

News Release

Clarence H. Carter, Director

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Arizona Department of Economic Security seeks federal support for new safety net initiative

DES Director travels to the nation's capitol to open dialog on new project

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A delegation from the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) traveled to Washington, D.C., this week to seek support for a new Initiative that will reinvent Arizona's safety net system. The group highlighted the ways in which goods and services are currently delivered to Arizonans in need; offered suggestions to improve efficiency and reduce dependency; and discussed the federal implications of this project.

"The public safety net is a partnership between the federal, state and local governments and the community," said Director Clarence H. Carter. "If we are to change the operating model of the safety net, we have to begin with its point of origination, the federal government."

The Initiative, which was officially announced in Phoenix on May 10, includes a proposed new person-centric delivery model that focuses on growing the capacity of Arizona consumers and reducing their dependency on the system.

"Currently, the system focuses on the effective delivery of benefits, goods and services," adds Carter. "It is our contention that we ought to have equal focus on intentionally growing the capacity of the safety net consumer and thereby reducing their dependency on the service. We will test this contention through what we are calling a 'Demonstration' that is scheduled to begin later this year."

While in Washington, D.C., Carter and project leaders met with federal policy makers, stakeholder groups and academic leaders to discuss their role in the Demonstration and the broader implications this project will have on the national safety net system.

DES administers benefits and services to more than 1.6 million Arizonans, approximately 20 percent of the state's population. The Department administers more than 40 assistance programs, including nutrition assistance (SNAP), child care assistance, unemployment insurance, job training, services for individuals with developmental disabilities, aging and adult services and child protective services.

Additional information on the Initiative to reinvent the Arizona safety net is available on the DES website at www.azdes.gov/transformation.

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