

## Department of Human Services

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## **Arapahoe County receives award for digital innovation in Human Services**

*Tech media giant, IDG Enterprises, awards 2019 Digital Edge 50 to Human Services and Information Technology*

AURORA, CO – Arapahoe County has been named a recipient of a 2019 Digital Edge 50 Award from International Data Group, the leading tech media company in the world, for its innovative software system, HSConnects. This prestigious honor is bestowed upon a select group of organizations that have executed digital transformation initiatives with significant, measurable business impact. Arapahoe County will accept its award at the AGENDA19 Conference in March 2019 in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

“It’s an honor to be recognized for our leadership in technology; it is especially important as its purpose is to improve service to the community we serve,” said David Bessen, Arapahoe County Information Technology Director. “We have spent a lot of time studying the needs of our clients and staff in Human Services and—working jointly with Human Services—we have developed HSConnects to guarantee a more efficient workflow that benefits staff, clients and taxpayers.”

As the County population kept growing, so did the need to successfully handle a growing annual caseload from 40,000 to 100,000 in Community Support Services that includes critical programs like Food Assistance, Health First Colorado, Colorado Works and Adult Financial programs. The County needed to find a better way to accurately and timely receive, process and precisely allocate resources and funds to clients in need.

When HSConnects first launched in 2015, the positive impact of the automation was immediate. Today, using high-speed document scanners to digitize the paperwork clients bring in, HSConnects reads the State’s program systems to determine when a case is due, who the documents should be routed to, and prioritizes work based upon the due date. One of its great features ensures that the most pressing cases are pushed to the front of the line and worked first – every time. HSConnects also allows work to be transferred, reassigned or moved to a different priority to guarantee all work is processed in a timely fashion.

“HSConnects significantly improved customer service by reducing customer wait times and the application submittal process from an average of 25 minutes to about 2 minutes. That’s because once an application is submitted, caseworkers are able access the documents instantly, allowing for quicker response times,” said Bob Prevost, Human Services Deputy Director. “The error rate dropped dramatically as well, from 30 percent to nearly zero. These improvements are extremely valuable as many of the individuals and families we serve are in dire need of help to put food on the table, are dealing with tough issues such as being on the brink of their water or power getting shut off, or in need of immediate medical care.”

This efficiency has allowed Arapahoe County to become one of two large Colorado counties to comply with Federal and State timeliness mandates in 2016 and 2017. In 2018, the County was the only large county to receive consecutive C-Stat Distinguished Performance awards from the Colorado Department of Human Services for outstanding performance and has been recognized by the National Association of Counties for its achievement.

HSConnects also has allowed the County to save nearly \$1.5 million annually through the reduction of temporary staffing and overtime, which had previously been used to accommodate the volume of work. Further, the digitization of applications has reduced paper consumption by four million sheets. The County achieved these significant savings on an initial year investment of \$170,000, a payback period of only six weeks.

“Technology that is smart like HSConnects has a tendency to attract other counties. Currently, five other Colorado counties – El Paso, Pueblo, Eagle, Pitkin and Broomfield are using HSConnects to process their benefit applications,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Nancy Shape. “We are proud to be the model for success that helps carry out our mission to be first in service for our citizens and also beyond our county borders. Being recognized for the Digital Edge 50 Award validates our dedication to improve quality of life among our citizens through exceptional delivery of service and efficient use of public funds.”

While the County currently uses HSConnects for Food Assistance, Health First Colorado, Colorado Works and Adult Financial program, future plans include expanding to Child Support Services, Child Care and Child and Adult Protection Services.

### **About the Digital Edge 50 Awards**

The Digital Edge 50 Award recognizes a select group of organizations that have made great strides toward being a digital-centric business.

“This year’s class of Digital Edge 50 winners showed a wide range of sophisticated projects. Some involved complete process changes for agile development and innovation, while others empowered new types of customers or employees,” said Anne McCrory, group vice president, customer experience and operations, events, and the Digital Edge and AGENDA19 conference chair. “We also saw companies taking advantage of facial recognition, blockchain and bots, and many uses of AI. And results were just outstanding.”

The program is judged by a panel of executive peers, including past winners, who evaluate nominated projects on complexity, scale, business outcomes and innovation. Winning entries are digital transformation initiatives with significant measurable business impact. Fifty winners are selected.

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