



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

News Release

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Three courageous DES colleagues share their personal stories to better connect with clients

PHOENIX -- Words like scared, humiliated, worried, hopeless, and embarrassed describe how many people feel when they apply for benefits through DES. Through a video series called “A Story From the Other Side of the Desk,” three DES employees, who were once benefit recipients, want to share their personal stories in order to inspire others who may be going through a difficult time. “Many of us at DES truly understand the hardships our clients face,” said DES Director Timothy Jeffries. “No one is immune to any number of life’s greatest obstacles. That’s why we are committed to serving Arizonans with kindness and humility.”

You are invited into the personal lives of three courageous DES colleagues, Tamela West, Maria “Mimi” Boulmay and Marquisia Apodaca, whose powerful stories are ones that many Arizonans and DES clients can relate to.

[Tamela’s story](#): A bitter divorce left Tamela as a single mother of four. With no education or work experience, she felt hopeless. But powerful words from a DES employee completely changed her life for the better.

[Mimi’s story](#): Hurricane Katrina destroyed Mimi’s hometown and she began using drugs to cope with the feelings of loss and desperation. After hitting rock bottom, she decided she had to change her ways. With support from DES and her family, Mimi has been sober for six years.

[Marquisia’s story](#): As teenage mom, Marquisia struggled to raise her son because the baby’s father walked out of their lives. She was desperate for help and turned to DES. Now, in an interesting twist of fate, she works at DES and is helping other parents in similar situations.

As additional personal stories are shared by DES colleagues, the videos will be added to the [online series](#).

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