/unemployed-civilians/num/05000US08059/area/.

Box 3. Goal4 It!™ During COVID-19

On March 17, 2020, Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management sessions in Jefferson County moved from in-person to virtual in response to Colorado's COVID-19 stay at home order. All Colorado Works staff began working from home and had the option to go into the office to use equipment as needed. Although the Colorado Works office building reopened in June 2020, as of May 2022, all staff continue to work from home most of the time.

As of May 2022, most services remain virtual. The orientation is held virtually, twice a week as opposed to in person, three times a week before the pandemic. Most sessions are held monthly over the phone, and CFCs keep in touch with participants through phone calls and email in between sessions. While participants may request in-person meetings, they are rare.

Before the pandemic, participants filled out Goal4 It!™ forms by hand while they were in the office awaiting or participating in coaching sessions. Since the services moved to a virtual format, Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants reported they continue to use the Goal4 It!™ forms over the phone. However, instead of having participants write on the forms, coaches record participants' responses and then email the completed forms to the participants.

Starting during the pandemic and still available as of May 2022, Jefferson County used available funds from its TANF block grant allocation to provide participants with more generous supportive services, such as additional cash assistance for rent, utilities, and car payments. To help reduce participants' challenges to accessing technology, Colorado Works also doubled the amount of funds available to participants to purchase computers, from $250 to $500. In fall 2020, Colorado Works also began offering incentives for participating in virtual workshops: $25 for each workshop attended and an additional $200 for completing all the workshops the program offers. The program manager shared that Colorado Works will likely continue to offer staff the flexibility to work from home and some virtual services for participants.

JEFFERSON COUNTY COLORADO WORKS TRADITIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT AND GOAL4 IT!™ PROCESSES

Once determined eligible for Colorado Works, all participants must attend an orientation session within 30 days of completing the application and begin goal setting. The orientation, which occurred prior to random assignment during the study, provides an overview of the Colorado Works program and (during the period of study enrollment) the Employment Coaching study. During orientation, all participants also complete the *All About Me* form. In addition to collecting information about the participant's background, the *All About Me* form asks participants to identify an initial personal or professional goal that they will commit to pursuing while in the program, including the education or work experience needed to achieve the goal (see Box 4).

During the orientation, participants learn about Colorado Works expectations and requirements (see Box 5). Participants are expected to meet regularly with their assigned Goal4 It!™ or traditional case management CFC and engage in activities for a specific number of hours per week. Failure to participate in those activities can result in a sanction, which is a reduction in the cash benefit. If participants do not engage with their assigned CFC, their case may be closed.

Following the orientation, staff assigned participants at random to a Goal4 It!™ CFC group or a traditional case management CFC group. The Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management processes diverged after the orientation in five ways: (1) assessments used, (2) individual plans, (3) the process for setting and pursuing goals with accompanying tools, (4) frequency of meetings, and (5) participant accountability.

Box 4: Standard Colorado Works Forms

Completed by all study participants prior to random assignment

All About Me: Implemented in 2017, the *All About Me* form (1) collects information about the participant's family, children, child care arrangements, physical and mental health status, education goals, housing and transportation status, employment history, strengths and talents, and challenges; and (2) asks participants to record an initial personal or professional goal that they will commit to pursuing while in Colorado Works.

Completed by traditional case management participants only

Assessment Form: Implemented in 2017, the Assessment Form is goal-focused. With guidance from their assigned CFC, participants in the traditional case management group record information about (1) employment preparation, (2) education, (3) housing and transportation, and (4) barriers to self-sufficiency. For each of these areas, participants select a goal, state why the goal is important, the steps necessary to reach the goal, what might get in the way of goal attainment, and type of assistance needed. Finally, participants identify a person who is a positive influence in their life and who helps them be optimistic about their future. Goal4 It!™ participants instead fill out the Stepping Stones to Success form (see additional information below).

Individual Plan: Modified slightly in 2017 from a previous version to reflect a focus on goals, the Individual Plan is a signed contract between the participant and DHS that describes the rights and responsibilities of the participant. This includes a description of the work requirements that the participant must meet. Participants select a long-term goal (achievable in six months to one year) and a short-term goal (achievable in one to three months). The My Action Steps section of the Individual Plan lists the steps the participant agrees to complete, and the agreed-upon hours to be spent on each work participation activity. The final section of the Individual Plan describes CFC commitments (e.g., provide transportation allowance, make referral for child care). Participants in the Goal4 It!™ group use a modified version of this form, referred to as the Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan (see additional information below).

Box 5: Work Requirements and Sanctions

Federal Work Requirements

- One-parent families with children under age six must spend 20 hours per week in specified work activities such as working, volunteering, job search, or attending school.
- One-parent families with children over age six must participate in work activities for 30 hours per week.
- Families with two parents must spend a combined 55 hours per week in work activities if they are using child care and a combined 35 hours per week if they are not using child care.

To meet the required federal Work Participation Rate (WPR), states need 50 percent of all families with a work-eligible individual and 90 percent of the two-parent families on their caseload to meet the work participation requirements. However, there is a credit for reducing the caseload. In fiscal year 2019, Colorado met its federal WPR requirement, exceeding its target by 23 percentage points.

Sanctions and Case Closures

Participants who are meeting with their CFC but do not comply with work activities outlined in their Individual Plan "without good cause" are sanctioned. The first sanction results in a 25 percent benefit reduction, the second a 50 percent reduction, and the third a three-month case closure. If participants stop meeting with their CFC, their case is closed.

ASSESSMENTS

All Colorado Works participants are required to attend an initial assessment meeting with their assigned CFC. However, during this meeting, Goal4 It!™ CFCs and traditional case management CFCs use different assessment forms. Participants in the traditional case management group complete the *Assessment Form* (Box 4). Created in 2017 as part of the statewide focus on participant engagement, the *Assessment Form* collects information on employment preparation, education, housing and transportation, and barriers to self-sufficiency, as well as goals in each of these areas. The traditional case management CFC provides guidance as needed to ensure selected goals are realistic and attainable and are geared toward promoting self-sufficiency.

Goal4 It!™ participants instead fill out Stepping Stones to Success during the initial meeting and then use it as a "check in" at subsequent meetings. On this form, participants rate their life circumstances in 11 different focal areas on a four-point scale, from "an area of significant need" to "thriving." The focal areas are housing, dependent care, transportation, personal well-being, family well-being, social support, financial health, legal, education and training, job search skills, and employment. The purposes of the Stepping Stones to Success assessment are to identify needs and strengths in the life areas that relate to and support employment and parenting, prioritize an area of life and set goals in that area, and allow the participants to see their progress toward goals.

INDIVIDUAL PLANS

Participants in both groups also complete and sign a document at their initial meeting that describes their rights and responsibilities, and then update it on an ongoing basis as needed. Participants in the traditional case management group fill out this document, called an *Individual Plan* (Box 4), that lists long- and short-term goals that the participant and the CFC agree upon, the steps the participant will take to achieve them, and the agreed-upon hours for each activity. It describes the participant responsibilities in the third person (e.g., "No individual is legally entitled to any form of assistance…") and lists the commitments of the CFCs (e.g., provide transportation assistance, monitor the plan, return all phone calls).

The Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan, on the other hand, does not document goals because Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants have other tools to record short- and long-term goals (described further below). Instead, the *Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan* leaves space for the participant to enter activities to complete prior to the next meeting. The *Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan* does not list hours associated with each activity, and it describes participant responsibilities in the first person (e.g., "I am not legally entitled to any form of assistance under Colorado Works").

A Goal4 It!™ CFC listens to a participant during a coaching meeting.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

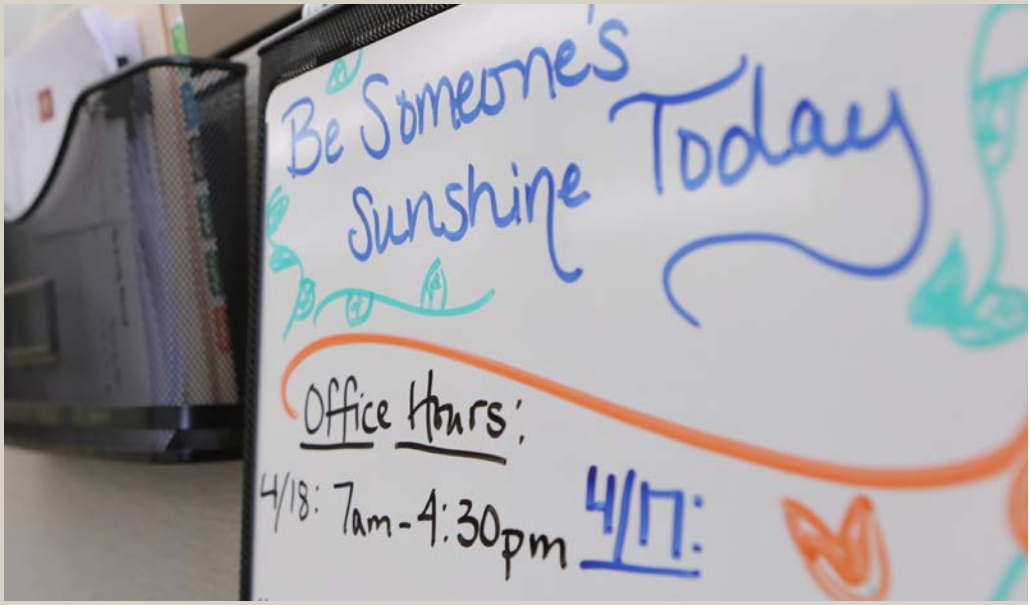
PROCESS FOR SETTING AND PURSUING GOALS

All CFCs—traditional case management and Goal4 It!™—work with participants to set goals, develop action steps, identify barriers to goal pursuit and needed supports, and monitor progress toward goals. However, traditional case management and Goal4 It!™ CFCs receive different training on approaches to working with participants, have access to and use different tools, and provide differing levels of direction to encourage participant goal setting and attainment.

Training for traditional case management CFCs involves reviewing the Colorado Works policies and procedures, followed by a month of job shadowing an experienced CFC. Traditional case management CFCs also participate in ongoing training opportunities, such as training on motivational interviewing and setting SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) goals. They may also attend other trainings as they are available (e.g., training on trauma-informed care).

When working with participants to set goals and action steps, traditional case management CFCs encourage participants to set their own goals but may encourage or direct them to select goals and activities that align with the Colorado Works focus on attaining self-sufficiency. They might also discourage goals they deem impractical or unachievable (e.g., becoming a famous DJ). Once the traditional case management CFCs and participant identify a suitable goal, they work together to list action steps or activities needed to accomplish the goal. CFCs might encourage participants to identify the activities, or they may prescribe the activities to the participant based on the agreed-upon goal, depending on the needs of the participant and the preference of the CFC. The traditional case management CFC also works with the participant to assign hours to each activity. As noted above, the activities and hours are recorded on the Individual Plan and reviewed and updated as necessary during each meeting.

A white board displays a motivational message.



(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

Because Goal4 It!™ CFCs started as traditional case management CFCs, they participated in the same initial and ongoing training described above. They additionally received Goal4 It!™-specific training, which focused on the Goal4 It!™ framework and the four-phase Goal4 It!™ coaching process (Goal, Plan, Do, Review/Revise). Mathematica's Goal4 It!™ curriculum (Derr and McCay, 2018), which informed the structure and content of the training, includes an overview of the Goal4 It!™ framework and detailed descriptions of the coaching phases and the supporting tools. Goal4 It!™ CFCs also receive training on self-regulation skills, but do not use self-regulation skills terminology in conversations with participants. An earlier version of Goal4 It!™ piloted in other agencies involved explicit references to self-regulation terminology with participants. Mathematica removed explicit references to self-regulation skills after practitioners reported finding it hard to use with participants. Instead, Goal4 It!™ CFCs focus on the steps of goal achievement when working with participants, which in turn build self-regulation skills without using the specific terminology. Box 6 shows the self-regulation skills associated with each of the four phases.

Box 6: Self-regulation skills used in each Goal4 It!™ Phase

Phase	Self-regulation skills used
Goal	Metacognition (understanding thought processes), working memory, prioritization
Plan	Planning, prioritization, time management, working memory
Do	Task initiation, response inhibition, time management, flexibility, sustained attention, working memory, organization, persistence, stress tolerance, emotional control
Review/Revise	Working memory, flexibility, metacognition

Source: Derr, McCay, and Dunn 2018.

The Goal4 It!™ CFC facilitates the process, but the participant has considerable autonomy. As such, Goal4 It!™ CFC training focuses on being nondirective and encouraging participants to choose their own goals and identify the action steps needed to accomplish them. By asking participants to select their goals, Goal4 It!™ aims to increase participants' motivation to meet them. To further motivate participants, Goal4 It!™ CFCs are trained to ask participants to imagine how their lives might be different if they accomplished their goals.

Three of the four Goal4 It!™ phases have associated tools that the participant can complete with the Goal4 It!™ CFC (Exhibit 1). Goal4 It!™ CFCs can use the tools to support the relevant coaching phase when appropriate, but the tools are not required. The four-phase structure and the associated tools are summarized below.[2]

1. **Goal Phase:** The Goal4 It!™ CFC and participant discuss the participant's current circumstances, personal strengths, and challenges. The participant identifies a potential goal that is meaningful.

   Two Goal4 It!™ tools support goal identification: Stepping Stones to Success and Goal Storming. Goal4 It!™ CFCs use Stepping Stones to Success (described above) during the initial meeting to help participants prioritize an area of life and set a goal accordingly. They also use the tool at the start of each subsequent meeting to illustrate progress toward goals and identify areas of need to focus the meeting.

   If a participant needs guidance to develop a personally meaningful goal, Goal4 It!™ CFCs can use *Goal Storming*—a series of prompts to generate a discussion about work and life areas that the participant would like to change, potential action steps, and resources necessary for making those changes.

2. **Plan Phase:** During this phase, the participant commits to a meaningful goal, breaks the goal into manageable and achievable steps, names potential obstacles to achieving the goal and identifies corresponding solutions, and formalizes a concrete plan for achieving a short-term goal. Goal planning may begin as early as the first meeting between a Goal4 It!™ CFC and a participant and may be revisited at any time as the participant's situation changes.

   Goal4 It!™ has three tools to support goal planning: *My Pathway*, *My Goal Plan*, and *Potholes and Detours*. *My Pathway* documents a long-term goal and breaks it down into shorter-term goals and action steps. If using *My Pathway*, Goal4 It!™ CFCs might also use the *Potholes and Detours* tool (also called an "if/then plan") to help the participant identify obstacles that might impede goal achievement and actions that could address them. Goal4 It!™ CFCs can use *My Goal Plan* to help participants develop a plan for achieving their short-term goal. Using *My Goal Plan*, participants

[2] Just before Goal4 It!™ was implemented in Jefferson County, the developers created a Goal4 It!™ supervision process that mirrors the goal setting process used with participants. Developers shared this process with supervisors in Jefferson County. However, the supervisors did not implement it. The supervisors—who each supervised both Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management CFCs—did not want to use the Goal4 It!™ supervision process because they did not want to supervise different CFCs differently or to contaminate the experiment by exposing the traditional case management CFCs to Goal4 It!™.

create a plan for accomplishing a meaningful goal, noting anticipated resource needs, potential obstacles, and a solution to the obstacle. Goal4 It!™ CFCs also use *My Goal Plan* to review progress toward the goal and develop next steps.

3. **Do Phase:** During this phase, the participant takes action to achieve the goal by executing activities recorded on My Goal Plan and/or My Pathway. The Goal4 It!™ CFC may help prepare, encourage, or support the participant for this stage, but the participants do the work.

Exhibit 1. Goal Pursuit Approach and Coaching Tools

Goal4 It!™ Participant Phases and Associated Steps	Goal4 It!™ Tools
Goal • Identify a specific, meaningful goal. • Consider something challenging but within reach. • Imagine how life may be different once the goal is accomplished.	*Stepping Stones to Success* • Used to obtain a participant's perception about the challenges in different aspects of life and to identify a goal that is meaningful to the participant. • May also be used to track progress over time. *Goal Storming* • Brainstorming activity to help participants identify potential goals, steps to achieve them, and resources needed for success.
Plan • Develop a detailed plan and commit to a specific time for getting started. • Break the plan down into small steps with a short time horizon. • Identify a pothole—something likely to get in the way of accomplishing your plan. • Identify a detour – something to overcome or work through the pothole. • Combine the pothole and detour in the form of an "If [pothole], then [detour]" statement.	*My Pathway* • Facilitates planning for long-term goals that need to be broken down into smaller short-term goals. *My Goal Plan* • Documents a participant's short-term goal and their plan for accomplishing the goal (including possible obstacles and actions to overcome them). Reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis. *Potholes & Detours* • Used to identify what might get in the way of the participant's success, or what has gotten in the way in the past, and possible actions that the participant can take to prevent or address these issues.
Do • Share the goal and plan with a trusted person and ask them to check in and help with accountability. • Use reminders and supports (such as a phone app) to help get started, manage time, stay organized, or stick with it.	• Participant executes activities recorded on *My Goal Plan* or *My Pathway*.
Review/Revise • Review progress in response to these questions: What did you learn? What worked well? Where are you stuck? What got in your way? What could you do differently? • Revise the goal, plan, and/or pothole-detour combination based on learnings. • Remember that, regardless of goal achievement, this process is an opportunity for personal growth and learning.	• Revisit *Stepping Stones to Success*, *My Goal Plan*, and *Potholes & Detours*.

Source: Derr and McCay (2018).

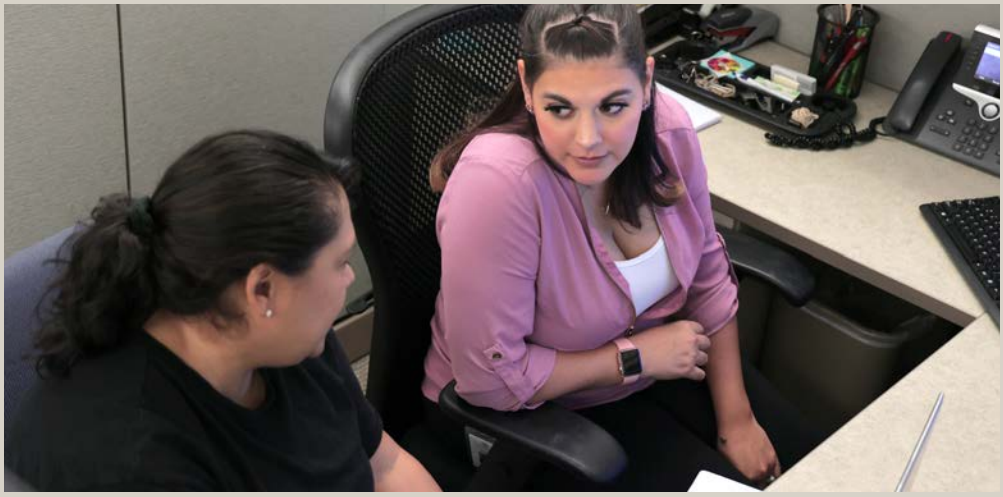
4. **Review/Revise Phase:** Goal4 It!™ CFCs aim to meet regularly with participants to review their recent activities and progress toward the identified goal. In RAP (review, assess, plan) sessions the Goal4 It!™ CFC and the participant together assess the fit of the goal, identify any obstacles to goal achievement, and revise the goal plan if needed or identify additional supports. Participants can complete a new Stepping Stones to Success at the start of each meeting to get quick updates, document goal progress, and focus the session. Goal4 It!™ CFCs may also revisit and update completed *My Goal Plan* and/or *Potholes and Detours* forms to support the review and revise phase.

Each of the four phases builds upon the previous one in sequence, but the phases need not occur in order. For example, a participant who has a well-defined goal in mind can start at the Plan Phase. Or, following the discussion during the Review/Revise Phase, the participant might return to the Goal Phase to select a different goal, or the Plan Phase to develop a different plan. Participants determine when to work on a new phase. Ultimately, the aim is for participants to use this approach to goal setting even after coaching ends.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

All Colorado Works participants—whether receiving traditional case management or Goal4 It!™—are required to meet regularly in person (or virtually after the start of the pandemic, as described in Box 3) with their assigned CFC. However, the frequency of meetings differs between traditional case management and Goal4 It!™. Traditional case management CFCs are expected to meet with participants at least once every three months, though meetings may be more frequent if participants need or want more support. Goal4 It!™ CFCs aimed to meet with participants monthly, or every two months if the participant was working. All CFCs may also check-in with participants by phone or email in between meetings. Supervisors encourage all CFCs to meet more frequently with participants in crisis, such as those becoming homeless or at risk of losing custody of their children.

A participant and a Goal4 It!™ CFC discuss the participant's goals.



(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

ACCOUNTABILITY

Jefferson County Colorado Works' rules around participant accountability apply to participants in both groups. Broadly, participants must engage with their assigned CFC and complete the action steps on their individual plans during a time specified on the plan (e.g., turn in job search logs by the first of the month, research local education program options and bring them to the next meeting). Traditional case management and Goal4 It!™ CFCs assess whether the participant is complying with activity requirements outlined in the Individual Plan or Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan. If a participant does not complete the action steps, their assigned CFC will contact them to determine the reason for noncompliance. If the participant has a reasonable explanation (e.g., the participant had to focus on an immediate need, such as loss of childcare or problems with transportation), the CFC will work with the participant to create a new plan to "get them back on track." If the participant does not complete the activities on the new plan or fails to engage with their CFC at any point, they can be sanctioned or have their case closed (see Box 5).

Although the sanction steps are similar for the Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management groups, the detail in the groups' corresponding individual plans differ, as does the structure of interactions, thus giving Goal4 It!™ CFCs more flexibility. While the Individual Plan and Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan both list action steps, the action steps on the Individual Plan have hour expectations while those on the Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan do not, so it is less clear whether a Goal4 It!™ participant is complying with the plan or not. For example, a Goal4 It!™ CFC might not move forward with the sanction process if the customer completed five hours of volunteering instead of 20. Further, while traditional case management and Goal4 It!™ CFCs are both instructed to work with participants who fail to complete action steps to diagnose the reason, there are more opportunities to revise the plan under Goal4 It!™ as part of the Review/Revise Phase. For example, traditional case management CFCs can work with participants to create a new plan if they are not making progress toward their action steps. However, if the participant does not comply with the new plan, they can be sanctioned. The review and revise process for Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants is cyclical; when necessary, Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants work together to develop a plan for how to address the lack of progress and update the My Goal Plan and Goal4 It!™ Individual Plan accordingly. If participants do not try to progress toward the goals, the Goal4 It!™ CFC can initiate the sanction process.

III. Goal4 It!™ and Traditional Case Management CFCs

The Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management CFCs were similar in terms of demographic and educational characteristics, according to the staff survey (see Appendix B, Exhibit B.1 for more detail on staff characteristics). The average age was 40 for both groups of CFCs, most were female, and about half were white. Most CFCs in both groups had a four-year degree or higher (78 percent of traditional case management CFCs and 85 percent of Goal4 It!™ CFCs). All CFCs worked full time. While supervisors tried to divide CFCs equally into two groups based on their experience and skill level, survey findings showed that traditional case management CFCs were on average more experienced than Goal4 It!™ CFCs: they had been in their role nearly twice as long as Goal4 It!™ CFCs (about six and a half years versus about three and a half years, on average) and had been at the organization on average four years longer than Goal4 It!™ CFCs.

IV. Study Participants

All study participants were Jefferson County residents who were deemed eligible for Colorado Works and consented to participate in the study. Random assignment ensured study participants assigned to the Goal4 It!™ CFC and traditional case management CFC groups had similar characteristics (as shown in Appendix B, Exhibit B.2). Exhibit 2 shows characteristics of the study participants. Only one characteristic, number of adults in the household, differed by a statistically significant amount between the Goal4 It!™ or traditional case management participants. Goal4 It!™ participants were slightly less likely to live with another adult than were traditional case management participants (Appendix B, Exhibit B.2).

At the time of study entry, participants were, on average, in their early 30s with just under two children living with them (Exhibit 2). The vast majority were female (over 90 percent). Almost half identified as White, non-Hispanic, and 40 percent identified as Hispanic.

Exhibit 2. Characteristics of Study Participants at Enrollment

Baseline characteristic	Value
Demographics	
Average age (in years)	32.4
Female (percentage)	90.1
Race and ethnicity (percentage)	
Hispanic	41.6
Black, non-Hispanic	8.5
White, non-Hispanic	46.7
Other	3.1
Number of adults with whom respondent lives	1.5
Number of children with whom respondent lives	1.9
Socioeconomic status	
Did not complete high school or GED (percentage)	22.3
Employment status and history	
Worked for pay in past 30 days (percentage)	26.7
Earnings in past 30 days among those who worked ($)	705.8
Employment Barriers	
Challenges that study participants reported made it very or extremely hard to find or keep a good job (percentage)	
Lack of transportation	42.0
Lack of child care	48.3
No valid driver's license (percentage)	37.9
Unstable housing (percentage)	33.7

Source: Baseline survey for all study participants (n=802).

Note: Missing data rates ranged between 0 percent and 19 percent.

Slightly more than one-quarter of study participants worked in the 30 days prior to study enrollment. Working participants earned $706 on average during that time, or about $8,500 per year. About one in five study participants lacked a high school diploma or GED certificate (22 percent). Participants cited several barriers to employment, including child care (48 percent), lack of transportation (42 percent), lack of a valid driver's license (38 percent), and unstable housing (34 percent). (See Appendix B, Exhibit B.2 for more participant characteristics.)

During a meeting with a participant, a Goal4 It!™ CFC listens and takes notes.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

V. Goal4 It!™ in Practice

Goal4 It!™ CFCs implemented most, but not all, facets of Goal4 It!™. They were generally nondirective, and Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that the tools helped participants set, plan, and review their goals. Participants described positive experiences with Goal4 It!™ CFC sessions. In early months of study participation, Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants met monthly, although engagement declined over time. Relative to participants assigned to the traditional case management CFC group, Goal4 It!™ participants set goals and action steps in more sessions. Data gathered for the study identifies eight key takeaways about the implementation of Goal4 It!™ in Jefferson County, presented below (and summarized in Box 7).

Box 7. Goal4 It!™ Implementation Key Takeaways

1. Goal4 It!™ CFCs largely delivered collaborative and nondirective coaching, including at times when participants were not making progress toward their goals.
2. Goal4 It!™ CFCs used the process and tools associated with the intervention and reported they were valuable.
3. Participants mostly described positive experiences with the intervention and referred to their Goal4 It!™ CFCs in positive terms.
4. Goal setting and action step development occurred during most contacts and more frequently under Goal4 It!™ than traditional case management.
5. Significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed employment-related topics than did traditional case management participants, and significantly fewer discussed basic needs and family and children services.
6. Goal4 It!™ CFCs met with participants more frequently and for more total time than did traditional case management CFCs; program engagement for both groups dropped sharply after the first month and then continued to decline.
7. TANF requirements and short periods of engagement with Colorado Works influenced coaching.

Goal4 It!™ CFCs largely delivered collaborative and nondirective coaching, including at times when participants were not making progress toward their goals.

Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported being nondirective and supervisors concurred. In interviews, most Goal4 It!™ CFCs stated that they facilitated the goal setting and action-planning conversations but did not direct participants. For example, one Goal4 It!™ CFC reported using probing questions when a participant was not progressing, such as "What would help get you out of this situation" or "In 30 days, what do you want to change?" Another noted:

> *If someone is not making progress, [the Goal4 It!™ process] helps coaches [Goal4 It!™ CFCs] discuss what went wrong and what the participant could add or do differently. The tools help the coaches engage the participants more in a nonconfrontational way (for example, the coach might say "What do YOU think you need to do more?"). The tools also give the participant space to identify potholes when participants are not making progress toward goals.*

A participant listens as a CFC explains the Goal4 It!™ tools.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

Analysis of 15 video-recorded Goal4 It!™ CFC sessions also indicated Goal4 It!™ CFCs generally avoided directing participants (see Box 8 for examples of nondirective interactions).

Box 8. Examples of Participant-Centered Goal4 It!™ Interactions

- A Goal4 It! CFC and participant were working on setting a goal and determining an action plan. The Goal4 It! CFC provided the participant the My Goal Plan form and asked the participant, "What do you want to do? You mentioned housing, so do you want to be in an apartment by a certain time?" The participant replied, "I want to be stable," and the Goal4 It! CFC asked, "So what would that look like?"
- Using open-ended questions, a Goal4 It! CFC helped a participant identify her long-term goal. The CFC asked, "Thinking about going to school, what type of job would be appealing to you?" The participant responded that she wanted to be a substance abuse counselor. The Goal4 It! CFC then asked, "Would you say that is your long-term goal at this time?" The participant agreed and the Goal4 It! CFC showed the participant where to write down her long-term goal on the My Pathway form. The Goal4 It! CFC then asked, "In order to get to that long-term goal, what are some areas that you would like to focus on?"

Source: Video recorded coaching sessions.

When participants are in crisis (e.g., experiencing homelessness, loss of child care, loss of electricity) Goal4 It!™ CFCs said that they do not discuss long-term goals. Instead, they work with participants to select goals that they can accomplish in the short term to help them attain stability, such as finding child care or housing. They also reported meeting with participants when they are in crisis more frequently than at other times to see how they are progressing.

During in-depth interviews, participants also described their interactions with Goal4 It!™ CFCs as nondirective. One participant stated:

Before, they want you to go to [a local service provider], like they don't really give you an option. Here, they're asking you, "What do you want to do in life?" Not just, "You're going to do this, and this is what's going to happen." I guess the whole part of making good choices and making good goals is very helpful...I would say they're more helpful than other counties because when I did live in [another county], it wasn't as helpful. I think you were more just like pushed along. Here, you're more a person and you've got opinions and thoughts.

Still, some Goal4 It!™ CFCs were directive at times. For example, video recordings of one Goal4 It!™ CFC showed the CFC providing direction when listing action steps (e.g., instructed a participant to call financial aid) and offered next steps without asking the participant whether it would be something she wanted to do (e.g., "we can have you do an initial meeting with a Social Security Disability person").

Interviews with traditional case management CFCs suggest they do direct participants more often, especially if the participant is not making progress. See Box 9 for an example of how a traditional case management CFC directed a participant several times during an observed session.

Box 9. Example of a Traditional Case Management Session

The traditional case management CFC had a pre-set agenda for the meeting and directed the conversation. Before the meeting started, the CFC told the observer that the session would focus on putting the participant on a maternity hold (a temporary waiver of work requirements) for eight weeks after her baby was born and referring the participant to a nurse home visiting program and a store for free baby products. During the meeting, the CFC told the participant her next steps. However, the CFC did ask several questions about her planned internship after the maternity hold, such as whether the internship would be doable and if she had the necessary supports in place.

Source: Observation of case management session.

Supervisors reported encouraging Goal4 It!™ CFCs to be more nondirective than traditional case management CFCs. For example, if a participant fails to show progress toward a goal, one supervisor said she might encourage a traditional case management CFC to place the participant in a different activity whereas she might encourage the Goal4 It!™ CFC to talk with the participant about barriers that are preventing progress.

Goal4 It!™ CFCs used the process and tools associated with the intervention and reported they were valuable.

Analysis of video-recorded Goal4 It!™ CFC sessions and the staff survey indicate that Goal4 It!™ CFCs frequently used the Goal4 It!™ tools. The most used tools were Stepping Stones to Success (used in all video-recorded sessions), My Goal Plan (used in 60 percent of sessions), and My Pathway (used in 53 percent of sessions). None of the video recordings showed Goal4 It!™ CFCs using Potholes and Detours. However, the My Goal Plan tool has a place to list potholes and detours and Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that they sometimes gave this form to participants to document challenges and approaches to addressing them there. The staff survey found similar patterns. Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that they often or always used Stepping Stones to Success

(100 percent), My Pathway (83 percent), and My Goal Plan (67 percent). The least used form was Potholes and Detours, with only 17 percent reporting that they often or always used that form (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3. Frequency of Goal4 It!™ Tool Use

Tool	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
My Goal Plan	33	0	67	0
My Pathway	0	17	83	0
Potholes and Detours	50	33	17	0
Stepping Stones to Success	0	0	33	67

Source: Staff survey (n=6).

Note: Responses from 2 of 8 Goal4 It! CFCs missing.

The Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that the tools helped participants identify goals, action steps, and a timeline for completing activities as well as track progress over time. In addition, the Goal4 It!™ CFCs said the tools assisted participants in recognizing and addressing challenges to meeting goals. One Goal4 It!™ CFC said that having participants record goals and activities–rather than having the CFC do it for them–allowed participants to process the information differently (e.g., take more ownership over the action steps). Several Goal4 It!™ CFCs also reported that they preferred the Goal4 It!™ approach and tools to traditional case management, with one stating it "feels better with the participant."

On the staff survey, Goal4 It!™ CFCs rated the value of Goal4 It!™ tools in helping the participants find and maintain employment. Goal4 It!™ CFCs rated three valuable or extremely valuable in helping participants find and keep employment, including My Pathway (100 percent), and Stepping Stones to Success (83 percent), and My Goal Plan (83 percent). Fewer (66 percent) reported Potholes and Detours was valuable or extremely valuable, perhaps because they sometimes use My Goal Plan in its place (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Reported Value of Goal4 It!™ Tools

Tool	Rarely Valuable (%)	Somewhat Valuable (%)	Valuable (%)	Extremely Valuable (%)
My Goal Plan	0	17	33	50
My Pathway	0	0	33	67
Potholes and Detours	17	17	33	33
Stepping Stones to Success	0	17	33	50

Source: Staff survey (n=6).

Note: Responses from 2 of 8 Goal4 It! CFCs missing.

Participants mostly described positive experiences with Goal4 It!™ and referred to their Goal4 It!™ CFCs in positive terms.

Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported receiving positive feedback on the Goal4 It!™ approach from several participants. For example, one Goal4 It!™ CFC said a participant described Goal4 It!™ as putting the needs of the participant first ("this is really all about me").

"Establishing that structure, helping me actually write down my goals and, like, have something to look out for while I'm trying to accomplish them. It's really, really helped."

Six of the nine participants interviewed for the study also described Goal4 It!™ positively. One participant reported that "the whole part of making good choices and making good goals is very helpful." Another appreciated the ability to work on goals in a variety of domains, not just employment, noting, "But here I am getting paid to work on my health. Because they know in the long term, if I'm healthy, I'm less likely to be back here." Participants also shared that Goal4 It!™ CFCs helped them with preparing their resume, connecting them with resources, and "putting their life in perspective."

Five of the nine interviewed participants reported that they found the Goal4 It!™ tools useful and appreciated the goal setting support they received. One participant said, "Establishing that structure, helping me actually write down my goals and, like, have something to look out for while I'm trying to accomplish them. It's really, really helped." Another participant noted, "Honestly, setting goals…like, you really underestimate the power of writing things down for yourself and, like, just having a structure. Like, the structure of that was really, really encouraging. I was like, oh, I grasp this."

Most participants had positive or neutral comments about their Goal4 It!™ CFCs. A few said they had built a friendship with their Goal4 It!™ CFC and that the CFC provided support that they did not receive from others in their life. One interviewed participant said, "I was going through leaving domestic violence, leaving substance abuse behind…. I feel like I have been on my own…. If I could make [my Goal4 It!™ CFC] my personal friend, I would…. I don't have anybody [else]." Another participant said, "You don't always feel like caseworkers [in general] are even on your team. And that's definitely the opposite of how I feel with [my Goal4 It!™ CFC]." However, a few participants described the relationship with their Goal4 It!™ CFCs as transactional. For example, one interviewed participant noted: "It's almost like if she didn't see me in person, I would've just been a number on a paper, not even a name or anything."

Goal setting and action step development occurred during most contacts and more frequently under Goal4 It!™ than traditional case management.

Data from the study tracking system show that goal setting discussions occurred frequently for participants in both groups. While goal setting was common among participants in both the Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management groups, significantly more Goal4 It!™ CFC contacts included goal setting (76 percent) than did traditional case management CFC contacts (70 percent) (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Discussion Topics in First Nine Months after Study Enrollment

Number and percent of contacts that included	Goal4 It! Participants		Traditional Case Management Participants	
	#	%	#	%
Goal setting	2.6***	75.7***	1.7	69.6
Development of action steps toward goal	2.6***	72.0**	1.6	67.1
Discussion of next steps to take	3.2***	85.1***	1.7	62.0

Source: Staff records from study tracking system for the Goal4 It! group (n=401) and the traditional case management group (n=401).

Note: ***The difference between Goal4 It! and traditional case management participants was significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test. **The difference is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, using a two-tailed test.

As Exhibit 5 shows, a larger share of Goal4 It!™ participants also developed and discussed action steps, including which to take next, than did traditional case management participants. In alignment with the "Plan" and "Do" phases, significantly more Goal4 It!™ CFC contacts relative to traditional case management CFC ones included action step development (72 percent and 67 percent, respectively) and discussion of the action step to take next (85 percent and 62 percent, respectively). Supervisors also reported that, compared with traditional case management CFCs, Goal4 It!™ CFCs had more discussions with participants to review recent progress toward the short-term goal, to assess how well the goal fits the participant, to identify any obstacles to goal achievement, and to revise the goal plan or identify additional supports as needed.

Significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed employment-related goals than did traditional case management participants, and significantly fewer discussed goals related to basic needs and obtaining services to address family and children's needs.

Significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed goals related to employment than did traditional case management participants

Traditional case management CFCs and Goal4 It!™ CFCs alike reported encouraging participants to set goals that were personally meaningful, though traditional case management CFCs also said they sometimes provide direction to ensure goals are realistic and pursuant to self-sufficiency. Exhibit 6 shows the topics of goals discussed during sessions in the first nine months after study enrollment. Significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed a goal during at least one contact (in person or via phone) (92 percent) than their traditional case management counterparts (85 percent).

The most common goals discussed for both groups were related to topics such as employment, basic needs (e.g., food, housing), and education. In both groups, more than three-quarters discussed a goal related to employment. More than half of both groups also discussed goals around meeting basic needs and education.

However, significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed goals related to employment than did traditional case management participants (84 percent versus 76 percent). Fewer Goal4 It!™ participants discussed a goal related to basic needs (62 percent versus 73 percent); services to address family and children's needs, such as intimate partner violence, child behavior or special needs, family relationships (38 percent versus 48 percent);

Exhibit 6. Topics of Goals Discussed in the First Nine Months

Goal Setting and Goal Topics	Goal4 It! Participants	Traditional Case Management Participants
Percentage of participants who discussed goals during at least one contact	92.0***	85.3
Percentage of participants who discussed goals during at least one contact, by topic		
Employment	83.7***	75.7
Basic needs	62.2***	73.4
Family and children services	37.9***	48.3
Benefits and financial services	34.9	39.1
Education	55.3	56.7
Health	38.9**	47.3

Source: Staff records from study tracking system for Goal4 It! group (n=401) and traditional case management group (n=401).

Note: ***The difference between the Goal4 It! participants and the traditional case management participants is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test. **The difference is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, using a two-tailed test.

or health (39 percent versus 47 percent). About the same percentage of participants in each group discussed goals related to education (55 percent and 57 percent).

While Exhibit 6 shows the types of goals participants discussed, Exhibit 7 illustrates work readiness topics that staff reported discussing with participants, regardless of whether the participant specifically discussed a goal on the topic or not. Consistent with the higher share of Goal4 It!™ participants who discussed an employment-related goal, significantly more Goal4 It!™ participants discussed work readiness topics during at least one contact during the first nine months than did participants in traditional case management (92 percent versus 84 percent). Goal4 It!™ participants also discussed child care, transportation, education, and problems on the job more frequently, and training less often, than traditional case management participants.

Slightly over half of the Goal4 It!™ participants discussed Colorado Works work requirements during the first nine months of program participation, significantly fewer than traditional case management participants (53 percent versus 64 percent). This is consistent with the guidance given to Goal4 It!™ CFCs to focus on the participants' goals rather than program compliance.

Goal4 It!™ CFCs met with participants more frequently and for more total time than did traditional case management CFCs; program engagement for both groups declined significantly after the first month and then continued to drop.

As noted, Goal4 It!™ participants are expected to meet regularly with their assigned CFC at least once every month unless they are working; traditional case management participants must meet at least once every three months. According to program tracking data, the average number of contacts—which could be in-person meetings, telephone calls, emails, or texts—between Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants aligned with Goal4 It!™ expectations in the first three months, but then declined. Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants had on average 1.7 contacts in the first month and about three

Exhibit 7. Work Readiness Topics Discussed in First Nine Months

Topics	Goal4 It! Participants	Traditional Case Management Participants
Percentage of participants who discussed work readiness topics during at least one contact	92.1***	84.0
Percentage of participants who discussed work readiness topics during at least one contact, by topic		
Child care	74.6***	65.6
Transportation	80.8***	64.1
Work requirements	53.0***	64.3
Education	72.4***	58.3
Problems on the job	37.6***	28.8
Stress reduction	34.0	37.3
Training	42.0*	47.8
Resume	42.8	40.4

Source: Staff records from study tracking system for Goal4 It! group (n=401) and traditional case management group (n=401).

Note: ***The difference between Goal4 It! participants and the traditional case management participants is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test. * The difference is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, using a two-tailed test.

cumulatively in the first three months (Exhibit 8). Between months three and six, Goal4 It!™ participants on average had less than one total contact with their CFCs; the same is true for months seven through nine. Over the nine-month period, Goal4 It!™ participants met with their assigned CFC less than four times, on average.

Goal4 It!™ participants had significantly more contacts with their assigned CFCs than did traditional case management participants. For example, in the first month, Goal4 It!™ participants met with their CFCs on average 0.5 times more than the participants in the traditional case management group. Goal4 It!™ participants continued to meet more often than participants in the traditional case management group over time. After nine months in the study, Goal4 It!™ participants had over one additional contact on average with CFCs than did traditional case management participants, a statistically significant difference (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Number of Contacts per Participant, First Nine Months

Average Number of Contacts	Goal4 It! Participants	Traditional Case Management Participants
In the first month	1.7***	1.2
In the first 3 months	2.6***	1.8
In the first 6 months	3.2***	2.3
In the first 9 months	3.7***	2.6

Source: Staff records from study tracking system for Goal4 It! group (n=401) and traditional case management group (n=401).

Note: A contact is defined as an in-person meeting, telephone call, email, or text message between a CFC and a participant.

***The difference between Goal4 It! participants and the traditional case management participants is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test.

A Goal4 It!™ participant completes the Stepping Stones to Success tool.

(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

As mentioned above, Goal4 It!™ participants were more likely than traditional case management participants to meet with a coach in the first month. Exhibit 9 shows the percentage of participants who were still in contact with their CFC in any of the first nine months, after the first month (months 2 through 9), after the second month (months 3 through 9), and so on. It shows that more Goal4 It!™ participants met with a CFC than traditional case management participants over the first nine months after random assignment (92 percent versus 87 percent). After the first month, the difference between the engagement of Goal4 It!™ participants and traditional case manage-

Exhibit 9. Percentage of Participants who had a Contact with a CFC in the First 9 Months after Study Enrollment

Period of time after random assignment	Goal4 It!™ Participants	Traditional Case Management Participants
Any contact in months 1-9	92.0**	86.8
Any contact in months 2-9	56.6***	47.1
Any contact in months 3-9	40.6	39.4
Any contact in months 4-9	30.4	32.4
Any contact in months 5-9	26.4	26.2
Any contact in months 6-9	21.9	21.4
Any contact in months 7-9	19.0	17.5
Any contact in months 8-9	16.7	14.2

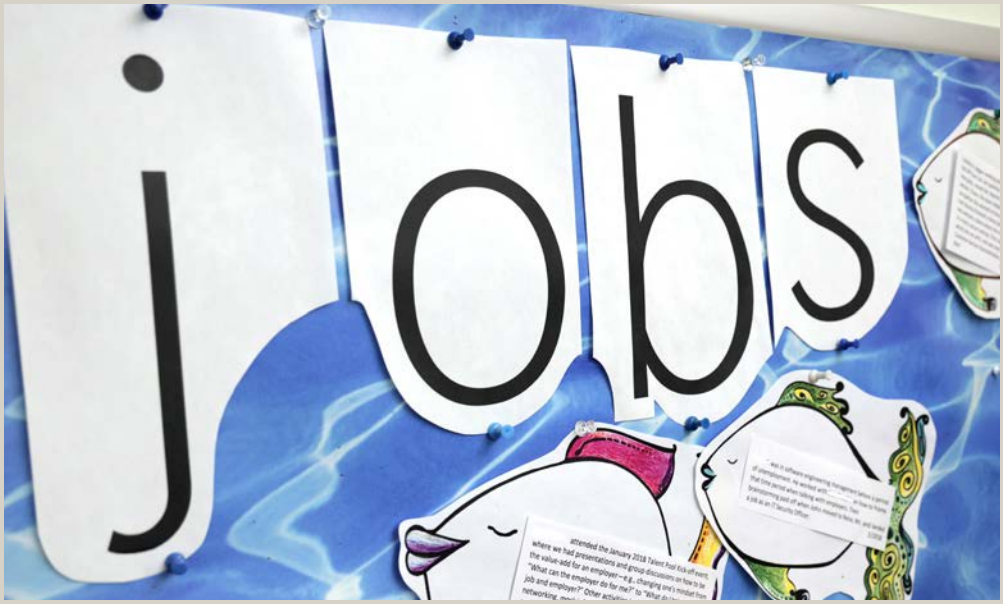
Source: Staff records from study tracking system for Goal4 It!™ group (n=401) and traditional case management group (n=401).

Notes: A contact is defined as an in-person meeting, telephone call, email, or text message between a CFC and a participant.

***The difference is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test.

**The difference between the Goal4 It!!™ participants and the traditional case management CFCs is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, using a two-tailed test.

A bulletin board displays participants' employment success stories.



(Photo: Rich Clement, Mathematica)

ment participants persisted: 57 percent of Goal4 It!™ participants had a contact with a CFC in months 2 through 9 after random assignment compared to 47 percent of traditional case management participants. After three months (months 4 through 9 after random assignment), the difference between the two groups disappeared.

Engagement with the program decreased rapidly over time for both groups. Fewer than 60 percent of the Goal4 It!™ participants and fewer than 50 percent of traditional case management participants had any contact after the first month. After three months, only about one-third of each group were still engaged, and after eight months, fewer than one-fifth of each group were still engaged.

Administrative data on receipt of TANF benefits shows a similar pattern of declining program engagement. After the first month of study enrollment, 90 percent of study participants were receiving TANF benefits. After three months about 63 percent were receiving benefits and after nine months about 30 percent were still receiving benefits. These figures suggest that some participants were not in contact with their CFC because they left Colorado Works (voluntarily or due to case closure) while others continued to receive TANF benefits but did not attend meetings with their CFCs.

As Exhibit 10 shows, the largest share of contacts for both groups occurred in person. Over the first nine months after study enrollment, Goal4 It!™ CFCs and participants had in-person contacts 2.7 times on average, significantly more than traditional case management CFCs had with participants (2.2 times). Goal4 It!™ participants also had more telephone and email contacts with their CFCs, on average, than did traditional case management services participants.

Exhibit 10. Contact Mode and Location, First Nine Months

Contact mode and location	Goal4 It!™ Average # per Participant	Goal4 It!™ % of Total Contacts	Traditional Case Management Average # per Participant	Traditional Case Management % of Total Contacts
Contact mode				
In person	2.7***	82.9***	2.2	91.3
Telephone	0.7***	12.6***	0.3	7.0
Email	0.3***	4.5***	0.1	1.7

Source: Staff records from study tracking system for Goal4 It!™ group (n=401) and traditional case management group (n=401).

Note: ***The difference between Goal4 It!™ participants and traditional case management participants is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test

Across in-person and virtual modes of contact, Goal4 It!™ participants and their CFCs spent more time in contact over the first nine months than did traditional case management participants and their CFCs. The average total contact time for Goal4 It!™ participants was 3.0 hours during this period, significantly more than the average contact time of 2.1 hours for traditional case management participants (Exhibit 11). The average initial contact was 76 minutes for Goal4 It!™ participants, significantly longer than the average initial traditional case management contact (68 minutes). Subsequent contacts were about 44 to 45 minutes for both groups, on average.

Exhibit 11. Contact Duration per Person, First Nine Months

Contact length	Goal4 It!™ Participants	Traditional Case Management Participants
Total contact time (hours)	3.0***	2.1
Average length of each contact (minutes)		
Average length of first contact	76.1***	67.6
Average length of subsequent contacts	45.8	44.0

Source: Staff records from study tracking system for Goal4 It!™ group (n=401) and traditional case management group (n=401).

Note: ***The difference between Goal4 It!™ participants and traditional case management participants is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, using a two-tailed test.

TANF requirements and short periods of engagement with Colorado Works influenced coaching.

As noted earlier, the Colorado Department of Human Services launched an initiative in 2016 to emphasize participant engagement in Colorado Works services rather than activities that count toward the federal WPR. Goal4 It!™ CFCs expressed different opinions as to whether the flexibility afforded by the state was necessary to make Goal4 It!™ implementation possible. Some Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that Goal4 It!™'s participant-centered approach could be incompatible with the federal WPR if participants selected goals and action steps that did not count toward it. One noted, "If we were more focused on WPR, I don't think Goal4 It!™ would work." Other Goal4 It!™ CFCs noted, however, that participants often select a goal that does count toward the WPR (e.g., enrollment in a short-term training program for an in-demand occupation), so many participants' activities would have counted toward the WPR if it was

still the focus of Jefferson County's Colorado Works program. One Goal4 It!™ CFC noted, "Most of the time participants set their own goal, and it is often employment-focused. Most of the participants who believe they can work want to work."

Some Goal4 It!™ CFCs said that it is challenging to find a balance between the Goal4 It!™ participant-centered model and accountability. Even with a focus on engagement rather than WPR-countable activities, Colorado Works still requires participants to be accountable for their goals and action steps articulated in their individual plans. Failure to take the agreed upon steps may result in sanctions. However, supervisors reported noncompliance is an easier conversation when participants create their own plan, in their own handwriting. According to one supervisor, "We hear less of the 'I didn't have a choice' because they made the plan."

Supervisors also reported that more traditional case management participants than Goal4 It!™ participants had case closures and that more Goal4 It!™ participants than traditional case management participants were sanctioned for failure to comply with one or more aspects of their plan. This difference could reflect that Goal4 It!™ participants attended more sessions, thus providing an opportunity for their CFCs to assess progress toward their goals rather than just closing cases because they were not showing up to meetings.

Short tenure in Colorado Works may also hinder Goal4 It!™'s ability to build CFC-participant relationships, develop participants' self-regulation skills, and improve participants' employment and self-sufficiency outcomes. One supervisor noted that caseload turnover among Colorado Works participants—due to employment, sanctions, or other factors—affects the length of the Goal4 It!™ CFC-participant relationship and thus participants' exposure to coaching and goal setting practice: "We may get three to four months with a customer from application to program exit. We may only get three meetings." Colorado Works administrative data showed that on average study participants received TANF for 4.4 months.

VI. Summary

The Jefferson County Department of Human Services implemented Goal4 It!™ as an alternative approach to traditional case management. Although Goal4 It!™ CFCs and traditional case management CFCs both work with participants to identify and set goals, Goal4 It!™ CFC training focused on being nondirective, using a four-phase goal setting framework that aimed to build participants' self-regulation skills over time, and provided tools to facilitate the goal setting process.

Consistent with the design, Goal4 It!™ participants discussed goals and action steps more frequently than traditional case management participants. Relative to traditional case management CFCs, Goal4 It!™ CFCs were less directive, even when participants failed to make progress toward their goals. Goal4 It!™ CFCs reported that they frequently used the tools and that the four-phase process combined with the tools helped participants set goals and determine action steps. Participants also generally reported positive experiences with the Goal4 It!™ tools and their CFC.

Although CFCs implemented Goal4 It!™ largely as designed, participants' short tenure in Colorado Works limited the opportunity for Goal4 It!™ participants to practice goal setting and build self-regulation skills. Even though the average total contact time over nine months was significantly longer for Goal4 It!™ participants than traditional case management participants, it was only just over three hours in total. This partly reflects that study participants were only participating in Colorado Works for an average of about four months. This short time in the program may result in part from the fact that Colorado Works participants do not need to earn much to lose their TANF eligibility (https://coloradopeak.secure.force.com/resource/1409271310000/StaticPdfs_StaffAids/StaffAids_Pdfs/ProgramOverview_COWorks.pdf).

Goal4 It!™ CFCs had differing opinions as to whether Goal4 It!™ could be implemented successfully in a program that focused more on compliance to work participation requirements. Some CFCs argued that because Goal4 It!™ focuses on participant-selected goals that are personally meaningful and is not compliance oriented, it may be inconsistent with meeting federal WPR requirements. However, in practice, even when given the choice, most Goal4 It!™ participants discussed goals and action steps that aligned with WPR activities. Goal4 It!™ CFCs also argued that it was easier to hold participants accountable when the participants had developed an action plan themselves rather than been directed to develop a plan.

Future reports from the *Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations* will include a synthesis of findings from the descriptive studies of all interventions and reports on the impacts of each intervention on participants' self-regulation, employment, earnings, self-sufficiency, and other measures of well-being. These reports will be available on the project's website: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-coaching-focused-interventions-for-hard-to-employ-tanf-clients-and-other-low-income-populations.

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Appendix A. Design of the Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations

The ***Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations*** aims to learn more about the potential of different coaching approaches in helping adults with low income become more economically secure. The study's primary research questions are as follows:

1. Do the employment coaching interventions improve the outcomes of low-income people?
   - Do the employment coaching interventions affect participants' intermediate outcomes related to goal pursuit and other skills associated with labor market success?
   - Do the employment coaching interventions affect participants' employment and economic security outcomes?
   - How do the impacts of the coaching-focused interventions change over time?
   - Are the employment coaching interventions more effective for some groups of participants than others?
2. How were the employment coaching interventions implemented?
   - What is the program design?
   - What factors appear to have impeded or facilitated implementation of the program as designed?
   - What were the clients' experiences with coaching, what services did they receive, and what types of coaching and other services did control group members receive?

The evaluation is examining four separate coaching interventions (Exhibit A.1). It includes an impact study and an implementation study.

The **impact study** uses an experimental research design that includes randomly assigning eligible individuals who consent to participate either to a treatment group with access to the coaching intervention or to a control group that cannot access the coaching intervention but can receive other services in the community. Enrollment into the study occurred at different times in each program, but all programs ended enrollment by November 2019. The study assesses differences in outcomes related to self-regulation skills, employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and other measures of personal and family well-being.

The impact study data sources are:

- A baseline survey of study participants administered at study entry and two follow-up surveys administered approximately 9-12 months and 21 months after study enrollment;

Exhibit A.1. Coaching Programs and Study Locations

Program	Provider	Program Description	Study Location
Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)	Local human services agencies ("Community Action Agencies") under contract to the Iowa Department of Human Rights.	Provides TANF participants with employment coaching during home visits.	Iowa, select agencies
Goal4 It!™	County TANF agency.	Employment coaching intervention being piloted as an alternative to case management.	Jefferson County, CO
LIFT	Nonprofit organization.	Provides career and financial coaching to parents and caregivers of young children.	Chicago, IL Los Angeles, CA New York, NY*
MyGoals for Employment Success	Baltimore and Houston Housing Authorities.	Coaching demonstration project that provides employment coaching and incentives to unemployed adults receiving housing assistance.	Baltimore, MD Houston, TX

* LIFT also operates in Washington, DC, but that location is not participating in the evaluation due to its involvement in another study.

- Administrative records of employment, earnings, and Unemployment Insurance receipt from the National Directory of New Hires operated by the Office of Child Support Enforcement within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Administrative records of TANF receipt and, for some programs, SNAP receipt.

The **implementation study** provides important context for understanding and interpreting the findings from the impact study and supports future replication of employment coaching interventions. The implementation study data sources are:

- A baseline survey of study participants administered at study entry, with timing varying by study intervention (between February 2017 and November 2019);
- A survey of program managers and staff conducted between January and March 2019;
- In-person discussions with program management and staff and direct observations of coaching sessions between April and June 2019;
- Video recordings of coaching sessions conducted between April and July 2019;
- In-depth, in-person interviews with coaching participants conducted between March and May 2019;
- Service receipt data as reported by program staff and recorded in the study's data tracking system or the program's management information system;

- Document reviews, such as policy and procedure manuals, training manuals, curricula, participant enrollment forms, assessment forms, and forms used to document coaching sessions and other activities.
- Secondary data on local economic conditions.

Further details about the design of the impact and implementation studies, including analysis methods, are included in the project's Evaluation Design Report (Moore et al., 2019). Reports from the evaluation are available online at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-coaching-focused-interventions-for-hard-to-employ-tanf-clients-and-other-low-income-populations.

THE EVALUATION OF GOAL4 IT!™

The evaluation of Goal4 It!™ began in October 2018, when program staff started randomly assigning Colorado Works TANF clients with work requirements who consented to be in the evaluation to a group assigned to trained Goal4 It!™ Career and Family Coordinators (CFCs) or a group assigned to traditional case management CFCs.

Program staff conducted a baseline survey of all study participants (program and control group; n=802) administered just before study enrollment (between October 2018 and November 2019). Goal4 It!™ CFCs (n=7), traditional case management CFCs (n=9), and supervisors (n=2) responded to a web-based survey about the program and its participants between January and April 2019. Goal4 It!™ CFC did not respond. The evaluation team visited the Jefferson County Colorado Works office in May 2019. During this visit, the evaluation team conducted in-person discussions with program managers, supervisors, Goal4 It!™CFCs, traditional case management CFCs, and intake staff, as well as directly observed meetings between Goal4 It!™and traditional case management CFCs and participants. While on site, the evaluation team collected program documents (such as training materials) and annual reports for later review. The team also collected secondary data on local economic conditions around the time of study enrollment. The evaluation team examined 15 video recordings of coaching sessions that occurred between May and June 2019 and conducted in-depth, in-person interviews with nine Goal4 It!™ participants in April 2019. Finally, the implementation study draws on service receipt data for Goal4 It!™and traditional case management participants recorded by program staff in in the study's tracking system. This information includes the number, type, and length of contacts between Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management participants and CFCs, as well as the topics discussed during contacts.

Appendix B. Supplemental Tables

Exhibit B.1. Career and Family Coordinators (CFCs) Characteristics

Characteristic	Goal4 It!™ CFCs	Traditional Case Management CFCs	All CFCs
Demographics			
Average age (in years)	40.1	40.5	40.3
Female (percentage)	86	67	75
Race and ethnicity (percentage)			
Hispanic	29	56	44
Black	0	0	0
White	50	56	53
Other	39	22	24
Highest Level of Education (percent)			
Some college	0	22	13
4-year degree	57	67	63
Graduate or Doctoral degree	14	11	13
Other	14	0	6
Employment			
Average length of employment in position (years)	3.5	6.5	5.2
Average length of employment at organization (years)	4.3	9.0	6.7
Full time employment status (percent)	100	100	100
Total work experience coaching (percent)			
Less than 3 years	0	0	0
3 to 5 years	43	11	25
More than 5 years	57	89	75
Sample size	**7**	**9**	**17**

Source: Staff survey.

Note: 1 of 8 Goal4 It!™ CFCs did not respond to the survey.

Exhibit B.2. Study Participant Characteristics at Enrollment

Baseline Characteristic	Goal4 It!™	Traditional Case Management	All Participants
Demographics			
Average age (in years)	32.1	32.7	32.4
Female (percentage)	91.5	88.8	90.1
Race and ethnicity (percentage)			
Hispanic	40.1	43.2	41.6
Black, non-Hispanic	8.8	8.2	8.5
White, non-Hispanic	47.9	45.6	46.7
Other	3.2	3.0	3.1
Currently married (percentage)	9.9	13.7	11.9
Number of adults with whom respondent lives	1.5*	1.6	1.5
Number of children with whom respondent lives	1.9	1.9	1.9
Socioeconomic status			
Did not complete high school or GED (percentage)	22.4	22.2	22.3
Receiving any income from public assistance/social insurance program (percentage)	93.2	92.2	92.7
Employment status and history			
Worked for pay in past 30 days (percentage)	27.2	26.1	26.7
Earnings in past 30 days ($)			
Earnings among all	234.7	141.2	187.5
Earnings among those who worked	869.9	539.9	705.8
Hours worked per week at current or most recent job (percentage)			
Not working	74.6	75.6	75.1
Part-time (under 35 hours)	17.7	15.0	16.3
Full-time (35 hours or more)	7.8	9.4	8.6

Exhibit B.2 Study Participant Characteristics at Enrollment (continued)

Baseline Characteristic	Goal4 It!™	Traditional Case Management	All Participants
Employment barriers			
Challenges that study participants reported made it very or extremely hard to find or keep a good job (percentage)			
Lack of transportation	43.3	40.7	42.0
Lack of child care	51.0	45.6	48.3
Lack of right clothes or tools for work	28.2	25.4	26.8
Lack of the right skills or education	31.3	27.9	29.6
Perceived lack of jobs in area	16.1	18.8	17.4
Having a criminal record	20.4	20.8	20.6
Health condition preventing working	22.6	23.6	23.1
No valid driver's license (percentage)	35.7	40.1	37.9
Unstable housing (percentage)	33.0	34.4	33.7
Sample size	**401**	**401**	**802**

Source: Baseline survey for all study participants (n=802).

Notes: Missing data rates ranged between 0 percent and 19 percent. All scales are defined so that larger values indicate higher levels of skills.

*The difference between Goal4 It!™ and traditional case management participants is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, using a two-tailed test.

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