



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

News Release

Clarence H. Carter, Director

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MEDIA CONTACT
Tasya Peterson
602-542-4296
TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov

Director Clarence Carter Hosts Community Forums on DES Demonstration Project

Forums held in Arizona communities where project will be implemented

PHOENIX – The Department of Economic Security, in partnership with faith-based organization Open Table, hosted community forums this week in Prescott and Phoenix on the DES Demonstration Project as part of the initiative to reinvent the safety net system.

“Our goal with the Demonstration Project is to show that when you break down the barriers between programs and refocus them to meet the needs of the user, you are better serving the individual and helping them to improve self-sufficiency to reduce dependency,” said Director Carter. “We currently have a system of single-purpose programs that don’t consistently work together, and in some cases, actually work against each other. This type of system doesn’t benefit anyone.”

The Demonstration Project will support the Department’s person-centric vision of delivering benefits, goods and services to Arizona’s safety net consumers with the end goal to improve the capacity of the user and reduce dependency on public supports. *Case coordinators* will work with individuals to assess priorities and aspirations, outline the steps to accomplish the participant’s goals and coordinate services to meet those needs.

“The answer to ending poverty is not solely the responsibility of government or programs,” said Open Table State Director Judith Fritsch. “Those in poverty are best served when individuals within the community come together to invest their social, economic and networking capital in meaningful relationships.”

The Department is targeting three locations for the Project: Prescott, South Phoenix and Tucson. Project administrators expect to engage approximately 1,000 participants over time and will begin recruiting in South Phoenix in October. The Tucson and Prescott Valley locations are expected to begin recruitment in early 2014.

“Different locations were chosen because we recognize the journey of someone in a metropolitan area like Phoenix is distinctly different from one who is trying to get back on their feet in a more rural area like Prescott Valley,” adds Carter. “We also recognize the responsibility for helping individuals in need of safety net supports does not lie entirely on the shoulders of DES. It will require a community-wide effort, which is why we are engaging organizations like Open Table.”

Open Table provides a model to faith-based and community partners for walking in relationship with a person or family needing extra support to attain self-sufficiency. More information on the organization is available on its website: www.theopentable.org

Details on the DES Demonstration Project are available on the Transformation website:
www.azdes.gov/transformation

The Tucson forum will be held on September 18 from 9:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. at Embassy Suites Paloma Village located at 3110 E. Skyline Drive.

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