

# News Release

Clarence H. Carter, Director

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## **DES announces new Initiative to reinvent Arizona's safety net** *Department launches Demonstration Project to test new operating construct*

PHOENIX – The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today a new Initiative to reinvent how Arizona's safety net services are delivered to those in need.

"The safety net as we know it now is a system of individual, single purpose programs with a primary emphasis on the effective delivery of benefits, goods and services," said DES Director Clarence Carter. "No where in our current system is there an incentive to grow a consumer out of the system or reduce their dependency on our services."

Carter announced the Initiative this morning during a forum hosted by the Arizona Community Foundation. Speaking to an audience of Arizona's leaders representing government, philanthropy, business, education, faith and community service organizations, Carter explained how he sees a fundamental flaw in both design and operation of safety net services.

"There is a design flaw in that each of the more than 40 programs we administer at DES work in their own 'silo', they don't talk to each other despite the fact that most of the time they are helping the same consumer," said Director Carter. "The operating challenge comes from what I call a 'program-centric system' because our programs are measured on how well the service is delivered, but not on whether or not they actually helped the consumer grow beyond that condition."

To address these flaws, Carter has proposed a new person-centric delivery model that focuses on growing the capacity of Arizona consumers and reducing their dependency on the system.

"It's our argument that we absolutely should be held accountable for the efficient and effective delivery of services. But shouldn't we also be held accountable for growing the capacity of the individual or family that needed that service beyond their need for it?" adds Carter.

DES, with the support and engagement of the broader Arizona community, will implement a Demonstration Project to develop and refine this new person-centric model. With the help of several advisory groups, the Department will also identify steps and resources needed to shift the existing safety net structure, culture and practice to the proposed model. Because many of these resources will come from the federal government level, Director Carter will travel to Washington D.C. later this month to meet with federal policy makers, stakeholder groups and others to discuss the initiative and its broader implications on the national safety net system.

Additional information on the initiative to reinvent the Arizona safety net is available on the DES website at [www.azdes.gov/transformation](http://www.azdes.gov/transformation) .

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