



Policy/Procedure:	Domestic Violence Policy for Colorado Works
Reference:	C.R.S. 26-2-716, 9 CCR 2503-6
Rule/Statute:	3.604.5
Effective Date:	3/1/2022

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The presence of domestic violence (also known as family violence) may prevent a client from engaging with the standard components of the Colorado Works (CW) program. The purpose of the policy is to identify how Routt County will support clients impacted by domestic violence (DV), as defined in Colorado Works program rules.

DEFINITIONS

Client - A current or past applicant or a current or past recipient of a CW grant payment.

Colorado Works - The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in Colorado.

County worker - An employee or designated representative of the county department.

Domestic violence - (also known as family violence) means a pattern of coercive control one individual inflicts upon another in the context of familial, household, or intimate partner (current or former) relationships including marriage and dating. Violence may be inflicted through a variety of means including, but not limited to:

- A. Physical acts threatening or resulting in physical injury to the individual, including hitting, punching, slapping or biting;
- B. Intimidation resulting in fear of imminent bodily harm through the use of gestures, displays of weapons, or destruction of property, including pets;
- C. Threats of or attempts at physical or sexual abuse or other means of coercion and control, including harm to or threats to harm children, other family members, or pets;
- D. Sexual abuse or threats to inflict nonconsensual sexual acts, including sexual activity with a minor;
- E. Mental, emotional, or psychological abuse including degradation, constant put-downs, or humiliation that results in a reduced ability to engage in daily activities;
- F. Isolation from friends, family, or any type of emotional support system;
- G. Neglect or deprivation of medical care;
- H. Stalking;
- I. Economic abuse or control of finances through withholding money or sabotaging attempts to attain economic self-sufficiency; and/or,



J. Child molestation, incest.

DV survivor - Any person who has experienced or is experiencing DV as defined above.

Good cause - means circumstances beyond the control of the client. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, medical emergencies or hospitalization; a client who has a disability or other medical condition(s) requiring additional time and/or assistance; a delayed appointment with the Social Security Administration beyond the client's control; or other good cause determined reasonable by the county department using the prudent person principle, including the reasons outlined in 3.608.3. Related to the appeal process, the following circumstances do not constitute good cause: an excessive workload of a party or his or her representative or attorney; when a party obtains legal representation in an untimely manner; a party or his or her representative or attorney's failure to either receive or timely receive, a timely mailed initial decision, or other timely mailed correspondence from the Office of Administrative Courts, the Office of Appeals, or the county department; when a party or his or her representative or attorney has failed to advise the Office of Administrative Courts, the county department, or the Office of Appeals of a change of address or failed to provide a correct address; or any other circumstance which was foreseeable or preventable.

Statewide automated system - The electronic platform used to calculate public assistance program benefits and grant payments.

Workforce Development (WD) - The program provided to clients determined to be work eligible as described in section 3.607.

POLICY

Routt County allows clients to voluntarily and confidentially self-identify as survivors of DV, by providing multiple, safe opportunities for clients to disclose this information, and using trained staff to conduct routine assessments. Screening, assessment and discussions about DV occur in a private confidential area.

Screening and Assessment

Every adult or minor parent on Colorado Works (including clients on child-only cases) must be screened for DV by a worker certified in the Family Violence Option (FVO) at the time of application, before completing a child support referral. Verbal screenings for DV must take place in a private, confidential area where the conversation cannot be overheard by others, and where the client's partner or children are not present. If a conversation is taking place over the phone or by a virtual meeting, the county worker will determine if the client is in a safe environment before discussing the topic. If a confidential environment is not available where a verbal discussion would not be overheard, the screening might be performed non-verbally (using a screening document or form), or the conversation might be deferred to another time. If the screening for DV must be deferred, the county will identify that child support good cause is pending in the statewide automated system to ensure that referrals to child support are not made before the client has been screened. DV screenings or discussions will not be initiated, verbally or nonverbally, in the presence of another adult without the CW client's approval.



The State Department *Domestic Violence Screening Form* is a tool that must be added to a client’s case file as a record that a screening occurred. Because one “yes” for any item is sufficient to identify a client as a survivor of DV, workers are not required to ask all questions on the form. The individual who conducted the screening and the date it was completed must be documented in the statewide automated system.

When a DV screening identifies the client as a survivor of DV, Routt County will assess the client to determine their needs for support, referrals and waivers.

Self-disclosed information remains confidential, unless information disclosed triggers a mandatory reporting requirement or there is an immediate threat to the safety of the client or others.

Waiver

Routt County will offer the following good cause waivers for DV survivors:

1. Child Support Services: Routt County must offer a child support referral waiver to the DV survivor.
 - a. Routt County will ensure waivers are offered timely and efficiently through the following:
 1. The determination for the waiver is made during the initial appointment by the intake worker or by the case manager if the initial screening for DV has been deferred.
 2. The worker uses the prudent person principle to determine if the client meets the criteria to offer the waiver.
2. Work activities: If a client is identified as a survivor of DV that interferes with the safety and/or ability to participate in the CW Workforce Development (WD) program, Routt County will offer the client a waiver.
3. Time Clock: If a client is identified as a survivor of DV that has reached or is nearing their 60th month on TANF, Routt County will offer the client a 60 month time limit extension according to the Routt County Hardship Extension policy.

Routt County will involve the client in the decision to grant a waiver and the client may accept or refuse any waiver offered. Clients will also be provided information about and, if requested, enrolled in the statewide Address Confidentiality Program. This referral and associated services will be captured in the Individualized Plan (or in case comment for child-only cases). A continued FVO waiver must be reassessed and documented in the statewide automated system every six months.

Waivers will be accompanied by documentation in the statewide automated system describing the following:

1. Past, present and ongoing impact of family violence on the client and family.
2. The client’s connections to advocacy groups, available resources and support systems.
3. Safety planning (details of the plan do not need to be documented).
4. Participation in and/or waiver work components.
5. Opportunities to improve financial security while maintaining the safety of the client.

Referrals

Routt County provides referrals to appropriate DV advocacy, counseling, and support services, to include the Routt County Advocates, the Routt County Public Health agency, law enforcement, and legal aid.



Brochures and other informational handouts regarding domestic and family violence issues are distributed and available in English and Spanish to all CW clients. The information is located in the lobby and all common areas. The information includes, but is not limited to, material from local DV providers, batterer intervention service providers, victim advocate organizations, victim's compensation programs, and DV safety planning.

Training

Routt County staff and any contractor who plays a role in working with CW clients (i.e. intake, eligibility, assessment, case management, investigations, or workforce development) will receive state-sponsored training in recognizing, responding, and referring survivors and/or perpetrators of DV, including associated impacts on economic independence and community resources. After initial training, refresher training will be taken at least once every five years. Routt County supplements state training with internal training provided in collaboration with the local and/or state DV programs or agencies. Routt County will verify that internal staff and contracted staff members as described in this paragraph have been trained.

Signed by:

CHAIR, ROUTT COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DATE