

## NCBR ARTICLE

### **Jobs for homeless initiative receives \$15,000 from United Way**

By Staff

**January 15, 2010 --**

LARIMER COUNTY - The Hand Up Cooperative, a collaborative effort to help the homeless who need jobs, has received \$15,000 from the United Way of Larimer County to fund a program coordinator.

The Hand Up Cooperative is a partnership between United Way, the business community, the Larimer County Workforce Center and the Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope. Its mission is to match area businesses that have employment opportunities with pre-screened, qualified applicants who are homeless and unemployed.

"This is a new, innovative approach to employing the chronically homeless and community members who've recently become homeless," said Gordan Thibedeau, president and CEO of United Way of Larimer County, in announcing the grant. "This is the hardest population to employ. Any effort we can make is a breakthrough in breaking this particular cycle."

So far, eight businesses are involved with the Hand Up Cooperative, including the Hilton Fort Collins, which currently has one employee hired through the new program.

"It's important to be good community partners, not just at the conceptual level but to give a hand up, if you will, to folks who are disadvantaged," said Ned Sickle, general manager of Hilton Fort Collins, in a prepared statement. "To help them be part of the workforce is important."

The funding for the Hand Up Cooperative will come from United Way's "Bridging the Gap Fund." This fund is specifically for projects designed to accomplish the 12 goals of United Way of Larimer County's Pathways Past Poverty Initiative.

Pathways Past Poverty is a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to poverty with the goal of turning the trend of increasing poverty around in Larimer County, developed by community volunteers during the past three years.