



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. SB 18-042 included an appropriation of \$43,157 for FY 2018-19 for the program, and an additional \$64,108 General Fund was appropriated for FY 2019-20 in the 2019 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

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¹Section 35-1-104.5, C.R.S.
²Section 24-46.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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. CDLE was appropriated \$400,883 General Fund for FY 2019-20 for the program in the 2019 Long Bill.

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 15-1230.³ 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. CDLE was appropriated \$602,852 General Fund for FY 2019-20 for the program in the 2019 Long Bill. 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.⁴ 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 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. This work was incorporated into a larger, federally funded Colorado Helps Advanced Manufacturing Program (CHAMP).

Teacher shortage programs. The General Assembly has passed several bills designed to address teacher shortages.

Rural School District Teaching Fellowship Program. House Bill 18-1002 directed CDE to identify geographic areas of the state and specific subject areas and grade levels for which there are critical shortages of qualified teachers to fill elementary and secondary teaching positions in public schools. A rural local education provider located within one of these identified geographic areas or seeking to fill a teaching position in one of the identified subject areas or grade levels that can also demonstrate difficulty in hiring or retaining teachers and a level of financial need may enter into an agreement with an institution of higher education to create a teaching fellowship program. Following the one-year fellowship, the rural local education provider must commit to extend a job offer to each teaching fellow who successfully completes the fellowship year. The bill also created teaching fellowship stipends of \$10,000 per year. Teaching fellows who accept the stipend must accept any job offer made

³Section 24-46.3-105, C.R.S.

⁴Section 23-60-1001, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

by the participating rural local education provider and complete two full years of employment; otherwise, they must repay the stipend amount.⁵

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.⁶ 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.

Grow Your Own Educator Program. House Bill 18-1309 also directed CDE and CDHE to create the Grow Your Own Educator Program.⁷ The program allows school districts and charter schools to apply for grants to help teachers of record pay for credit hours remaining to complete their degree program. The teacher must work in the school district or charter school that received the grant for three years after completion of the program. HB 18-1309 included an appropriation of \$1.0 million General Fund for the implementation of the program for FY 2018-19.

Rural educator programs. CDHE administers the rural educator programs created by Senate Bill 16-104 and Senate Bill 18-085. These programs provide financial stipends to offset tuition costs for individuals in approved educator preparation programs who agree to student teach in a rural school or rural school district and to teachers in rural schools or school districts who are seeking certification as a national board certified teacher or concurrent enrollment teacher. CDHE may also provide financial stipends to teachers completing an approved alternative licensure program that leads to initial licensure and full-time employment in a rural school or school district and individuals seeking to complete the required coursework leading to certification as a special services provider and employment in a rural school or school district. CDHE also 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.⁸ CDE and CDHE were appropriated \$681,095 General Fund and cash funds for FY 2019-20 for rural teacher recruitment, retention, and professional development in the 2019 Long Bill.

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

⁵Section 23-78-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

⁶Section 22-60.5-208.7, C.R.S.

⁷Section 22-60.5-208.5, C.R.S.

⁸Section 23-76-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

education agencies, private industry councils, and approved joint apprenticeship programs.⁹ 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 16-1288.¹⁰ 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 15-1276.¹¹ 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. The program received an appropriation of \$5.0 million cash funds for FY 2018-19 in the 2018 Long Bill and an appropriation of \$1.0 million General Fund was included in HB 18-1316 for FY 2018-19. An additional \$3.3 million General Fund was appropriated for FY 2019-20 in the 2019 Long Bill.

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.¹²

Colorado Customized Training Program. The Colorado Customized Job Training Program is jointly administered by the Colorado Community College System and OEDIT.¹³ 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 \$4.5 million General Fund for FY 2019-20 for the program in the 2019 Long Bill.

⁹Section 23-60-307, C.R.S.

¹⁰Section 24-46.3-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹¹Section 8-83-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹²Section 23-3.3-1101, C.R.S.

¹³Section 23-60-306, C.R.S.

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 18-1266.¹⁴ 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.

Concurrent enrollment. Enacted in 2009, the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act has been amended and expanded, most recently by Senate Bill 19-176.¹⁵ 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 bill included an appropriation of \$1.5 million from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for the grant program.

High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program. Senate Bill 19-216 created the High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program in CDE.¹⁶ 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. 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 15-1270.¹⁷ 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.

¹⁴Section 22-54-138, C.R.S.

¹⁵Section 22-35-101, *et seq.* C.R.S.

¹⁶Section 22-35.6-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁷Section 22-35.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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.¹⁸ 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 local education providers that are members of workforce development partnerships through which eligible adults receive basic education in literacy and numeracy.¹⁹ 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 for FY 2019-20 for the program in the 2019 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 local education providers when eligible students attain specified outcomes.²⁰ 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. HB 19-1236 included an appropriation of \$1.0 million General Fund for FY 2019-20 for the program. 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.

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.²¹ 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

¹⁸Section 23-60-901, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

¹⁹Section 22-10-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁰Section 22-10.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²¹Section 26-2-701, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

the Colorado Works Program are required to participate in work-related activities. Individuals participating in the Colorado Works Program may be eligible for certain education vouchers for the purpose of securing short-term educational and academic skills training and job placement services. Individuals may also be eligible to participate in an employment program, originally created by Senate Bill 17-292. The bill directed the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) to work in collaboration with the CWDC and counties to administer the program. The program is intended to assist participants in attaining living-wage, permanent jobs by funding evidence-based subsidized wage opportunities, including subsidized employment, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, transitional jobs, and administrative costs that directly support employment programs tied to a wage. The employment program was appropriated \$4.0 million in federal funds for FY 2019-20 in the 2019 Long Bill and is scheduled to end on June 30, 2020.

Employment Support Job Retention Services Program. The Employment Support Job Retention Services Program in CDLE was created by House Bill 19-1107.²² 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.

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.²³ 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 18-1334.²⁴ The program previously operated as a federally funded program, HIRE Colorado. The purpose of the program is to provide qualified

²²Section 8-83-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²³Section 8-15.5-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁴Section 26-2-1101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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 for FY 2019-20 for the program in the 2019 Long Bill. The program is scheduled to operate through June 30, 2024.

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.²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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.

Other Workforce Development Programs

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 18-1343.²⁷ 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

²⁵Section 8-84-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁶Section 8-84-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

²⁷Section 8-14.3-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

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. HB 18-1343 included an appropriation of \$1.0 million from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for FY 2018-19. The program is scheduled to repeal January 1, 2024.

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.²⁸ 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.²⁹ 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.

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.³⁰ 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;³¹
- 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;³²
- 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; and³³
- a variety of other workforce development initiatives as required by statute and executive orders, along with other internal initiatives.

²⁸Section 17-29-105, C.R.S.

²⁹Section 26-2-138, C.R.S.

³⁰Section 24-46.3-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and 29 U.S.C. § 3111.

³¹Section 24-46.3-103, C.R.S.

³²Section 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>.

³³Section 24-46.3-301, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Business Experiential-Learning Commission. In 2015, the Governor created the Business Experiential-Learning Commission (BELC) in CDLE.³⁴ 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.

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.³⁵ CDLE must update the directory annually and must promote public awareness of the directory.

³⁴Executive Order B 2015-004.

³⁵Section 8-83-308, C.R.S.