



Legislative Council Staff
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Memorandum

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TO: Interested Persons
FROM: Luisa Altmann, Senior Research Analyst, 303-866-3518
SUBJECT: Overview of Colorado Workforce Development Programs

Summary

This memorandum provides a summary of various workforce development programs in Colorado.

Programs Targeted at Specific Industries

A variety of the state's workforce development programs focus on specific industries.

Agricultural Workforce Development Program. Senate Bill 18-042 required the Commissioner of Agriculture to create the Agricultural Workforce Development Program.¹ The program is designed to partially reimburse agricultural businesses that hire interns and meet specific criteria. The Department of Agriculture was appropriated \$64,108 General Fund and 0.3 FTE for FY 2020-21 for the program in the 2020 Long Bill. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2024.

Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program. The Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) was created by Senate Bill 14-015.² The purpose of the program is to accelerate growth and improve and expand the development of hospitality secondary education programs. Among other criteria, eligible education programs must include a curriculum that teaches career and college readiness skills that are pertinent to the hospitality industry and offer hospitality industry validated certificates of completion. The 2020 Long Bill appropriated \$401,947 General Fund and 0.5 FTE for FY 2020-21 for the program.

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¹Section 35-1-104.5, C.R.S.

²Section 24-46.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Manufacturing career pathway. House Bill 13-1165 required the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education to design a career pathway for students within the manufacturing sector.³ The career pathway must be designed in collaboration with local district colleges, area technical colleges, CDLE, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The career pathway must consist of a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry-relevant skills and certification where available, and to obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment. It must also include industry-validated stackable certifications and multiple entry and exit points that allow students of all ages to seek additional opportunities in the manufacturing sector. More information about this, and other career pathways, can be found here:

<https://www.mycoloradojourney.com/journey/tools/careers>

Teacher shortage programs. The General Assembly has created several programs that are designed to address teacher shortages.

Teacher Mentor Grant Program. The Teacher Mentor Grant Program in CDHE is intended to provide money to partnering local education providers and educator preparation programs to provide training and stipends for teachers who serve as mentors for teacher candidates participating in clinical practice.⁴

Collaborative Educator Preparation Grant Program. The Collaborative Educator Preparation Grant Program in CDHE is intended to support the development and implementation of targeted educator preparation initiatives through partnerships of educator preparation programs and local education providers. These partnerships aim to prepare educators specifically for employment by the partnering local education providers.⁵ The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2021.

Rural educator support programs. Several programs in state law specifically address teacher shortages in rural areas of the state.

- *Rural School District Teaching Fellowship Program.* House Bill 18-1002 allows a rural local education provider located in an area with critical teacher shortages or seeking to fill a teacher position in a critical subject area or grade level to enter into an agreement with an institution of higher education to create a teaching fellowship program. The local education provider must demonstrate difficulty in hiring or retaining teachers and a level of financial need, and must offer a job to each teaching fellow who successfully completes the fellowship year. Teaching fellowship stipends of \$10,000 per year are also available for teaching fellows who accept the job offer and complete two years of employment.⁶
- *Financial stipends for student teachers.* CDHE may provide financial stipends of up to \$4,000 per student per year to offset tuition costs for individuals in approved educator preparation programs who agree to student teach in a rural school or rural school district.⁷

³Section 23-60-1001, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁴Section 23-78-105, C.R.S.

⁵Section 23-78-203, C.R.S.

⁶Section 23-78-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁷Section 23-76-104, C.R.S.

- *Financial stipends for continuing education.* CDHE may provide financial stipends of up to \$6,000 to any:
 - teacher in a rural school who is seeking certification as a national board certified teacher or a concurrent enrollment teacher;
 - teacher who is completing an approved alternative licensure program that leads to initial licensure and full-time employment as a teacher in a rural school;
 - individual who is seeking certification as a special services provider and employment in a rural school; and
 - teacher who is employed by a rural school and is seeking an additional license endorsement or a master's degree to meet a faculty need of the rural school.⁸
- *Teacher cadet programs.* CDHE oversees the teacher cadet programs located in identified rural schools and school districts that identify and support high school students who are interested in pursuing teaching careers in rural Colorado.⁹

CDHE was appropriated \$709,354 General Fund and 0.8 FTE for FY 2020-21 for rural teacher recruitment, retention, and professional development in the 2020 Long Bill.

Teacher of Record Program. House Bill 18-1309 allows local education providers to employ an individual with a teacher of record license if the provider has determined that there is a critical teacher shortage and if there are no other qualified, licensed applicants for a vacant position.¹⁰ To qualify for a teacher of record license, an individual must be enrolled in an accepted institution of higher education, have successfully completed the coursework for a bachelor's degree, and not yet completed teaching field work requirements. These licenses are valid for two years. Participants in the Teacher of Record Program must be provided with performance evaluations, supervision by mentor teachers, and other teacher support services.

Worker Training Programs

A number of programs are designed to provide worker training.

Colorado Existing Industry Training Program. The Colorado Existing Industry Training Program within the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education is a collaborative effort with the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), CDLE, state and local education agencies, private industry councils, and approved joint apprenticeship programs.¹¹ The program is designed to provide training or retraining for workers of companies affected by major technological change or for situations where training is deemed crucial for the company and for worker retention.

Industry Infrastructure Grant Program. The Industry Infrastructure Grant Program in the CWDC was created by House Bill 16-1288.¹² The purpose of the program is to partner with eligible nonprofit entities to develop and maintain the industry competency standardization needed to support businesses in their implementation of worksite training programs. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2021.

⁸Section 23-76-106, C.R.S.

⁹Section 23-76-105, C.R.S.

¹⁰Section 22-60.5-208.7, C.R.S.

¹¹Section 23-60-307, C.R.S.

¹²Section 24-46.3-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment, and Key Training Grant Program. The Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment, and Key (WORK) Training Grant Program in CDLE was originally created by House Bill 15-1276 and extended by House Bill 18-1316.¹³ The program is designed to increase the state's skilled workforce by awarding matching grants to eligible government or nongovernmental entities that have partnered with industry to offer or fund a skilled worker training program. Skilled worker training programs are defined as an accredited educational, occupational education, apprenticeship, or similar training program that trains or retrains individuals to perform a skill that is needed in the workforce and awards an industry- or state-recognized certificate, credential, associate degree, professional license, or similar evidence of achievement upon completion of the program. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly passed House Bill 20-1395, which eliminated \$3.3 million General Fund appropriation for FY 2020-21. The program must transfer its remaining fund balance to the State Treasurer on September 1, 2020, and is repealed on September 30, 2021.

Educational Financial Assistance Programs

A variety of programs are designed to provide financial assistance to individuals pursuing specific higher education programs.

Career and technical education certificate program tuition assistance. House Bill 15-1275 required the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to establish a tuition assistance program for students enrolled in qualifying career and technical education certificate programs.¹⁴ The commission was appropriated \$450,000 General Fund for FY 2020-21 for the program in the 2020 Long Bill.

Colorado Customized Training Program. The Colorado Customized Job Training Program is jointly administered by the Colorado Community College System and OEDIT.¹⁵ The program is designed to provide grants to employees to receive customized job training conducted at community colleges or at private companies. OEDIT was appropriated \$3.5 million General Fund for FY 2020-21 for the program in the 2020 Long Bill.

High-School Level Educational Programs

A number of programs aim to prepare high school students for careers in various industries.

Career Development Success Program. The Career Development Success Program in CDE was created by House Bill 16-1289 and subsequently extended by House Bill 18-1266.¹⁶ The program is designed to provide financial incentives to participating districts and charter schools to encourage high school students to enroll in, and successfully complete, qualified industry-credential programs, internships, residencies, construction industry pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs, and advanced placement courses. The program is scheduled to repeal September 1, 2024.

¹³Section 8-83-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁴Section 23-3.3-1101, C.R.S.

¹⁵Section 23-60-306, C.R.S.

¹⁶Section 22-54-138, C.R.S.

Concurrent enrollment. Enacted in 2009, the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act has been amended and expanded several times, most recently by Senate Bill 19-176.¹⁷ Concurrent enrollment is defined as the simultaneous enrollment by a high school student in a local education provider and in one or more transferrable postsecondary courses. These postsecondary courses may include academic or career and technical courses, or course work related to apprenticeship programs or internship programs and are provided at no cost to the student. SB 19-176 also created the Concurrent Enrollment Expansion and Innovation Grant Program within CDE that is designed to provide grants to local education providers and institutions of higher education that seek to begin offering, or to expand their capacity to offer, concurrent enrollment opportunities to high school students. The 2020 Long Bill appropriated \$1.5 million from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for the grant program for FY 2020-21.

High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program. Senate Bill 19-216 created the High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program in CDE.¹⁸ Local education providers may propose an innovative learning plan that permits high school students to participate in innovative learning opportunities prior to graduation. Innovative learning opportunities include learning experiences that usually occur outside of the classroom, including work-based learning, such as apprenticeships, competency-based learning projects, capstone projects, and other learning experiences that are designed to support students in a successful transition from high school to postsecondary education or the workforce. CDE was appropriated \$127,095 General Fund and 0.3 FTE for FY 2020-21 in the 2020 Long Bill. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2025.

Pathways in technology and early college high schools. The General Assembly allowed the Commissioner of Education and CDHE to establish a limited number of pathways in technology and early college high schools (P-Tech schools) through House Bill 15-1270.¹⁹ P-Tech schools are public schools that include grades nine through fourteen and are designed to prepare students for high-potential careers in industry by enabling them to graduate with a high school diploma and an industry-recognized associate degree. P-Tech school students may also earn pre-apprenticeship certificates and other industry-recognized certificates in addition to an associate degree. P-Tech schools are operated as a collaborative effort by a local education provider, a community college, and one or more local high-growth industry employers. P-Tech schools integrate high school and college courses with mentoring, job shadowing, internships, pre-apprenticeship training, and other workplace education experiences.

Adult Educational Programs

A number of programs aim to provide education to adults who lack fundamental skills.

Accelerated certificate programs. House Bill 13-1005 allows the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education to design accelerated certificate programs in collaboration with local district colleges, area technical colleges, and local workforce development programs.²⁰ These programs must be designed to provide career and technical education certificates on an accelerated schedule for unemployed or underemployed adults who have an insufficient level of information or math literacy and are seeking to enter or reenter the workforce or obtain better employment. Each program must consist of courses that integrate information and math literacy development with career and technical training.

¹⁷Section 22-35-101, *et seq.* C.R.S.

¹⁸Section 22-35.6-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁹Section 22-35.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁰Section 23-60-901, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Adult Education and Literacy Grant Program. The Adult Education and Literacy Grant Program, managed by CDE and the State Board of Education, is designed to provide funding for eligible adult education providers or education attainment partnerships that provide basic literacy and numeracy skills training for adults.²¹ The goal of the literacy and numeracy education is to lead to additional skills acquisition, postsecondary credential attainment, and employment. Eligible adults served by these educational programs must lack a high school diploma, be in need of English language instruction, or lack sufficient mastery of the basic literacy and numeracy skills necessary to enable the person to function effectively in the workplace. CDE was appropriated almost \$1.0 million General Fund and 1.0 FTE for FY 2020-21 for the program in the 2020 Long Bill.

Workforce Diploma Pilot Program. Created by House Bill 19-1236, the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program in CDE provides performance payments to certain diploma-granting institutions and adult education providers when eligible students attain specified outcomes.²² Eligible students include Colorado residents who are least 21 years of age and who currently do not have a high school diploma. Outcomes for which qualified providers may receive payment include an eligible student's completion of credit hours, an accredited high school diploma, an employability skills certification program, and attainment of an industry-recognized credential. CDE was appropriated \$212,222 General Fund and 0.2 FTE for FY 2020-21 for the program in the 2020 Long Bill. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2022.

Services for Qualified Individuals in Financial Need

A number of programs are targeted toward individuals who are in financial need.

Employment Support Job Retention Services Program. The Employment Support Job Retention Services Program in CDLE was created by House Bill 19-1107.²³ The program is designed to fund employment support services for individuals who are at least 16 years old and who have a household income at or below the federal poverty line. Services that may be reimbursed through the program include transportation; emergency child care; emergency housing; fees related to employment preparation, job training, employment pursuit, or job retention activities; work tools and equipment; food and nutrition; utilities, telephone, and internet bills; prepaid cell phones; licenses and certifications; legal services and fees related to employment; language communication, interpretation, and translation expenses; emergency and work-related medical, behavioral, and mental health, dental, and vision services and expenses that impede an individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment; and other expenses as they pertain to employment preparation, job training, employment pursuit, or job retention services. HB 19-1107 included an appropriation of \$750,000 General Fund for the program, of which \$250,000 was appropriated for FY 2019-20 in the 2019 Long Bill, and \$405,000 and 0.5 FTE was appropriated for FY 2020-21 in the 2020 Long Bill. The program is scheduled to repeal September 30, 2022.

Multiservice centers for displaced homemakers. Colorado law allows CDLE to establish multipurpose service centers, in partnership with public or private organizations, to provide services for displaced homemakers.²⁴ A displaced homemaker is defined as an individual who has worked in the home, providing unpaid household services for family members for a substantial number of years; is not gainfully employed; has had, or would have, difficulty finding employment; and has been depending on the income

²¹Section 22-10-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²²Section 22-10.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²³Section 8-83-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁴Section 8-15.5-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

of a family member and has lost that income or has depended on government assistance as the parent of dependent or minor children, but who is no longer eligible, or close to losing eligibility, for such assistance. Services provided at these centers must include job counseling, job training placement, job placement, health education and counseling, financial management services, educational services, legal counseling and referral services, and outreach and information services.

Transitional Jobs Program. The Transitional Jobs Program, known as ReHire Colorado and administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), was originally created by House Bill 13-1004, and subsequently extended by House Bill 14-1015, House Bill 16-1290, and House Bill 18-1334.²⁵ The program previously operated as a federally funded program, HIRE Colorado. The purpose of the program is to provide qualified unemployed and underemployed adults with an opportunity to experientially learn, model, and practice successful workplace behaviors that help them to obtain long-term unsubsidized employment. The program prioritizes providing transitional job offers to noncustodial parents, veterans, and displaced workers who are 50 years of age or older. DHS was appropriated \$2.6 million General Fund and 2.0 FTE for FY 2020-21 for the program in the 2020 Long Bill. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2025.

Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Two workforce development programs focused on persons with disabilities are managed by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) within CDLE: the Business Enterprise Program and Employment First for Persons with Disabilities. These programs are mostly funded with federal funds.

Business Enterprise Program. First established in 1977, the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) places qualified legally blind business persons as managers of food and vending service operations, primarily in state-owned buildings and facilities.²⁶ The BEP operates under the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act and is run by the DVR.

Employment First for persons with disabilities. The Employment First program, originally created by Senate Bill 16-077, is designed to consult best practices in developing employment first policies and increasing competitive integrated employment for persons with disabilities.²⁷ The Employment First program is designed to focus all publicly funded vocational rehabilitation services on the premise that employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome for all working-age persons with disabilities, regardless of the level of disability. SB 16-077 also created the Employment First Advisory Partnership, which, among other duties, is required to develop a strategic plan to expand competitive integrated employment outcomes for persons with disabilities through employment first policies and practices. The partnership underwent a sunset review prior to its repeal date of September 1, 2021. A copy of the sunset review report can be found [here](#).

²⁵Section 26-2-1101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁶Section 8-84-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁷Section 8-84-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Other Workforce Development Programs

Just Transition Office. House Bill 19-1314 created the Just Transition Office within CDLE.²⁸ The purpose of the office is to identify or estimate the timing and location of facility closures and job layoffs in coal-related industries and their impact on affected workers, business, and coal transition communities and make recommendations to the Just Transition Advisory Committee as to how the office can most effectively respond to these economic dislocations. The 19-member advisory committee is required to develop a just transition plan for the state by December 31, 2020, that outlines various supports for communities and workers whose coal-related industries are subject to significant economic transition.

Minimum security inmate off-grounds work program. Colorado law allows the Department of Corrections to establish an off-grounds work program to provide employment opportunities for any appropriate minimum and minimum-restrictive inmates.²⁹ The program is designed to provide inmates with the necessary skills and appropriate work ethics in reentering the workforce and their communities.

Refugee Services Program. Senate Bill 19-230 codified the existing Colorado Refugee Services Program that is administered by DHS.³⁰ The program provides refugees with a variety of services, including employment services, employability assessments, English language instruction, vocational training, skills recertification, and case management services related to employment.

Veterans' Service-to-Career Program. The Colorado Veterans' Service-to-Career Program was originally created as a pilot program by House Bill 16-1267 and subsequently extended by House Bill 18-1343.³¹ The goal of the program is to assist veterans, along with their families and caregivers, in seeking, obtaining, and retaining employment. County workforce centers that are selected to participate must develop and expand programs to provide workforce development-related services specifically tailored to the needs and talents of veterans and other eligible participants. These services may include skills training, opportunities for apprenticeship and internship placements, opportunities for work placements, and other support services. In selecting workforce centers to participate in the program, CDLE is directed to give preference to workforce centers that: partner with an agency that is an integrated service and support center for veterans and their families; are located in the state of Colorado; have existing programs or partnerships with businesses or organizations in the community to provide services appropriate to the program; and have the capacity to provide a wide range of workforce development-related services tailored to the target population. CDLE is required to develop a grant process so that workforce centers may apply for money to administer the program. The 2020 Long Bill appropriated \$300,000 from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for FY 2020-21 for the program. The program is scheduled to repeal January 1, 2024.

Additional Information

In addition to the workforce development programs outlined in statute and summarized above, a variety of entities in Colorado may initiate other workforce development programs. A selection of these entities and initiatives are summarized below.

²⁸Section 8-83-501, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁹Section 17-29-105, C.R.S.

³⁰Section 26-2-138, C.R.S.

³¹Section 8-14.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Colorado Workforce Development Council. The CWDC in CDLE is the state’s workforce development board, as required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.³² The CWDC oversees a variety of workforce development initiatives throughout the state, including:

- collaborating with CDHE, CDE, CDLE, and OEDIT as part of the Key Industries Talent Pipeline Working Group created by Senate Bill 14-205 to create the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report;³³
- designing integrated career pathways for students within select industry sectors identified in the annual Talent Pipeline report produced by the above working group as directed by House Bill 15-1274;³⁴
- directing the work of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Statewide Coordinator, created by House Bill 15-1170, which works to raise the level of postsecondary and workforce readiness that Colorado high school graduates achieve; and³⁵
- a variety of other workforce development initiatives as required by statute and executive orders, along with other internal initiatives.

Business Experiential-Learning Commission. In 2015, the Governor created the Business Experiential-Learning Commission (BELC) in CDLE.³⁶ The BELC is tasked with developing a systemic solution for integrating work-based education and training to meet the needs of Colorado’s economy. In 2016, in partnership with several large Colorado industry associations and businesses, the BELC launched the CareerWise initiative, with a pilot program starting in 2017 in select school districts. CareerWise is a statewide youth apprenticeship program and is designed to replicate Switzerland’s apprenticeship model.

Colorado counties and workforce centers. In addition to the initiatives outlined above, many Colorado counties offer a variety of other workforce development programs, often offered through a county’s workforce center. There are 57 workforce centers within the ten federally-recognized workforce regions across Colorado that make up a bulk of the state’s workforce development system, as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. These workforce centers provide access to a variety of county-specific programs and a number of the above state statutory programs. In addition, counties often provide access to various federal workforce development programs, including:

- employment and training services provided to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants;
- the National Farmworker Jobs Program designed to respond to seasonal unemployment and underemployment experienced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers;
- employer sector partnerships, which bring together employers within targeted industries to collaborate with colleges, schools, and community stakeholders to align training with the skills needed for that industry to grow and compete; and
- a variety of programs targeted specifically toward veterans.

Workforce development month. Each year since 2004, September has been declared Workforce Development Month in Colorado. CDLE, in partnership with county workforce centers, hosts a variety of workforce development-focused events throughout the month across the state.

³²Section 24-46.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and 29 U.S.C. § 3111.

³³Section 24-46.3-103, C.R.S.

³⁴Section 24-46.3-104, C.R.S.

A copy of the Talent Pipeline Report can be found here: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cwdc/colorado-talent-pipeline-report>.

³⁵Section 24-46.3-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³⁶Executive Order B 2015-004; Executive Order B 2016-001; Executive Order B 2018-012.

Colorado Community College System and Department of Higher Education. The postsecondary education system provides its students with access to numerous workforce development programs across the state.

Industry apprenticeships. Many industries and higher education providers in Colorado provide apprenticeships that are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship. Registered apprenticeships must meet national standards, provide on-the-job learning and job-related technical instruction, and the apprenticeship must result in an industry-recognized credential that is nationally recognized, portable, and stackable. Apprenticeships typically range from one to six years. Senate Bill 19-176 required CDLE to create the Colorado State Apprenticeship Resource Directory, which includes information about various registered apprenticeship programs in the state.³⁷ CDLE must update the directory annually and must promote public awareness of the directory.

My Colorado Journey. House Bill 20-1396 requires the CWDC, in collaboration with CDHE, CDLE, and CDHS, to implement and maintain a free online platform to provide Coloradans with personalized information to assist them in making career and education planning decisions.³⁸ The online platform must promote career, education, and training exploration and planning and provide related tools, resources, and information. The resulting website is found at MyColoradoJourney.com.

³⁷Section 8-83-308, C.R.S.

³⁸Section 24-46.3-106, C.R.S.