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Memorandum

January 7, 2019

TO: Interested Persons

FROM: Luisa Altmann, 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.

Veterans' Program

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 18-1343.¹ The goal of the program is to assist veterans, along with their families and caregivers, in seeking, obtaining, and retaining employment. 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, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (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

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¹Section 8-14.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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 program is scheduled to repeal January 1, 2024.

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.² The program is designed to partially reimburse agricultural businesses that hire interns and meet specific criteria. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2024.

Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program. The Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program in CDLE was created by Senate Bill 14-015.³ The purpose of the program is to accelerate growth and improve and expand the development of hospitality secondary education programs. Among other criteria, education programs that are eligible to receive grants through this program 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.

Innovative Industries Workforce Development Program. The Innovative Industries Workforce Development Program in CDLE and overseen by the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) was created by House Bill 15-1230.⁴ The purpose of the program is to reimburse businesses for up to one-half of their expenses related to a qualifying internship in an innovative industry. For the program, innovative industries include advanced manufacturing, aerospace, bioscience, construction, electronics, energy and natural resources, engineering, and information technology industries, and any other innovative industry as determined by CDLE. A business pre-approved by CDLE to participate in the program may be reimbursed for up to five interns per location and up to ten interns total at all locations. The program is scheduled to repeal July 1, 2020.

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.⁵ The career pathway must be designed in collaboration with local district colleges, area technical colleges, CDLE, Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), Colorado Department of Education (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 certifications and multiple entry and exit points that allow students of all ages to seek additional opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

²Section 35-1-104.5, C.R.S.

³Section 24-46.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁴Section 24-46.3-105, C.R.S.

⁵Section 23-60-1001, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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.⁶ The program is designed to provide training or retraining for workers of companies being 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 16-1288.⁷ 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.

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 15-1276.⁸ House Bill 18-1316 subsequently extended the program through FY 2020-21. 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.

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.⁹

Colorado Customized Training Program. The Colorado Customized Job Training Program within the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education is a collaborative effort between state and local education agencies, the Department of Human Services (DHS), CDLE, and the

⁶Section 23-60-307, C.R.S.

⁷Section 24-46.3-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁸Section 8-83-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁹Section 23-3.3-1101, C.R.S.

Department of Local Affairs.¹⁰ The program is designed to provide grants to employees to receive customized job training conducted at community colleges or at private companies.

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 18-1266.¹¹ The program is designed to provide financial incentives to participating districts and participating charter schools to encourage high school students to enroll in, and successfully complete, qualified industry-credential programs, qualified internships, residencies, construction industry pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs, and qualified advanced placement courses. The program is scheduled to repeal September 1, 2024.

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 15-1270.¹² 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.¹³ 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.

¹⁰Section 23-60-306, C.R.S.

¹¹Section 22-54-138, C.R.S.

¹²Section 22-35.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹³Section 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 local education providers that are members of workforce development partnerships through which eligible adults receive basic education in literacy and numeracy.¹⁴ 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.

Services for Qualified Individuals in Financial Need

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

Colorado Works Program. The Colorado Works Program is Colorado’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and is operated by each county’s department of human or social services.¹⁵ The program provides cash assistance to low-income families and assists adults in the program prepare for, gain, and retain employment. All adult participants receiving cash assistance through the Colorado Works Program are required to participate in work-related activities.

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.¹⁶ 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 DHS, was originally created by House Bill 13-1004, and subsequently extended by House Bill 14-1015, House Bill 16-1290, and House Bill 18-1334.¹⁷ 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. The program is scheduled to operate through June 30, 2024.

¹⁴Section 22-10-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁵Section 26-2-701, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁶Section 8-15.5-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁷Section 26-2-1101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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.

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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ 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. The program will undergo a sunset review prior to the scheduled repeal date of September 1, 2021.

Inmate Program

Programs for inmates focus on preparing them to leave the Department of Corrections and reenter the workforce.

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.²⁰ The program is designed to provide inmates with the necessary skills and appropriate work ethics in reentering the workforce and their communities.

Other Workforce Development Programs

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.²¹ The CWDC oversees a variety of workforce development initiatives throughout the state, including:

¹⁸Section 8-84-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁹Section 8-84-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁰Section 17-29-105, C.R.S.

²¹Section 24-46.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and 29 U.S.C. § 3111.

- 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;²²
- 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;²³
- 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; and²⁴
- 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.²⁵ 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. The 57 workforce centers within the ten federally-recognized workforce regions across Colorado 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, the Governor has declared September to be 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.

²²Section 24-46.3-103, C.R.S.

²³Section 24-46.3-104, C.R.S.

A copy of the 2018 Talent Pipeline Report can be found here: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cwdc/colorado-talent-pipeline-report>.

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

²⁵Executive Order B 2015-004.

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.