



Legislative Council Staff

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Memorandum

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February 3, 2023

TO: Interested Persons

FROM: Dan Graeve, Research and Committee Analyst, 303-866-3446

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 \$139,108 General Fund and \$150,000 cash funds and 0.3 FTE for FY 2022-23 for the program in the budget. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2024.

Energy sector workforce program. [House Bill 21-1149](#) created the Strengthening Photovoltaic and Renewable Careers (SPARC) Workforce Development Program within the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE).² The program creates capacity for and bolsters training, apprenticeship, and education programs in the energy sector career pathway to increase employment in the energy sector. The program is a collaborative effort between CDLE, the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC),

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¹Section 35-1-104.5, C.R.S.

²Section 24-46.3-501, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The bill transferred \$5.0 million from the General Fund into the SPARC Program Fund, which is subject to annual appropriation by the General Assembly. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2026.

Health care workforce programs. The General Assembly has created several programs to support various areas of the health care workforce.

Behavioral Health Care Provider Workforce Plan. [Senate Bill 22-181](#) required the Behavioral Health Administration to create and begin to implement a behavioral health care provider workforce plan to expand and strengthen Colorado’s behavioral health care provider workforce.³ The workforce plan must be developed in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), institutions of higher education, and community colleges to provide job shadowing, internships, incentives, loan repayment, scholarships, marketing, and other programs to increase the behavioral health care provider workforce.

Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Program. [Senate Bill 22-226](#) created the Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Program in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to ensure that Colorado’s health care workforce is supported in order to meet the health care demands of Coloradans.⁴ The program is intended to support the resilience, wellbeing, and retention of health care workers by providing technical assistance, guidance, funding, and other supports for a variety of activities.

Rural Health Care Workforce Initiative. The Colorado Rural Health Care Workforce Initiative was established by [Senate Bill 22-172](#) to expand the number of health care professionals practicing in Colorado’s rural or frontier counties.⁵ As part of the initiative, an institution of higher education may establish or expand a health care professionals rural track. Funding may be used for a variety of purposes to support the rural track, including providing scholarships to students participating in the rural track who commit to living and working as a health care professional in a rural or frontier county for two years after completing education and training.

Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program. The Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program in CDLE was created by [Senate Bill 14-015](#).⁶ 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 FY 2022-23 budget appropriated \$414,105 General Fund and 0.5 FTE for the program.

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.⁷ The career pathway must be designed in collaboration with local district colleges, area technical colleges, CDLE, CDHE, CDE, and the 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

³Section 27-60-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁴Section 25-20.5-1401, *et seq.* C.R.S.

⁵Section 23-76.5-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁶Section 24-46.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁷Section 23-60-1001, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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>

Education workforce programs. The General Assembly has created several programs that are designed to address teacher shortages.

Educator Recruitment and Retention Program. [Senate Bill 21-185](#) created the Educator Recruitment and Retention Program in CDE.⁸ The purpose of the program is to provide support to members of the armed forces, nonmilitary-affiliated educator candidates, and local education providers to recruit, select, train, and retain highly qualified educators across the state. The FY 2022-23 budget appropriated \$5.0 million General Fund for the financial assistance that is provided through the program. CDE must prepare a report on the program by July 1, 2031, that includes a recommendation on whether the program should be continued, amended, or repealed.

Quality Teacher Recruitment Program. CDE is required to contract with a vendor, in partnership with a district, to create a Quality Teacher Recruitment Program to recruit, select, train, and retain licensed teachers to teach in public schools and in school districts in the state that can demonstrate a historic difficulty in recruiting and retaining licensed teachers.⁹ The program began placing licensing teachers in the 2014-15 school year. The FY 2022-23 budget appropriated \$3.0 million General Fund for the program.

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.¹⁰

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.¹¹
- *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.¹²
- *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;

⁸Section 22-60.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁹Section 22-94-102, C.R.S.

¹⁰Section 23-78-105, C.R.S.

¹¹Section 23-78-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹²Section 23-76-104, C.R.S.

- 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.¹³
- *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.¹⁴

CDHE was appropriated \$1.2 million General Fund and 0.8 FTE in the FY 2022-23 budget for rural teacher recruitment, retention, and professional development.

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.¹⁵ 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.

Teacher Recruitment Education and Preparation Program. [Senate Bill 21-185](#) created the Teacher Recruitment Education and Preparation (TREP) Program, which is administered by CDE.¹⁶ The objectives of the program are to increase the number of students who enter the teaching profession; increase the percentage of students who participate in postsecondary educator preparation programs, especially among low-income and traditionally underserved populations; create a more diverse teacher workforce to reflect the ethnic diversity of the state; decrease the amount of time that is required for a student to complete a postsecondary educator preparation degree or certificate; and increase the opportunities to participate in the teaching career pathway. The department must prepare a report on the program by July 1, 2031, that includes a recommendation on whether the TREP program should be continued, amended, or repealed.

Teaching Career Pathway. [Senate Bill 21-185](#) requires CDHE to design a career pathway for students to enter the teaching profession.¹⁷ The career pathway must connect school districts, local district colleges, community colleges, and four-year institutions of higher education with adult programs.

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

¹³Section 23-76-106, C.R.S.

¹⁴Section 23-76-105, C.R.S.

¹⁵Section 22-60.5-208.7, C.R.S.

¹⁶Section 22-35-108.5, C.R.S.

¹⁷Section 23-60-110, C.R.S.

agencies, private industry councils, and approved joint apprenticeship programs.¹⁸ 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.

Displaced Workers Grant Program. [House Bill 22-1192](#) codified the Displaced Workers Grant Program in the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative in CDHE.¹⁹ The program provides grants to support Coloradans displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic who have an incentive to reskill, upskill, or complete industry-recognized credentials in order to improve economic prospects for themselves or their communities. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2024.

Investments in Reskilling, Upskilling, and Next-Skilling Workers Program. [House Bill 21-1264](#) created the Investments in Reskilling, Upskilling, and Next-Skilling Workers Program as an initiative of CWDC.²⁰ The goal of the program is to train unemployed and underemployed Coloradans during times of substantial unemployment, which is defined as an unemployment rate that is higher than 4 percent for the state, as a whole, or for a workforce development area. Money appropriated for the program may be used for reskilling, upskilling, and next-skilling activities, including career counseling, career and academic exploration and planning, tuition, employer-provided training, needs-based services, transportation, equipment, retention services, and others. The bill appropriated \$25 million from the Workers, Employers, and Workforce Centers Cash Fund, which included appropriations from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Cash Fund and the General Fund, for the program. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2027.

Work Force Innovation Grant Program. [House Bill 21-1264](#) created the Work Force Innovation Grant Program for the purpose of promoting innovation in order to improve outcomes for learners and workers, including underserved populations, by promoting partnerships and helping prepare Coloradans for well-paying, quality jobs.²¹ Funds are distributed to work force development boards through a formula that considers share of unemployment claims and jobs lost in industries affected by a public health emergency, as well as other factors determined by the CWDC. The program was allocated \$17.5 million in FY 2021-22. Grants must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and expended by December 31, 2026. More information can be found on the CWDC Workforce Innovation Funding page, [here](#). Grant recipients are required to report information on the [Connecting Colorado](#) database for evaluation purposes.

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.²² The commission was appropriated \$450,000 General Fund for FY 2022-23 for the program.

Colorado Customized Training Program. The Colorado Customized Job Training Program is jointly administered by the Colorado Community College System and OEDIT.²³ The program is designed

¹⁸Section 23-60-307, C.R.S.

¹⁹Section 23-3.3-1008, C.R.S.

²⁰Section 24-46.3-601, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²¹Section 24-46.3-704, C.R.S.

²²Section 23-3.3-1101, C.R.S.

²³Section 23-60-306, C.R.S.

to provide grants to employees to receive customized job training conducted at community colleges or at private companies. OEDIT was appropriated \$4.5 million from the General Fund for FY 2022-23 for the program.

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](#).²⁴ 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, qualified workplace training programs, and qualified advanced placement courses. CDE was appropriated \$4.52 million for the program for FY 2022-23 in the budget. The program is scheduled to repeal September 1, 2024.

Concurrent enrollment. Enacted in 2009, the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act has been amended and expanded several times.²⁵ Concurrent enrollment is defined as the simultaneous enrollment by a high school student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary course, including academic or career and technical education courses, at an institution of higher education. These postsecondary courses are provided at no cost to the student. [Senate Bill 19-176](#) 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.²⁶ The FY 2022-23 budget appropriated \$1.5 million from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for the grant program.

Fourth-Year Innovation Pilot Program. [Senate Bill 21-106](#) created the Fourth-Year Innovation Pilot Program, which provides state funding to low-income students who graduate early from a participating high school and begin a postsecondary program with 18 months after graduating.²⁷ CDE was appropriated \$68,208 from the General Fund in the FY 2022-23 budget. The program is scheduled to repeal December 31, 2027.

High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program. [Senate Bill 19-216](#) created the High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program in CDE.²⁸ 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 \$349,039 from the General Fund and 0.6 FTE for FY 2022-23 in the budget. 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](#).²⁹ P-Tech schools are public schools that

²⁴Section 22-54-138, C.R.S.

²⁵Section 22-35-101, *et seq.* C.R.S.

²⁶Section 22-35-114, C.R.S.

²⁷Section 23-3.3-1301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁸Section 22-35.6-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁹Section 22-35.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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.³⁰ 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.

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.³¹ 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 from the General Fund and 1.0 FTE for FY 2022-23 for the program in the budget.

Career and Technical Education Equipment, Facility, and Instruction Capacity Funding. [House Bill 21-1264](#) appropriated \$10 million from the Workforce Centers Cash Fund to the Department of Higher Education to career and technical education providers to expand equipment, facility, and instruction capacity as identified in the Colorado Talent Report.³²

Services for Qualified Individuals in Financial Need

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

Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program. The Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program in CDLE was created by [House Bill 19-1107](#) and extended in [House Bill 22-1230](#).³³ The program is designed to fund employment support services for individuals who are at least 16 years old, who have a household income at or below the federal poverty line, and who are underemployed

³⁰Section 23-60-901, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³¹Section 22-10-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³²Section 23-8-201, C.R.S.

³³Section 8-83-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

or unemployed. 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 22-1230 included an appropriation of \$250,000 General Fund dollars for the program for FY 2022-23. The program is scheduled to repeal September 1, 2029.

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.³⁴ 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 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](#).³⁵ 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 2022-23 for the program in the budget. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2025.

Workers, Employers, and Workforce Centers Cash Fund. [House Bill 21-1264](#) established this cash fund by transferring \$200 million from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Cash Fund and \$25 million from the General Fund to provide assistance to unemployed individuals, to households, and to populations and business and organizations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁶ In addition to providing funding in FY 2021-22 to the Reskilling, Upskilling, and Next-Skilling Workers Program described above, the fund also supported the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative and career and technical education programs, among others.

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.

³⁴Section 8-15.5-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³⁵Section 26-2-1101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³⁶Section 24-75-231, C.R.S.

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.³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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. Following a sunset review in 2021 of the partnership, [Senate Bill 21-095](#) extended the partnership indefinitely. A copy of the sunset review report can be found [here](#). CDLE was appropriated \$290,744 for Employment First initiatives, mostly in federal funds, for FY 2022-23 in the budget.

SB 21-095 also required CDLE to implement a hiring preference pilot program for persons with disabilities applying for a position within the department that will operate from 2023 through 2027. Other agencies may also implement the pilot program.³⁹

Other Workforce Development Programs

Just transition initiatives. [House Bill 19-1314](#) created the Just Transition Office within CDLE.⁴⁰ 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 was 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. The advisory committee is scheduled to repeal September 1, 2025. [House Bill 22-1394](#) transferred \$5 million from the General Fund to the Just Transition Cash Fund for purposes of expansion assistance for existing local businesses, expansion of private financial investment, and site selector and technical assistance engagements.

[House Bill 21-1290](#) created the Coal Transition Worker Assistance Program that provides funding for programs that directly assist coal transition workers or their family members and other household members. These include programs that establish or expand existing apprenticeship programs, the training capacity of such programs, and the placement of coal transition workers into such programs; aid implementation of the final just transition plan; provide tuition reimbursement; provide job search assistance; provide individualized financial and transition planning; provide other federally-authorized worker assistance services; support family members or other household members of coal transition workers; or test innovative coal transition work support programs through a pilot program. [House Bill 22-1394](#) authorized a \$10 million transfer from the General Fund to the program for tuition assistance

³⁷Section 8-84-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³⁸Section 8-84-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

³⁹Section 24-50-112.5 (8), C.R.S.

⁴⁰Section 8-83-501, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

and apprenticeships, expanded child care assistance, career planning services, financial counseling, and housing assistance.

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 medium, minimum, and minimum-restrictive inmates.⁴¹ The program is designed to provide inmates with employment opportunities, to reinforce their rehabilitation, and to provide them with the necessary skills and appropriate work ethics in reentering the workforce and their communities. The program was suspended in the fall of 2022.

Refugee Services Program. [Senate Bill 19-230](#) codified the existing Colorado Refugee Services Program that is administered by DHS.⁴² 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.

Regional Talent Development Initiative Grant Program. [House Bill 22-1350](#) created the Regional Talent Development Initiative Grant Program in OEDIT.⁴³ The purpose of the grant program is to provide grants to applicants in identified regions of the state in order to create or expand talent development initiatives across the state that meet regional labor market needs. The goals of the grant program are to meet workforce development needs as regions work to recover from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, to create intentional pathways between kindergarten through 12th grade education, higher education, and employment that allow learners to transition more easily in and out of each system and that ensure a highly skilled and well-educated workforce, and to provide more opportunities for regional learners and earners to be more economically mobile and earn a living wage in an in-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupation. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2028.

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](#).⁴⁴ 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 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 FY 2022-23 budget appropriated \$500,000 from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for the program. The program is scheduled to repeal January 1, 2024.

⁴¹Section 17-29-105, C.R.S.

⁴²Section 26-2-138, C.R.S.

⁴³Section 24-48.5-405, C.R.S.

⁴⁴Section 8-14.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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.

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.⁴⁵ 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;⁴⁶
- 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](#);⁴⁷
- 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; and⁴⁸
- 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.⁴⁹ 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.

⁴⁵Section 24-46.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and 29 U.S.C. § 3111.

⁴⁶Section 24-46.3-103, C.R.S.

⁴⁷Section 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>.

⁴⁸Section 24-46.3-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁴⁹Executive Order B 2015-004; Executive Order B 2016-001; Executive Order B 2018-012.

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.

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.⁵⁰ CDLE must update the directory annually and must promote public awareness of the directory. The directory can be found [here](#).

[House Bill 21-1007](#) created the State Apprenticeship Agency in CDLE, along with the State Apprenticeship Council and the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship.⁵¹ The State Apprenticeship Agency serves as the primary point of contact with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship in the Employment and Training Administration and has a variety of other responsibilities related to apprenticeship programs in the state. The State Apprenticeship Council oversees registered apprenticeship programs for the building and construction trades, while the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship oversees all other registered apprenticeship programs.

My Colorado Journey. [House Bill 20-1396](#) requires the CWDC, in collaboration with CDHE, CDLE, and DHS, to implement and maintain a free online platform to provide Coloradans with personalized information to assist them in making career and education planning decisions.⁵² 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](#).

⁵⁰Section 8-83-308, C.R.S.

⁵¹Section 8-15.7-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁵²Section 24-46.3-106, C.R.S.