

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT  
FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING AGENDA

**Thursday, December 12, 2024**

**1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**

**1:30-1:35      Introductions and Opening Comments**

Presenter: Joe Barela, Executive Director

**1:35-1:40      Common Questions**

Main Presenters:

- Joe Barela, Executive Director
- Cher Haavind, Deputy Executive Director and Chief Communications Officer
- Darcy Kennedy, Deputy Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer
- Caitlin Adams, Director of Policy and Government Affairs
- Christine Bonorino, Budget Director

Topics:

- Budget Requests to Replace One-Time Funding: Page 1, Questions 1 in the packet

**1:40-2:05      Executive Department Budget Reduction Requests**

Main Presenters:

- Joe Barela, Executive Director

Supporting Presenters:

- Paul Tauriello, Workers Compensation Division Director
- Kelly Folks, Employment and Training Division Director

Topics:

- Statewide Requests: Page 1,
- R2 Worker's Compensation Cash Fund Sweep: Page 1-3, Questions 3-7 Appendix 1 CoCo IT Capital Project
- R4 Hospitality Education Grant Program Reduction: Page 3-5, Questions 8-13

**2:05-2:30 Other Budget Reduction Options**

Main Presenters:

- Joe Barela, Executive Director

Supporting Presenters:

- Lee Wheeler-Berliner, Colorado Workforce Development Council Office Director
- Kelly Folks, Employment and Training Division Director
- Mahesh Albuquerque, Oil and Public Safety Division Director
- Katherine Keegan, Office of the Future of Work Director
- Paul Tauriello, Workers Compensation Division Director
- Scott Moss, Labor Standards and Statistics Division Director

Topics:

- Other Budget Reduction Options : Page 6-8, Question 14 Appendix 2- Final Q1 25-25 Stimulus Stakeholder report
- One-Time Funding Sweep: Page 9, Question 15
- Workforce Programs and Reductions: Page 9-21, Question 16-19 Appendix 3- Colorado PY13 WIOA Annual Report
- Cash Fund Spending Increases: Page 21-22, Question 20-22
- Cash Fund Transfers and Decreases: Page 22-24, Question 23-26
- Labor Standards Unit: Page 24-25, Question 27

**2:30-2:55 Unemployment Insurance**

Main Presenters:

- Joe Barela, Executive Director
- Cher Haavind, Deputy Executive Director

Supporting Presenters:

- Phil Spesshardt, Unemployment Insurance Division Director
- Jeff Newcomb, UI Branch Manager
- Zach Herman, UI Policy Advisor

Topics:

- Unemployment Insurance Program Updates: Page 25-32, Question 28-30
- R1 Unemployment Insurance Funding Expansion and Realignment: Page 32-35, Question 31-38, Appendix 4 R-01 slide deck

**2:55-3:00      EDO Offices Update**

Main Presenters:

- Joe Barela, Executive Director

Supporting Presenters:

- Dee Daniels Scriven, Office of New Americans Director
- Kathreen Keegan, Office of the Future of Work Director
- Wade Buchanan, Office of Just Transitions Director
- Danny Combs, Colorado Disability Opportunity Office

Topics:

- Funding Update on Various Offices within the EDO: Page 35-36, Question 39

## COMMON QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AT DEPARTMENT HEARINGS

- 1 Please describe any budget requests that replace one-time General Fund or ARPA funded programs with ongoing appropriations, including the following information:
  - a. Original fund source (General Fund, ARPA, other), amount, and FTE;
  - b. Original program time frame;
  - c. Original authorization (budget decision, legislation, other);
  - d. Requested ongoing fund source, amount, and FTE; and
  - e. Requested time frame (one-time extension or ongoing).

CDLE is not requesting any one-time General Fund or ARPA funds to be replaced with ongoing appropriations.

## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REDUCTION REQUESTS

### STATEWIDE REQUESTS

- 2 *[Sen. Bridges]* Provide a monetary General Fund relief estimate for the Statewide R6 request to consider revenue from Business Enterprise Program sales as TABOR exempt.

### OSPB Cash Fund Forecast

Fiscal Year	Business Enterprise Program (5040) Revenue (Subject to TABOR) Forecast
2022	263,154
2023	336,641
2024	373,178
2025	415,421
2026	404,456
2027	408,550

### R2 WORKER'S COMPENSATION CASH FUND SWEEP

- 3 *[Sen. Bridges]* Are there any long-term risks or consequences of a \$15.0 million transfer from the Major Medical Fund, both to claims but also the ability of the fund to cover centrally appropriated costs within the Department?

Response: The Department does not foresee any immediate or medium-term impacts to the program's ability to fulfill its mandate and cover costs as a result of the \$15M transfer. In the long term, if there should be an unusual increase in anticipated medical costs for these claims, this would necessitate reinstating a surcharge on workers' compensation insurers. The Department does not expect this to happen based on actuarial estimates on claims. The

Department is confident that \$15M will be unused funds from the MMF based on the most recent actuarial study.

4 [Sen. Bridges] Is it an option to buy out the Major Medical Fund and transfer it to Pinnacol?

Response: The Division has recently explored the option of paying to have another entity assume liability for this program as well as several other programs the division oversees. Interest from potential partners was poor, and would likely cost the state more than the estimated net present value of the existing liabilities. Pinnacol was not considered an option as they have repeatedly previously expressed no interest in adjusting claims other than those insured by them.

5 [Rep. Taggart] To inform assessments of the state's potential liability, can the Department share how many of the 426 people eligible for benefits but not actively receiving them as of October 2024 have continued injuries and major injuries? Has the Department estimated the solvency of the fund in light of any large costs due to claims filed for major injuries?

Response: All claims in the fund were considered catastrophic when originally admitted. That threshold would be considered very low by today's standards however (greater than \$20,000 in medical expenses). The Division annually commissions an actuarial study of the liabilities and solvency of the fund. The fund currently has a balance that exceeds the net present value of the liabilities by approximately \$15M. T As this population ages, challenges increase in separating costs due to normal aging versus complications due to original injuries.

As of October 2024, there are 623 injured workers or spouses that are eligible for claim benefits, with 197 actively receiving benefits. The 426 that are not currently active can receive payment for medical treatment. A non-active status indicates that we have not received a medical bill for the claim for 2 years. Upon receipt of a medical bill, the claim immediately moves to active status and requires payment. No new claimants may be added to the fund.

6 [Sen. Amabile] Why is 1981 the year at which eligibility to file claims for the Major Medical Fund ends? What happened in 1981?

Response: The Fund was originally established to attract more commercial insurers to Colorado to share the market with the Colorado State Fund (which is now Pinnacol). The objective was to increase competition to lower costs for Colorado employers and reduce the virtual monopoly of the state's (Pinnacol's) market. The General Assembly incentivized commercial insurers to come to Colorado by capping their losses for catastrophic claims at \$20,000. Any costs above that amount would then be assumed by the state through the Major Medical Insurance Fund. By 1981, the General Assembly felt that commercial insurers had sufficiently entered the Colorado market and that this incentive no longer was needed or was justifiable in light of the long-term cost of the assumed liabilities.

- 7 [Sen. Bridges] Share more about the proposed Workers' Compensation Division IT update. Will it only benefit the Major Medical Fund program?

Response: No, this modernization will update the system that serves the regulation of the entire Colorado workers' compensation system—including the Major Medical Insurance Fund program. It will administer every claim from every Colorado employer required to be filed with the division (all lost-time claims, claims with any level of permanent impairment, and all denied claims).

Link to the [II Capital request](#) for reference (also attached as Appendix 1).

#### *R4 HOSPITALITY EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM REDUCTION*

- 8 [Sen. Amabile] Why is the Department proposing to cut this program, considering that it seems like a worth-while program that has helped young people get into the hospitality industry? What will be the impact of this request to those young people?

Response: This proposal is part of the Governor's balanced budget. The \$1B deficit necessitated looking at programs where the other statewide programs were achieving similar goals. This is not a reflection of the quality of the program. While the request would remove a program for a specific industry, we believe that there are opportunities to continue to strengthen Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) for K-12 students through on-going work in Colorado. This includes programs such as CDIP and the CDE cost study on PWR programs.

The Hospitality Education Grant Program awards a grant to the Colorado Restaurant Association that uses the money for the Colorado ProStart program. Data indicates that students who participate in the program often progress into apprenticeships and careers in the hospitality industry. The number of students that have been served so far are noted in the answers below.

- 9 [Rep. Sirota] What does ProStart actually train students for and what kind of jobs are they getting with this training? Please provide numbers from the program about what jobs students took after their training, and how many went on to work in the hospitality industry.

Response: ProStart trains students in culinary arts, restaurant management, customer service, Lodging & Resort Management, and awards industry-recognized credentials like the ProStart National Certificate of Achievement as well as Certified Professional industry certifications. These skills and certifications prepare students for roles such as line cooks, pastry chefs, and restaurant managers.

In the 2023-24 school year, 43% of ProStart students worked in the hospitality industry while still in high school. One notable example is the D11 ProStart Student of the Year, who advanced his culinary skills through the Culinary Bridge Program internship funded by the Colorado Restaurant Foundation and the Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) grant. He subsequently secured an apprenticeship in Colorado Springs, despite coming from a low-income community with a median income of \$65,339.

**Program Expansion:** The Colorado ProStart program has expanded to eight new sites, including Douglas County School District (DCSD) Legacy Campus and Roosevelt High School, bringing the total to 49 programs across 47 high schools for the 2023/2024 academic year.

**Student Enrollment:** Over 1,900 students are currently enrolled, with more expected in the spring. The Restaurant Youth Registered Apprenticeship (RYRA) program has 252 pre-apprentices enrolled.

**Dual Enrollment:** 39 schools have dual enrollment agreements with colleges, with over two-thirds of ProStart students earning dual-enrollment credit, double the national average.

**Certifications:** ProStart teachers have trained 1,184 students in ServSafe Food Handler certification. Additionally, 123 students received a second industry certification, including ServSafe Food Safety Manager.

**Food Safety Certification:** Among those certified, 58 earned ServSafe Food Manager and 42 received Food Allergen certifications. The spring semester testing is upcoming, and Resort & Event Management students obtained 30 certifications in Fall 2023.

10 *[Rep. Sirota/Sen. Marchman]* How much is the Colorado Restaurant Foundation putting into this program? What portion of total ProStart program funding does state grant money represent? Please provide a breakdown from the Foundation of funding sources and amount of funding towards the ProStart program.

Response: Colorado ProStart® receives the majority of its funding from the CDLE Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant Program, with state grant funds making up approximately 50% which goes directly to the schools. In FY2023-24, the state grant allocation was \$500,000, with \$425,000 dedicated to programmatic funding and 15% (\$75,000) for administrative costs. The Colorado Restaurant Foundation (CRF) also supports the program through fundraising and local restaurant donations that go directly towards student scholarships.

**New Schools:** \$5,000 each for curriculum, supplies, and materials. \*Currently, Colorado ProStart® serves more than 2,000 students from 85 local high schools via 47 separate programs.

**Teacher Trainings:** \$15,000 annually for training and \$10,000-\$20,000 for classroom needs (\$700/teacher).

**Industry Certifications:** \$35,000 for ServSafe Food Handler certifications (\$20/student), with additional private funding for other credentials.

**Bootcamp:** \$100/student for workshops and networking (200 students attend).

**Student Invitational:** \$700/student for the Colorado ProStart Student Invitational (150 students compete).

**Final Exam Materials:** \$30,000 for ProStart® and Resort and Event Management exams.

**Program Enhancements:** \$50,000 for activities like master classes, field trips, and guest speakers (\$25/student).

- 11 *[Sen. Amabile]* What happens to the ProStart program if state grant money goes away? Will the Foundation have to cut its current offerings?

Response: The Colorado Restaurant Foundation uses the program to cover the costs of high schools to participate in the program. Without funding from the Hospitality Career Secondary Education Grant, each school would face additional annual costs of \$13,000 to \$23,500.

- 12 *[Sen. Kirkmeyer/Sen. Bridges]* Instead of pausing the program, could the grant program be funded by the Colorado Workforce Development Council? Similarly, could the grant program be funded through the Employment Support Fund?

No. The funds for the current year were awarded in September and there are no funds available to backfill and continue existing programs.

The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is focused on workforce innovation and working alongside economic development and education. While it oversees grants, the source is federal funding that is governed by the Wagner Peyser Act. These funds are restricted to immediate employment related activities and this grant program would not comply with federal regulations.

Employment Support Fund (ESF) expenditures are the same as General Fund expenditures for budget balancing purposes. Revenue that would cause the ESF to exceed its balance cap is diverted to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UITF) and is then exempt revenue. More ESF expenditures means the ESF can collect more non-exempt revenue before hitting its cap.

- 13 *[Sen. Bridges]* Does this Department think this program could be included with Department of Education's Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness efforts or other CDE efforts to pipeline K – 12 students to post-secondary education?

Response: Any answer on our part would require speculation and this is a question better directed to CDPHE and CDE.

The Department of Education released a cost-study relating to the cost of providing various types of post-secondary and workforce readiness (PWR) programs in Colorado at the beginning of December. The cost-study does not expressly mention the ProStart program, though it does highlight the importance of industry recognized credentials, work-based learning, and post-secondary credit. The ProStart program does provide students with all three of these post-secondary and workforce readiness outcomes, however it is worth noting that the ProStart program is not receiving funding from the current K-12 PWR programs. With that in mind, it is not clear how legislation that acts on report recommendations from the PWR cost-study might intersect with the ProStart program.



## OTHER BUDGET REDUCTION OPTIONS

14 *[Sen. Bridges]* Overall and if not covered by the specific questions below, please share the Department's thoughts on each of the JBC Staff-generated budget reduction options, listed below:

- Sweep of unencumbered one-time funding to the Department, particularly the unencumbered \$12.4 million from H.B. 21-1264 and \$1.5 million from H.B. 21-1149

Response:

H.B. 21-1264

The \$12.4 million referenced in the briefing will be finalized before the end of the calendar year and is likely to change. All of the funding appropriated through H.B. 21-1264 is allocated to projects or obligated to personnel expenses that cannot be formally encumbered in the state financial system. The report covering activities through 9/30/2024 [can be found at this link](#). [\(also found in Appendix 2\)](#).

H.B. 21-1149

The Strengthening Photovoltaic and Renewable Careers (SPARC) Program is authorized through June 30, 2026 with funding appropriated on an annual basis. Each year approximately \$125,000 is used to pay staff navigators at two workforce centers who coach individuals about careers in the areas related to this program. A small portion of funds supports ongoing career pathway development and enhancement activity led by the CWDC. The bulk of annual funds goes to the Colorado Community College System for the development training programs and to expand those programs across multiple campuses. CCCS has obligated all funding that has been made available and will spend by the required deadline. The unencumbered funding includes staff costs that cannot be encumbered in the state system.

- Repeal the Employment Support and Job Retention Services program

Response:

As of December 1st the Employment Support and Job Retention Service Program (ESJR) has provided supportive services to **371** individuals this program year. During the prior program year the program served **522** individuals.

Top three service categories for this PY:

- Work Tools and Equipment 20%
- Transportation or help with a vehicle used for work 22%
- Emergency Housing 19%

List of other services provided by ESJR:

- Transportation or Vehicle
- 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
- Utility, 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
- Other, as determined by CDLE

The ESJR program supports people who may not have access to other employment resources or who are preparing for, seeking, or attempting to retain employment.

To participate in the program, individuals must have a household income at or below the Federal Poverty line, are at least 16 years of age, and are eligible to work in the U.S. If this program were cut it would negatively impact some of our most vulnerable jobseekers. Noting, the program did run out of funds early last fiscal year and is likely to run out before the end of this fiscal year. As of Dec 9 \$31K remains. Goodwill is implementing strategies to sustain the program until June 30 by limiting the amount of referrals from service providers and serving individuals who are unemployed, not those who may be working less than six months and needing assistance with job retention

- \$700,000 one-time General Fund transfer from the Petroleum Redevelopment Fund  
Response:  
While activity in the fund has been slow in the past few years it has slowly picked up recently and in March the fund was critical in facilitating a Brownfield cleanup for redevelopment.
- \$400,000 total General Fund transfer from the Scale-up Grant Program and Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediary Grant Program  
Response: The proposed reduction of \$200,000 to each grant program will directly impact the number of grants that the Department can award.
  - o For the QAI program, the Department plans to award \$1.69M in grants (approximately 17 grants at \$100,000 each). A \$200,000 cut will reduce the number of grants by two. There are currently 34 recognized qualified intermediaries that may be eligible to apply for a grant.

- o For the ScaleUp program, the Department plans to award \$1.69M in grants (approximately 33 grants at \$50,000 each). A \$200,000 cut will reduce the number of grants by four. Each grant represents a new registered apprenticeship program or the expansion of an existing program which means fewer jobs available for apprentices.
- **\$500,000 one-time General Fund transfer from the Uninsured Employer Fund**  
**Response:** The purpose of this fund is to create a mechanism for the payment of covered claims to workers who are injured while employed by employers who do not carry workers' compensation insurance. The source of revenue are penalties from employers who do not carry workers' compensation insurance. Expenditures are mainly payments to individuals. It is unclear what the impact of reducing the Uninsured Employer Fund by \$500,000 is. We are currently able to provide injured workers with all levels of benefits and are able to encourage claimant attorneys to represent these claims because they will get paid. If the fund is reduced and those potential very large claims meet the eligibility requirements then it is likely the Board will have to reduce benefits for all injured workers currently in the fund. We also believe that this would reduce our stakeholder's confidence in the financial stability of the fund moving forward and discourage claimant attorneys from assisting these types of injured workers at hearing.
- **\$200,000 one-time General Fund transfer from the Workers' Compensation Immediate Payment Fund**  
**Response:** The purpose of this fund is to provide immediate payment to injured workers if their self insured company has declared bankruptcy. A reduction of \$200,000 would severely impact the fund's ability to pay claims in the event of a bankruptcy. As the Fund only accrues an average of \$1,800 a month in interest, it would take over nine years to recoup this money solely via interest accrual, making an assessment necessary. As a result, the Division would be forced to complete an assessment against all currently licensed public and private self-insured employers to make up the difference, including the State of Colorado who is self-insured. It can take months for the Department to recover assessment payments from self-insured employers, as it can be difficult for public employers such as school districts and municipalities to pay for unexpected costs such as this. Additionally, at the current level of \$750,000, the Division does not have enough money to bridge the payment gap if a larger employer declares bankruptcy. A 26% decrease will mean that the Division will not have enough money for smaller bankruptcies as well.
- **\$450,000 General Fund refinancing to the Workforce Development Fund**

This would be an expansion of the enterprise that would need to be reviewed in more detail. The fund receives fees from employers paying the support surcharge. Because employers across the state pay the support surcharge the fee should be used to benefit the labor market as a whole and not a specific subsector. There are also concerns that increasing expenditures from the Fund will require the Fund to have more revenue which could cause it to receive more than \$100M in the first five years and require voter approval per Proposition 117.

*ONE-TIME FUNDING*

15 *[Sen. Bridges]* How much funding is currently unencumbered from that appropriated to the Department through H.B. 21-1264 and H.B. 21-1149? Of this, how much of it is committed and what is the Department’s timeline to spending unencumbered funding? What is the funding used for?

Response:

State Bill	Funding Source	Project:Project Name	Allocation	Expended	Encumbered	Unencumbered/Obligated funds
HB21-1264	General (R)	Workforce Innovation Act	\$44,348,649	\$37,425,110.00	\$2,985,728.00	\$3,937,811.00
HB21-1264	Cash	Workforce Refinance	\$15,651,351	\$1,585,946.52	\$6,514,338.14	\$7,551,066.34
HB21-1149	Cash	Workforce Programs into Energy Career Pathways	\$5,000,000	\$4,504,007.71	\$3,280.00	\$492,712.29

HB 21-1264: Much of it is obligated to local workforce areas or to community based organizations. These funds are being spent in accordance with the requirements of H.B. 21-1264 and the federal restrictions. Most of the money will be spent by 6/30/2025. Funds that are supporting sector partnership efforts have been made available to grantees through 12/31/2025. A relatively small amount of funding will be spent by the final required date of 12/31/2026 as a minimum number of FTE will be funded to complete all grant closeout activities and an external evaluation on the use of the federal funds will be completed.

HB 21-1149: The numbers were updated to include the Interagency agreements on its final stages between CDLE and the Colorado Community Colleges in the amount of \$894K. Any action to recapture funds not yet spent would result in the colleges not being able to prepare learners to meet employer demand for clean energy careers in Colorado.

*WORKFORCE PROGRAMS*

16 *[Sen. Bridges]* How else is the Department serving the needs covered by the Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program? Please discuss where there may be redundancy in programs.

Response: The Department uses the funds from the Employment Support and Job Retention program to cover supportive services for individuals seeking work or requiring support to maintain employment. This funding is critical as it allows the department to provide these supportive services to individuals who may not be eligible to receive services under WIOA Title I due to federal eligibility requirements. Although WIOA does provide supportive services, the two programs are distinctly different because of the eligibility requirements of WIOA and therefore no redundancy exists between the two programs.

17 *[Sen. Amabile]* What is the role of the Qualified Intermediary Grant Program, when connecting apprenticeship programs with jobs seems like it would already be occurring? What is the role of the Scale-Up Grant Program? Do both of these programs have their own administrative costs and FTE, and if so, how much?

**Response:**

- Registered apprenticeships are considered the gold-standard of work-based learning. This mode of learning is comparable in skill-development and rigor to higher education.
- Unlike higher education, learning takes place both on the job and through related academic instruction.
- Businesses may see value in providing education and training directly related to their needs however usually businesses don't have direct experience providing education and training.
- Qualified intermediaries are the organizations that help to ensure the apprentice receives a high-quality education and training experience and the business receives well educated and trained talent for their needs.
- For example, Emily Griffith Technical College prepares apprentices to work for employers by connecting apprentices to job opportunities, employers to a skilled workforce, and supportive business services to ensure both parties are successful in their match.
- Intermediary organizations might include industry associations, workforce boards, community colleges, labor unions, non profits, government agencies, and specialty training providers.
- To expand apprenticeship as a viable, high-quality alternative to higher education for students interested in hands-on experiences, intermediaries are essential. Whereas institutions of higher education have administrative staff to recruit, retain, and launch students into their careers; apprenticeship intermediaries fill this role in a less institutional setting.
- Both of these Grant Programs were created through HB24-1439 and are in the process of being implemented.
- Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediary (QAI) Grant Program
  - In 2024, the State Apprenticeship Agency recognized two types of Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediaries to reach more career seekers and employers throughout the state:

- Industry Apprenticeship Intermediaries, like the Associated General Contractors Colorado, Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce, Front Range Community College, and Early Childhood Workforce Connect, focus on addressing employer needs through apprenticeship by providing industry focused program design/curriculum development, reducing administrative burden, and support with the implementation of apprenticeships.
  - Talent Apprenticeship Intermediaries like the Pikes Peak Workforce Center, The Master’s Apprentice, and Work Options focus on career seeker and/or apprentice needs, especially those facing employment barriers, by increasing awareness of apprenticeships, providing direct connections to opportunities and providing the resources necessary to retain in their program.
    - The QAI program is a competitive grant program to increase the capacity of QAIs so they can recruit more businesses to hire apprentices and/or provide supportive services to apprentices so they can participate.
- The Scale Up Grant program provides seed funding (small grants ~ \$50,000) and technical assistance to businesses to launch or expand a new Registered Apprenticeship Program. The seed funding can be used to design curriculum, pay instructors or mentors to support apprentices, purchase equipment, or other costs associated with designing or expanding a Registered Apprenticeship Program. The Scale Up Grants were piloted using a federal grant, which allowed the Office of the Future of Work to distribute \$1.7M to launch or expand 39 new apprenticeship programs with 51 employers across Colorado over the course of two cycles.
- The Office of the Future of Work has 2.5 FTE dedicated to administering these two grants over three years. This includes portions of two Grants Specialists to administer the grants, and a portion of a Programmatic Monitor and Fiscal Monitor to ensure the compliant spend down of funds. For FY 2024/25, \$1,333,334 was appropriated for the grant program, of which \$133,334 will be used for staff, technology, and other administrative costs and \$1.2M will be distributed in grant awards.

18 *[Sen. Bridges]* It looks like there is a lot of duplication in the Department’s workforce programs. What are all of the grant programs in the Department that do similar things? Among those grant programs, what are the outcomes the Department is measuring and using to determine grant funding? What are the job outcomes of all the Department’s workforce programs (not training outcomes, but actual employment outcomes)?

Response:

- State Funded Grants for Registered Apprenticeship Programs:

- HB23-1246: The BuildUp Grant Program funds training costs and supportive services for Registered Apprenticeships in the building and construction trades.
  - Criteria: Per the bill, the criteria to determine grant funding include demonstrating how the grantee will use the grant award to provide training to apprentices at no cost to the apprentices, how it will use the grant award to directly provide training, or remove barriers to accessing training, to persons from target populations; and commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its Registered Apprenticeship Program.
  - Funding: \$1.4M
  - Employment Outcomes: Two rounds of grants were awarded in May and December 2024 to nine Registered Apprenticeship Programs with 113 projected hires over the next 18 months.
- SB24-218: The goal of the Lineworker Apprenticeship Grants are to assist existing Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the Transmission or Distribution Lineworker Trades, absorb costs associated with career training, and help more people obtain and retain employment in the sector.
  - Criteria: Per the bill, the criteria to determine grant funding include demonstrating how the grantee will use the grant award to train apprentices as transmission or distribution lineworkers on construction projects. Grantees are required to provide a match.
  - Funding: \$600,000.00 and multiple grants will be funded with a possible maximum initial grant award of \$150,000.00.
  - Employment Outcomes: the application for this grant closes December 6th.
- HB24-1439:
  - Scale Up:
    - Criteria: Per the bill, grantees must be employers or sponsors who plan to launch a Registered Apprenticeship or expand an existing program.
    - Funding: \$2M for the Scale Up Grants **over three years** which provide up to \$50,000 and technical assistance to launch or expand a registered apprenticeship.
    - Employment Outcomes: the grants will be awarded in 2025 but we anticipate 100% employment for apprentices since they are hired at the time of entry to the program.
  - Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediary (QAI) Grant Program: The Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediary Grants aim to provide capacity building support for organizations that have been

officially recognized by the State Apprenticeship Agency as [Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediaries](#).

- Criteria: Per the bill, grantees must be a Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediary recognized by the State Apprenticeship Agency and will be selected based on the applicant's record of success in supporting job seekers, apprentices, employers, and sponsors; the regional diversity of the areas served by an applicant; the diversity of populations served by an applicant; and how the registered apprenticeship programs served by the applicant meet talent needs in high-priority, high-demand industries
- Funding: \$2M for the QAI Grants **over three years**.
- Employment Outcomes: the grants will be awarded in 2025; employment is not a direct outcome for this program but we anticipate 100% employment for apprentices in programs supported by qualified intermediaries.
- CWDC: Small Business Apprenticeship Grant
  - The CWDC has used ARPA funds to award Office of Future of Work - Workforce Programs:
    - The Office of the Future of Work houses Colorado's State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA).
    - The SAA is a regulatory agency recognized by the [USDOL Office of Apprenticeship](#) to oversee Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Colorado and ensure their conformity with federal regulations as part of the [national Registered Apprenticeship system](#).
    - Registered Apprenticeship Programs are a specific workforce development training model that:
      - 1) Start with employment at program entry: Apprentices are hired and paid by the employer for the duration of the Registered Apprenticeship Program **(100% employment)**
      - 2) Require Structured On-the-Job Learning: Programs provide structured on-the-job training in specific competencies identified by the employer to prepare for a successful career, including instruction from an experienced mentor. Most apprenticeships provide at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning per year.
      - 3) Require Supplemental Education: Apprentices are provided supplemental classroom education based on the employer's unique training needs to ensure quality and success. Most apprenticeships provide at least 144 hours of related instruction per year.



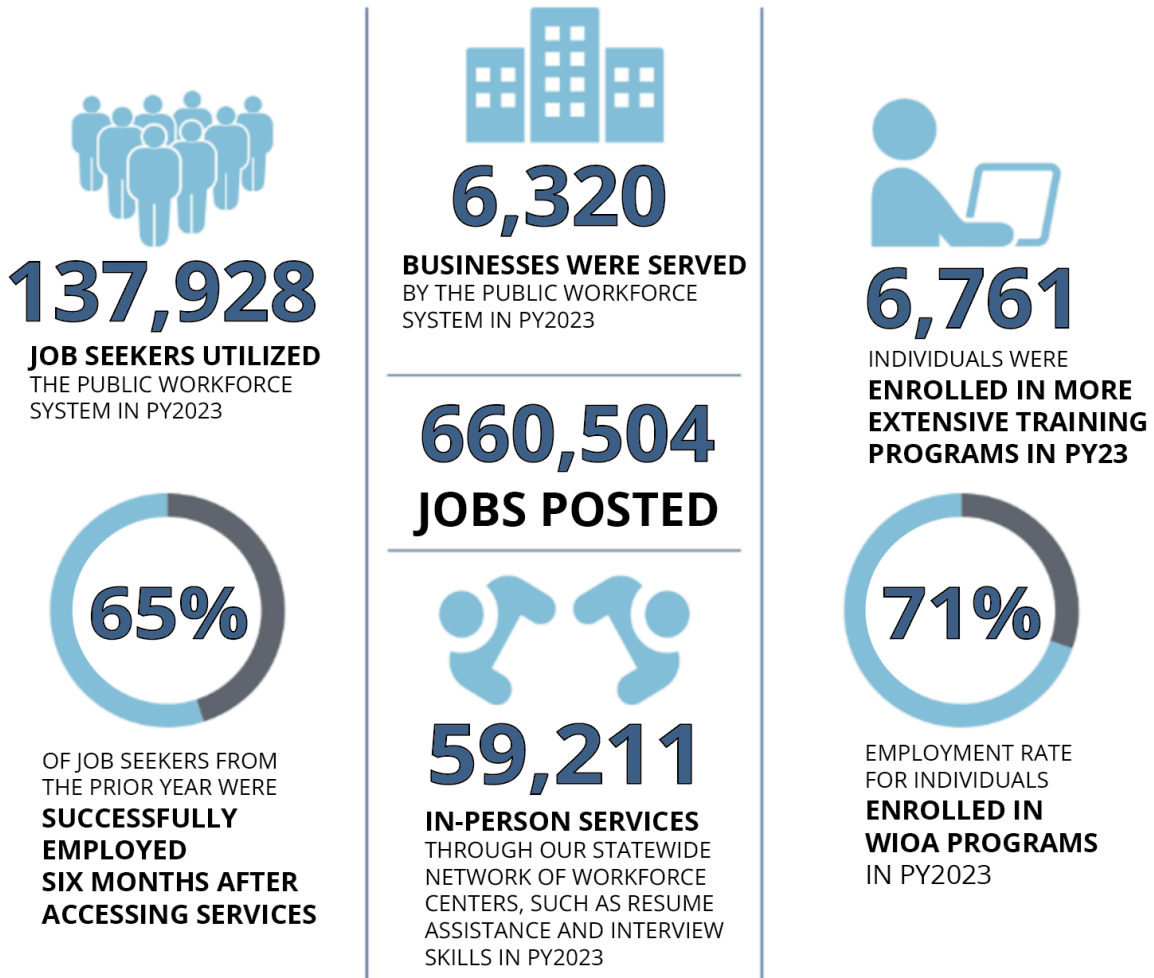
- 4) Result in Nationally Recognized Credentials: Apprentices earn a portable, nationally-recognized credential within their industry.
- Nationally there are over 600,000 apprentices, and in Colorado there are over 7,500 who are employed as apprentices by more than 100,000 small businesses for apprenticeship program development. The Governor prioritized the use of those funds for apprenticeships and the grant was designed to function similar to the Scale-Up grants but with a different target audience. The recipients are primarily small, minority-owned businesses who have difficulty developing new initiatives without grant support. This is a one-time project the CWDC is implementing and it will not be repeated without a new funding source being identified.

The majority of workforce programs within CDLE are managed by the Employment and Training Division. The largest of those programs is the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that authorizes an array of activities and sets performance standards for all states. Targets for each of the performance measures are set by the federal agency after some negotiation with state staff. Immediately below is a snapshot of data points about the public workforce system in Colorado.

- SB14-015:
  - Hospitality: The Colorado Restaurant Foundation's ProStart Program is about "Feeding Dreams" to transform Colorado's hospitality landscape with the Hospitality Grant Program. This dynamic initiative is designed to supercharge growth, elevate standards, and ignite innovation within the realm of hospitality programs, including the renowned ProStart® now in tandem with the Restaurant Youth Registered Apprenticeship (RYRA) that has braided efforts to bring focus to Registered Apprenticeship in Hospitality.
  - **Total Award Amount:** \$362,000
  - **Begin and End Dates:** Initiated in 2015 through a state grant, it is not bound by a predetermined end date, as its duration is contingent upon the availability of funds. However, the grant is currently under review for potential further funding.
  - **Goals and Mission:**
    - Expand ProStart® into additional Colorado high schools
    - Expand ProStart® student professional development programs
    - Expand the Lodging & Resort Management Level 1 & 2 Program and ProStart® Registered Culinary Arts Youth

- Apprenticeship Program into additional high schools.
  - Expand and market student professional development program support
  - Provide program enhancement grants to implementing ProStart® Programs
  - Identify and promote programs and events that elevate hospitality careers and the industry's stature
  - Develop a skilled workforce for the hospitality industry
  - Foster economic stability in local communities in conjunction with reducing unemployment rates among youth
  - Empower marginalized schools and students through meaningful career pathways
- **Who the program is for:** The program is for high school students.
- **What the program does:** The program operates under the Colorado Restaurant Foundation (CRF), which serves as the steward of Colorado ProStart®, the esteemed Pre-Apprenticeship program sanctioned by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. CRF has diligently established a robust infrastructure, fostering continuous access points and skillfully interweaving supportive services and other resources for students pursuing opportunities in Culinary Arts, Restaurant Management, and Kitchen Manager within both secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. The ProStart® program provides practical skills training and certifications from which participants directly benefit. Students transition from classroom learning to real-world employment through the work-based learning experiences offered.
- **How to access the program or service:** This program is available in approximately 48 Colorado secondary schools.
- HB19-1107:
  - Employee Support and Job Retention Program: The Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program is a State-funded program that provides up to \$400 in supportive services to eligible unemployed or underemployed Coloradans so they can pursue employment goals. The purpose of the program is to help eligible individuals who may not qualify for or have access to other employment resources or who are preparing for, seeking, or attempting to retain employment.

- **Total Award Amount:** Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 = \$250,000. Funds are annually appropriated through the 2024-25 Long Appropriations Bill.
- **Begin and End Dates:** July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025
- **Goals and Mission:** Provide \$400 in supportive services to job seekers through a statewide network of Service Providers (SPs) delivering access in all 64 Colorado counties.
- **Who the program is for:** Coloradans actively seeking better employment and job retention who are unemployed or underemployed, have a household income at or below the Federal Poverty line, are at least 16 years of age, and are eligible to work in the U.S.
- **What the program does:** Provides up to \$400 in supportive services for employment preparation, pursuit, and retention to eligible Colorado job seekers and recently hired individuals.
- **How to access the program or service:** Eligible Individuals make a request to the service providers they are working with. To be reimbursed by Goodwill, service providers make a referral to Goodwill, which must be approved. Service providers are then reimbursed.



In addition to the statistics on people served and training completed, the data on the federal performance measurements in the last program year is below.

### Statewide Performance Measures

Measures are for PY23, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Colorado met all statewide performance targets.

**Table 5: Title I PY23 - Adult**

*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

Adult Measures	Statewide	Standards
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	72.77%	75.0%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	73.31%	70.0%

<b>Adult Measures</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Median Earnings	\$9,717.00	\$7,273.00
Credential Rate	78.65%	78.8%
Measurable Skills Gains	68.54%	63.5%

**Table 6: Title I PY23 - Dislocated Worker**

*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

<b>Dislocated Worker Measures</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	72.48%	74.0%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	72.97%	76.0%
Median Earnings	\$11,709.00	\$10,500.00
Credential Rate	76.35%	70.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	72.86%	65.0%

**Table 7: Title I PY23 - Youth**

*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

<b>Youth Measures</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	72.43%	68.2%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	71.14%	67.0%
Median Earnings	\$5,609.00	\$4,073.00
Credential Rate	65.63%	62.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	59.66%	55.0%

**Table 8: Title II PY22 - Adult Education**

*PY23 data will be submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

<b>Adult Education Measures</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	26.71%	22%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	29.76%	25%
Median Earnings	\$6,933.63	\$5,800
Credential Rate	41.40%	17.7%
Measurable Skills Gains	51.55%	41%

**Table 9: Title III PY22 - Wagner-Peyser**

*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

<b>Wagner-Peyser Measures</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standards</b>
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Qtr 2 Employment Rate	63.39%	53.0%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	62.65%	54.0%
Median Earnings	\$8,700.00	\$6,200.00

**Table 10: Title IV PY23 - Vocational Rehabilitation**

PY23 data based on the final submitted RSA-911 and ETA-9169 reports

Common Performance Measures	Performance	Target
Qtr 2 Entered Employment Rate	55.9%	52.8%
Qtr 4 Entered Employment Rate	56.0%	50.8%
Median Earnings	\$5,037	\$4,633
Credential Rate	23.3%	26.5%
Measurable Skills Gains	38.7%	35.0%

Annually, the data points presented above and qualitative updates on the success of the public workforce system and partner programs are reported to the US Department of Labor through a consolidated report. [View the WIOA Annual Report](#) for program year 2023 (also attached as Appendix 3).

*The Division is entrusted with the goal of fostering connections, enhancing productivity and sustainability, and championing the diverse talents of our state’s workforce. Through these efforts, we contribute to Colorado’s continued growth and the resilience of its economy*

- 19 [Sen. Bridges] To better understand potential duplication, for all of the Department’s workforce development programs, please share the population they serve, if they are being served in other ways, and what is the cost per person served.

Response:

### **Employment and Training Division**

The Employment and Training Division is responsible for fostering a dynamic and robust labor market in Colorado by ensuring that job seekers are connected with the Public Workforce System for opportunities, supporting businesses with workforce needs, and administering programs that promote economic growth and stability.

To accomplish this, the Employment and Training Division team collaborates with a wide variety of workforce system partners, including local workforce areas, businesses, educational institutions, economic development, human services, and community-based organizations across the state to provide not only direct services, but also funding, guidance, technical support, and oversight to all of the critical services provided.

The Division is tasked with the goal of fostering connections, enhancing productivity and sustainability, and championing the diverse talents of our state's workforce. Through these efforts, we contribute to Colorado's continued growth and keep Coloradans working.

The Employment and Training Division secures and administers a broad range of funding that includes competitive discretionary grants in addition to formula funding at the state and federal levels to deliver a more robust ecosystem for Colorado. Employment and Training's PY23 outcomes contributed to the following ongoing key results:

- Build a pipeline of skilled talent and quality jobs for Colorado workers to prosper.
- Innovate and advance strategies to educate stakeholders of the talent and workforce development ecosystem in Colorado and nationally.
- Return on investment of public funds is realized and demonstrated throughout the public workforce system.
- Created a seamless customer experience, regardless of the channel of engagement.
- Increased our reach and brand awareness of the public workforce system through data-driven strategies, which led to higher program success rates and outcomes.
- Provided tailored, efficient, and effective services that met the workforce needs of businesses, resulting in increased job placements, improved employee skills and retention while fostering partnerships with chambers and economic development

The Employment and Training Division allocates the majority of its funding to the Public Workforce System, where local control ensures that community-specific needs are met. Consequently, the cost per participant for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs and discretionary grants varies across local areas. Similarly, cost variations for Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Enterprise Fund (WEF) programs reflect differences in community needs and other factors, including customer support services, training requirements, youth incentive policies, and staffing expenses. These localized approaches ensure resources are tailored effectively to address the unique demands of each workforce area.

In addition to ensuring that the workforce system has the funding, policy, and technical resources it needs to ensure the success of all Coloradans, Employment and Training administers a number of programs at the state level. Follow the links below to see a high-level performance report for each program.

- [Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth \(WIOA Title I\)](#)
- [Colorado Pathway Home](#)
- [CW STEP](#)
- [Disability Program Navigator](#)
- [Displaced Homemaker Grant](#)
- [Employment Support and Job Retention Program](#)
- [Federal Bonding](#)
- [Foreign Labor Certification](#)
- [Governor's Summer Job Hunt](#)

- [Hospitality Grant Program](#)
- [Jobs for Veterans State Grant](#)
- [Monitor Advocate and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers](#)
- [Pathful Program](#)
- [Rapid Response Layoff Assistance and Aversion Services](#)
- [Trade Adjustment Assistance](#)
- [Veterans Service to Career Program](#)
- [Work-Based Learning Incentive \(WBLI\)](#)
- [Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#)
- [Wagner-Peyser Employment Services](#)

**Office of Future of Work - Workforce Programs:**

- Typically there are no participant costs to participate in Registered Apprenticeships; apprentice wages and training costs are covered by the employer. However, employers and their training provider partners may require funding to support the curriculum development, training supplies, instructor wages, equipment, and supportive services to ensure apprentices are able to participate in the program. Therefore, grant funding is distributed to Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors, employers, and training partners and not directly to participants. Even where grants are awarded, the majority of each program is still funded by the employer.
- While all Registered Apprenticeship Programs are required to report program and apprentice information to the State Apprenticeship Agency, not all receive grant funds.
- Apprentice demographic data and program distribution can be found on [Apprenticeship Colorado's Data Dashboard](#).

*CASH FUND SPENDING INCREASES*

20 *[Sen. Bridges]* Can the Workforce Development Fund cover some of the current General Fund appropriations to existing workforce development programs and line items? Examples include General Fund appropriations to the Office of Future Work, the State Apprenticeship Agency, the Colorado Workforce Development Council, or other General Fund appropriations within the Division of Employment and Training. If so, how much General Fund could be refinanced by the Workforce Development Fund?

This would be an expansion of the enterprise that would need to be reviewed in more detail. The fund receives fees from employers paying the support surcharge. Because employers across the state pay the support surcharge the fee should be used to benefit the labor market as a whole and not a specific subsector. There are also concerns that increasing expenditures from the Fund will require the Fund to have more revenue which could cause it to receive more than \$100M in the first five years and require voter approval per Proposition 117.



- 21 *[Rep. Sirota]* Please share an estimate of how much new programs added to Labor Standards since 2019 could be funded through the Employment Support Fund?

Employment Support Fund (ESF) expenditures are the same as General Fund expenditures for budget balancing purposes. Revenue that would cause the ESF to exceed its balance cap is diverted to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UITF) and is then exempt revenue. More ESF expenditures means the ESF can collect more non-exempt revenue before hitting its cap.

- 22 *[Rep. Sirota/Sen. Kirkmeyer]* In general, how much more spending can the Employment Support Fund support, and in what program areas?

Employment Support Fund (ESF) expenditures are the same as General Fund expenditures for budget balancing purposes. Revenue that would cause the ESF to exceed its balance cap is diverted to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UITF) and is then exempt revenue. More ESF expenditures means the ESF can collect more non-exempt revenue before hitting its cap.

Furthermore, the ESF's revenue comes from the employer support surcharge. All employers pay this surcharge and so it should fund programs that benefit the whole state so all employers benefit from the fee. It should not be used for targeted programs for a specific sector.

#### *CASH FUND TRANSFERS AND DECREASES*

- 23 *[Sen. Bridges]* For the Uninsured Employer Fund, please elaborate on why the Department thinks a transfer could reduce the costs of provided benefits? In what scenario does the Department see costs and demand rising so high to warrant this?

**Response:** The Uninsured Employers Board sets the amount of benefits paid to injured workers who were employed by uninsured employers every June. The benefits are paid on a tiered basis, with medical benefits being the highest priority; additional tiers include wage loss benefits and payment for permanent injuries. When determining the benefit level, the Board looks at current and likely costs for admitted claims, the estimated number of new claims in the upcoming year, and the likely costs associated with those new claims.

The Division currently has 36 injured workers accepted into the fund, but we also monitor claims which have been filed but are not yet eligible to apply. Since the fund opened on January 1, 2020, 428 uninsured claims have been filed with the Division. Currently there are 92 open claims which have been filed with the Division but have not proceeded to hearing, which is an eligibility requirement. Claims can be expensive. One worker injured in a trucking accident was hospitalized for months with a spinal cord injury and to date, just the medical costs are \$444,868. When he was injured, this worker was anticipated to be a paraplegic; however, due to the fund's medical intervention, he has regained the use of his legs. The average cost per claim is \$66,327, but in addition to the trucking claim, nine claims currently exceed \$100,000 and another exceeds \$200,000. We currently have a potential claim that

involves a traumatic brain injury where the claimant remains comatose, and another where a young worker lost his life and his wife and two young children would be entitled to funeral and dependent benefits. Both of these claims have the potential to cost \$1 million or more. Currently the fund is paying for all workers' compensation benefits, but these large claim costs could be so significant that any decrease in our overall fund could mean a mandatory reduction in benefits to injured workers.

The only mechanism for collecting revenue in the fund is through regulatory fines issued by the Division and fees associated with fatalities where no dependents are present. While the fund actively seeks to recoup benefit payments from the responsible uninsured employers, such efforts are rarely successful as those employers have often disappeared. Revenue in this fund is highly variable with \$1.4M collected in FY24. There is not a mechanism to greatly increase this revenue source. If the fund is decreased, the Board would need to reassess whether there is enough money to continue providing all benefits levels, as is currently allowed, or if benefits would need to be decreased to ensure that at least medical benefits can be paid. This would mean that injured workers would no longer receive lost wages which are used to purchase food and housing.

24 *[Sen. Bridges]* What is the Workers' Compensation Immediate Payment Fund? Please describe how that fund is used, it's original intent, how it collects revenue, and why its expenditures have been so low since FY 2022-23?

**Response:** The Immediate Payment Fund bridges the gap between a self-insured employer declaring bankruptcy and the Division collecting any collateral from the bankrupt self-insured employer to pay for workers' compensation claims. The Division currently has 70 employers who are actively licensed to self-insure their workers' compensation, as well as manages accounts for an additional 27 employers who were self-insured in the past and still have outstanding claims from that period. To be a self-insured employer, a company must have at least 300 employees in Colorado or \$100 million in assets. Because workers' compensation benefits can be paid for an injured workers' lifetime, part of the self-insurance license includes the requirement that employers retain security to cover the cost of any claims that might exist after a bankruptcy. When a self-insured employer declares bankruptcy and ceases to pay for its workers' compensation claims, the Division becomes responsible to manage and pay for all medical and indemnity costs associated with the bankrupt employer's claims. As these are large employers, there can be dozens if not hundreds of open claims. However, it can take months for the Division to obtain the required security to pay for those expenditures as surety companies require significant proofs of claim and may even litigate having to pay the surety bond. Workers' compensation medical benefits are legally required to be paid within thirty days of the bill, and indemnity benefits must be paid every two weeks. The Immediate Payment Fund allows the Division to meet its statutory payment obligations while the actual funding is obtained and is eventually replenished by the bankrupt employer's security.

The Immediate Payment Fund was created in 1990 and enacted in 1992. It was initially funded by an assessment against all self-insured employers who were actively licensed at that time. When a bankruptcy occurs, whatever is spent from the Immediate Payment Fund is replenished out of the money obtained from that employer's surety bond.

25 *[Sen. Bridges/Sen. Kirkmeyer]* Please justify why the Workers' Compensation Immediate Payment Fund shouldn't be eliminated.

Response: The Immediate Payment Fund is the only mechanism that allows the Division to timely pay for workers' compensation claims after a self-insured employer goes bankrupt. These payments go towards an injured worker's medical expenses and wage replacement. Failure to provide wage replacement could mean that families are not able to purchase food or pay for rent until the Division is able to recover the bankrupt employer's security. Failure to pay medical bills can result in injured workers being unable to access needed medical treatments and medications. Historically, obtaining surety payments has taken an average of six months, although in a case where the surety company chooses to litigate, such litigation can take over a year. This fund was last utilized for its intended purpose in FY24.

26 *[Sen. Amabile]* Can the revenue gained in the Workers' Compensation Immediate Payment Fund be sent to another cash fund?

Response: The fund's only current revenue is generated through interest earned on the fund. After its initial inception, this fund has been replenished when necessary. According to 8-44-206(3)(b), all money collected for this fund shall be used solely for the administration and benefit of injured employees of bankrupt self-insured employers. Without a statute change, we do not believe that this revenue can be transferred to another cash fund.

#### LABOR STANDARDS

27 *[Sen. Bridges]* Share an estimate of General Fund relief and FTE impact of different options to combine programs added to the Labor Standards unit since 2019.

Response:

(1) As it gained new programs in recent years, Labor Standards (LS) has worked to efficiently consolidate programs with overlapping subject matter or processes. Examples:

(a) Starting in 2020, four laws significantly expanded (or created new) anti-retaliation and whistleblower rights (the 2020 paid sick and COVID whistleblower laws, and the 2023 wage theft law and health/safety whistleblower law). Those laws allow claims to be filed with LS, which LS investigates and, if it finds a violation, issues binding rulings that order relief (requiring changes to unlawful policies, reinstatement and back pay for those unlawfully terminated, attorney fees for those represented, etc.). Rather than each law generating partially duplicative complaint-processing, investigative, and managerial staff, LS has one Retaliation Unit covering retaliation claims under all these laws, with a unified manager.

(b) Starting in 2020, four laws significantly expanded (or created new) labor relations (mainly union-management) rights (Colorado WINS in 2020, county collective bargaining in 2022, and public employee speech and organizing rights in 2023). Those laws created a range of work for LS, including:

running elections to unionize; investigating and issuing binding rulings on complaints of unfair labor practices; and resolving various employee classification disputes. Rather than each law generating partially duplicative election, complaint-processing, investigative, and managerial staff, LS has one Labor Relations Unit covering all such matters, with a unified manager.

(c) Starting in 2022, three laws created significant new data-reporting duties for specific industries (health staffing agencies in 2022, and transportation and delivery network companies in 2024), and related obligations for LS to collect, track, and enforce the reporting of such data. Rather than each law generating partially duplicative administrative, investigative, technical, and managerial staff, LS has one Data Reports Unit covering all such matters, with a unified manager.

(d) The above programs also generate work tasks outside their primary units that are efficiently consolidated with LS-wide units, each partially funded by the funding from each new law. Examples:

(i) rulemaking, and policy research on novel or complex issues, is performed by an LS-wide Policy Unit;

(ii) technical work, such as adjusting and managing our Salesforce and other data systems, is performed by an LS-wide Business Analyst unit;

(iii) outreach on the new requirements of these laws (LS gives roughly 100 presentations annually), and responses to individual inquiries (LSA receives thousands of inquiries annually) is performed by LS-wide Outreach and Call Center Units;

(iv) larger investigations, when an individual complaint or lead shows the need (e.g., when a violation may span an entire workforce or sector) are performed by an LS-wide Strategic Enforcement Unit;

(v) complaint-processing, routing inquiries, mailings, and related paperwork are performed by an LS-wide Support Unit; and

(f) appeals of orders and rulings by any LS unit are adjudicated by an LS-wide Appeals Unit with administrative law judges as well as legal assistant and support staffing.

(2) These efforts have allowed resources to be maximally devoted to serving victims of labor violations with our investigations and rulings, as well as serving employers with strong outreach and compliance assistance. The extensive existing consolidation also means that (a) most staff perform the core LS work of investigating and remedying labor violations, and (b) LS is very efficient in its operating expenses, which account for only 6% of the LS budget, with the other 94% funding staff wages and benefits. Accordingly, any cuts would require cutting investigative staff, increasing wait times for victims of wage theft, retaliation, union-management violations, etc.

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

### *UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM*

28 [Sen. Amabile/Sen. Bridges] Is the Division still working on improving the process for people to receive unemployment insurance claims, particularly for those who do not have a smooth experience in applying (such as getting stuck in a fraud alert, are marked as missing information, etc.)? Please share the Division’s annual update on unemployment insurance, particularly efforts to improve the process for claimants and beneficiaries – how have improvements been going and what are the Division’s future plans?

Response:

In 2024 alone UI implemented 10 different process upgrades to improve claimant access and customer experience

- Received nearly 1000 responses to the claimant experience survey - feedback from the survey and focus groups informed other process improvements on this list, including the claim status tracker and text message reminders to claimants
- Conducted three claimant focus groups, with 20 participants each - feedback from the survey and focus groups informed other process improvements on this list, including the claim status tracker and text message reminders to claimants
- Claim status tracker - from 2023 to 2024, 5% more claimants report that they know how to find issues on their claims
- Reviewed and revised 500 pieces of correspondence for plain language
- Reviewed and revised 250 MyUI+ screens for plain language in the application
- Created “how-to” video series in English and Spanish - placed in the UI claimant lobby, these videos educate claimants re: common UI roadblocks (id verification, workforce registration, weekly certifications)
- Created revised claimant handbook in plain language - website statistics show an increase in traffic to the new handbook
- Updated Virtual Assistant - updates to this virtual assistant ensure that claimants are getting answers for emerging issues without having to speak to a live customer service agent.
- Implemented ID.me identification verification - too early to report meaningful impact, but this immediately cleared many PI holds in the system and transferred the work of verifying claimant identity to our single sign-on vendor.
- Redesign MyUI+login - made the login page more clear for claimants and directed them to resources without having to search our website for answers to common claim questions.
- There are also several new process improvements in the process of implementation
  - Claimant survey and focus groups - nearly 400 claimants responded, 200 are interested in participating in focus groups. Their comments will inform future process improvements.
  - Personalized claim information is available through virtual agent- the vast majority of calls to our call center are “what is the status of my claim?” - this update will allow claimants to check their status easily through the virtual agent

- Spanish version of the application launching in early 2025 - increase access to services to our spanish speaking claimants, which typically number around 20% of the claimant population
- Direct claim escalation function in MyUI+ for claims exceeding expected adjudication time - claimants with a pending claim that has not been decided may directly ask for an escalation within MyUI+ instead of having to call the call center.
- Expanded VA/IVR call center and self-service solution - we expect this solution to expedite all of our customer service solutions by integrating them into one product
- Revised Claimant Handbook in Spanish - increase access to services to our spanish speaking claimants, which typically number around 20% of the claimant population
- From July through October 80% of claims were processed in 1 to 4 weeks. Seventeen percent of claims were processed in 5 to 7 weeks and 3% of claims took longer than 7 weeks.
- In September of this year, Colorado was in line with the national average for claims processing timeliness with the national rate of claims being paid within 21 days being 79% and Colorado's 21-day first payment timelines also being 79%.
- The backlog for claims processing as of 11/1/2024 is 301. Claims processing federal first payment timeliness data for CY2024 (demonstrated improvements):

Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24
40.90%	33.64%	26.22%	31.11%	39.72%	49.70%	50.09%	55.33%	66.78%	68.87%	<b>75.44%</b>

29 *[Sen. Bridges]* How was funding provided through the FY 2023-24 Long Bill towards Unemployment Insurance fraud prevention work used and what were the outcomes from that funding?

Response: Fraud prevention efforts were primarily funded by a series of ARPA grants which have either expired or are due to expire at the end of 2025. The last grant received has only 17% left and is fully obligated.

- Grant investments were used for technology improvements and the staff time required to implement new tools and mitigate remaining pandemic backlogs.
- Technology procurements and tools deployed:
  - March 2023 - LexisNexis Identity Verification Integration with MyUI+
  - April 2023 - Google Fraud Analytics Engine
  - June 2023 Google Fraud Analytics Emerging Trends Dashboard
  - December 2023 - USPS ID Verification integration with MyUI+
  - January 2024 Bank Account Verification integration with MyUI+
  - October 2024 - ID.me Single Sign-On and ID Proofing integration with MyUI+
- Deployment of new tools and process improvements including a dedicated team to combat UI Benefits Fraud have had a major impact on Colorado's ability to stop benefits from being stolen and have saved millions from being taken from the UI Trust Fund.
- FY2023-2024 Fraud Prevented in amount of claims: \$419.09 Million total

- Ongoing annual costs to maintain and improve ID verification and fraud tools: Approx \$2.5 Million
- Since March of 2023 UI has implemented several new fraud prevention technologies including
  - LexisNexis Integrated ID verification,
  - Google Fraud Analytics engine
  - Google Fraud Analytics emerging trends dashboard
  - USPS ID verification
  - Bank account verification services
  - And ID.me
- Fraud triggers are actively updated based on emerging trends, which allows for targeted fraud protection without holding up the claims process for 97.4% of all claims

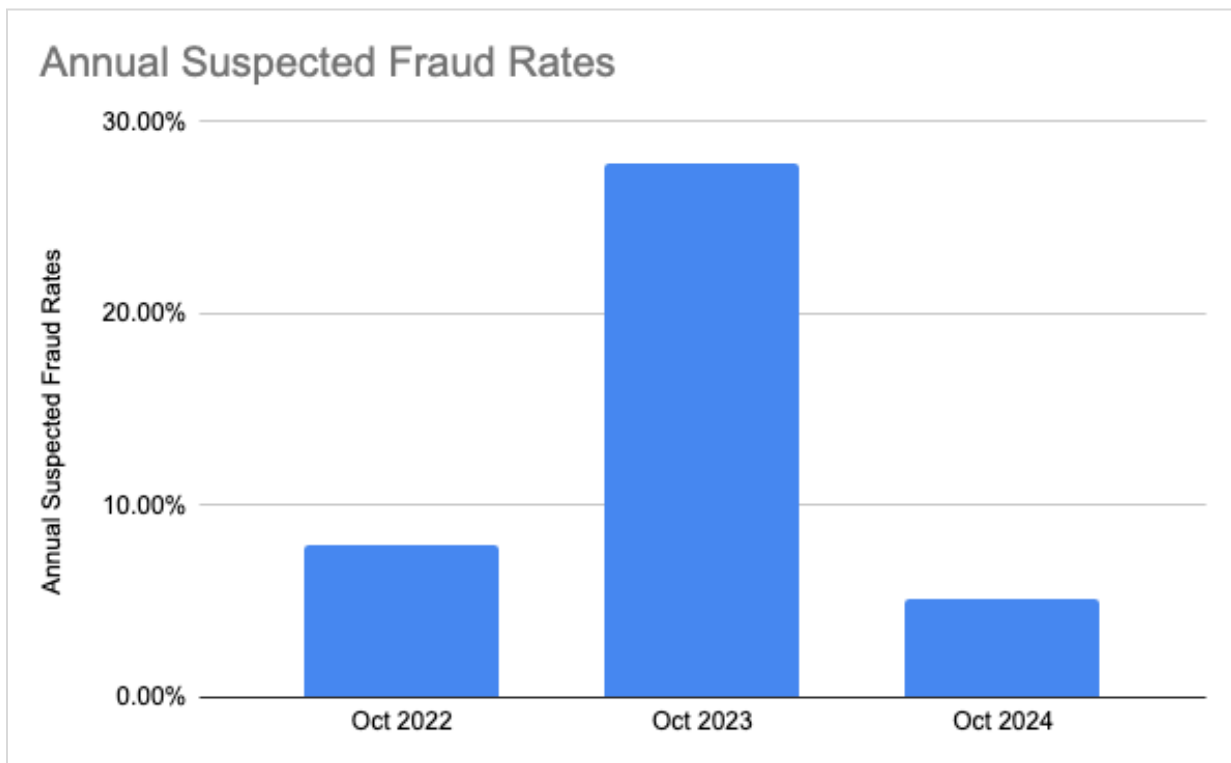
Overall Colorado is one of the best-performing states in terms of preventing fraud. Colorado has the 9th lowest rate of fraud in the nation.

Below are the annual average fraud rates and total dollars paid to fraudsters. The fraud rate represents the total percentage of all overpayments in the year that were caused by fraudulent activity for Colorado UI. The total dollars paid is the amount of money that was paid to fraudsters based on that fraudulent activity.

- 2019
  - Fraud overpayment rate 1.054%
  - Total dollars paid in fraud: 3,915,456
- 2020
  - # of confirmed fraud cases via ID Theft: 5538
  - Fraud overpayment rate 2.265%
  - Total dollars paid in fraud: 32,368,046 not including ID theft fraud
  - Total dollars paid in fraud \$56,083,845.00 via ID Theft Fraud
  - Total dollars of paid fraud prevented: : \$51,996,941.50
- 2021
  - # of confirmed fraud cases via ID Theft 7825
  - Fraud overpayment rate 9.277%
  - Total dollars paid in fraud: 94,036,534 not including ID theft fraud
  - Total dollars paid in fraud \$5,207,738 via ID Theft Fraud
  - Total dollars of paid fraud prevented: \$3,416,400
- 2022
  - 9599 claims suspected fraudulent about 8% of total claims
  - # of confirmed fraud cases via ID Theft 5445
  - Fraud overpayment rate 2.030%
  - Total dollars paid in fraud: \$4,529,904 not including ID theft fraud
  - Total dollars paid in fraud \$6,105,719.00 via ID Theft Fraud
  - Total dollars of paid fraud prevented: \$49,084,508.00

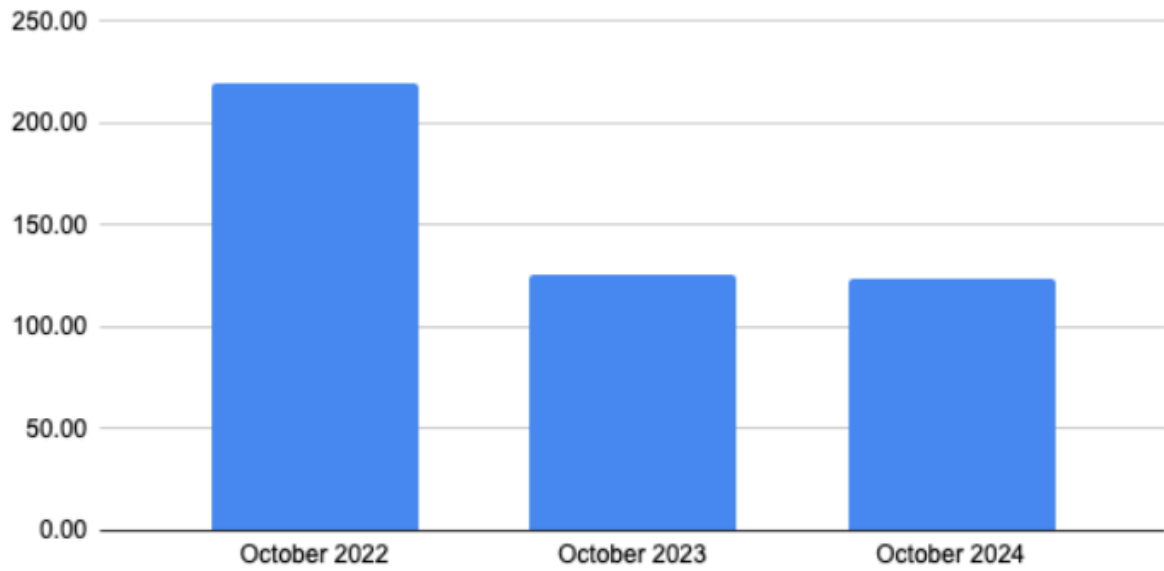
- 2023
  - 56,090 claims suspected of fraud about 31% of total claims
  - # of confirmed fraud cases via ID Theft 2832
  - Fraud overpayment rate 0.657%
  - Total dollars paid in fraud: \$2,976,069 not including ID theft fraud
  - Total dollars paid in fraud \$3,905,928 via ID Theft Fraud
  - Total dollars of paid fraud prevented: \$24,507,732
- 2024 as of 8/7/2024
  - 6085 claims suspected of fraud or 6.5% of claims filed so far
  - # of confirmed fraud cases via ID Theft 18,393
  - Total dollars paid in confirmed fraud: \$377,550 via ID Theft Fraud
  - Total dollars prevented \$273,864,964

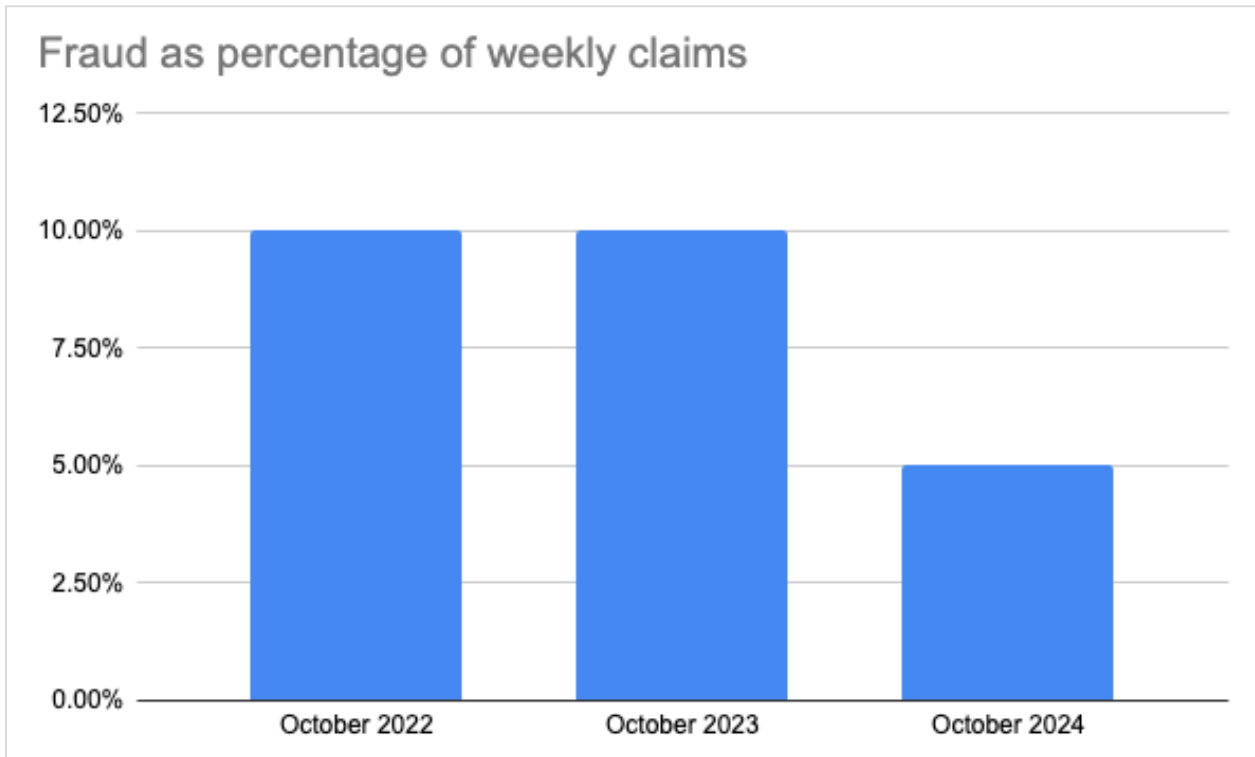
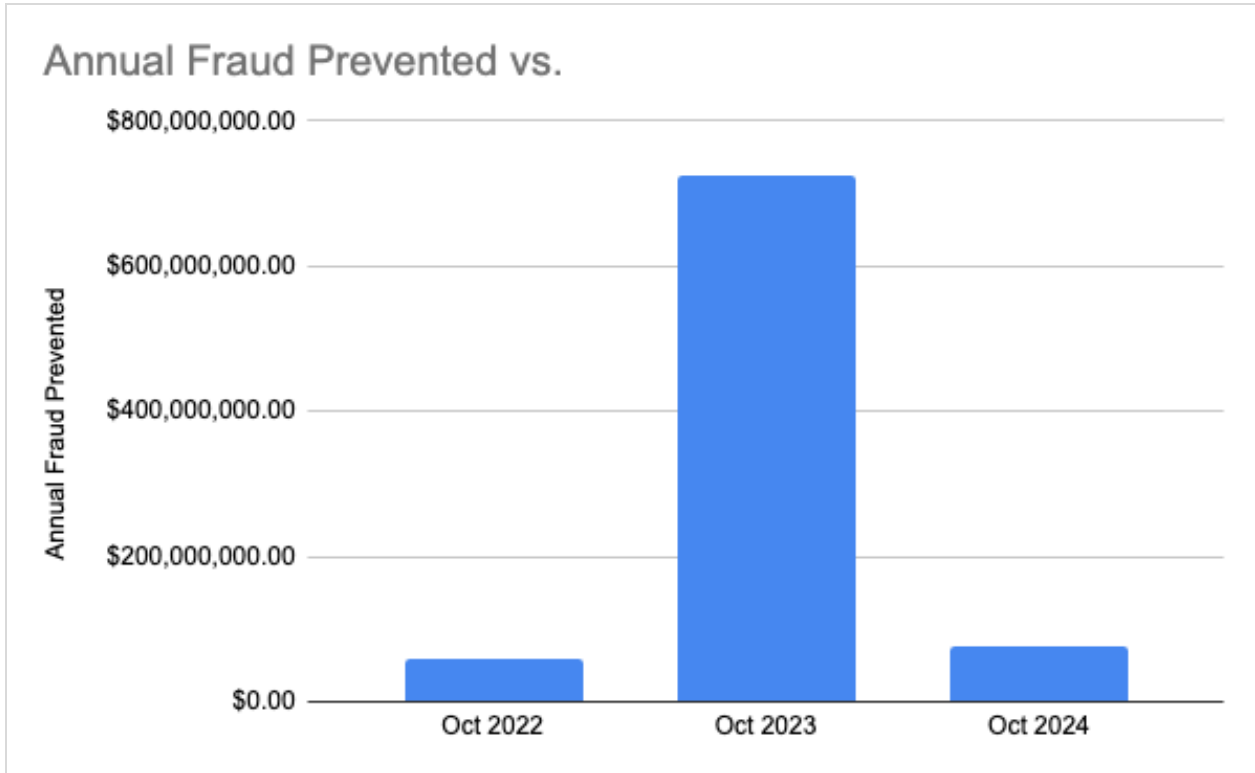
Additionally below are some general snapshots of how fraud is impacting UI from 2022 till now.





## Average Fraud Claims per Week





30 [Rep. Taggart] What has been the Department’s process to update stakeholders on its employment and wage data issues? Has it updated universities and other stakeholders

within the state that use this data for their economic forecasting? On May 20, 2024 we notified subscribers of LMI updates that there would be a two-week delay to the release of 4th quarter 2023 data and that we would also republish 3rd quarter 2023 data. This delay was needed for additional data cleanup.

- In addition to this recent notification, there have had informal discussions with stakeholders starting back in late August 2024 when BLS released their initial 2024 preliminary benchmark revisions to current establishment survey data for states.
- We notified our stakeholders subscribed to LMI updates on November 20, 2024 regarding the employment and wage data issues pertaining to the suspension of 2nd quarter 2024 data. On November 22, 2024 we notified our QCEW data microdata subscribers of the employment and wage data issues. Lastly, we notified legislative council staff on November 25 regarding questions they had on our communication about this matter.
- CDLE UI and LMI have been actively engaged with the US Dept of Labor and BLS on action steps being taken to address data integrity including weekly meetings with federal partners, vendors, staff and department leadership.
- The Department has been open and transparent about the data quality issues as we are continuing to work on a path forward.

#### *R1 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUNDING EXPANSION AND REALIGNMENT*

31 *[Sen. Amabile]* Can we amend statute so another existing enterprise fund can cover UI administrative costs, instead of creating a new fund?

Response: The Tech Fund is the only fund under the UI enterprise where statute could be updated to expand it to a more general Tech and UI Admin Fund. The other funds under the enterprise are specifically for benefits or other purposes that are not administration of the UI. The request was for a new UI Admin Fund as this would allow the Division to have distinct cash funds for different types of administration needs. The creation of a new UI Administration Fund under the UI enterprise is needed to ensure all UI administration is under the enterprise consistent with the intent of HB 09-1363 and HB 24-1409.

32 *[Rep. Bird]* Why does the UI Administration Fund need to receive 22.0 percent of the employer support surcharge? This rate seems excessive.

The UI Administration Fund is to help the UI Division manage the UI Program and Benefits. While the program has the Tech Fund for technology expenses this fund would cover other expenses such as staff. UI administration relies heavily on staff as benefit decisions must be made by merit staff.

This fund would cover the centrally appropriated costs for UI staff which is about \$8.9M. It would also help pay for staff salaries and other expenditures to administer the UI program at

about \$10M. This would total \$18.9M in expenditures for the fund. The support surcharge that this fund receives revenue from is forecasted to be around \$100M in revenue. The fund receiving 22% of the support surcharge would be about \$22M in revenue which would be enough for the fund to cover expenses and start to build a reserve balance.

This is a portion of the total funding needed for the UI Division to provide UI Benefits. The UI Division’s expenditures total around \$74M. The Federal Fund Base Grant that UI receives is returning to pre-pandemic levels at \$40M. The state support from this fund and the Tech Fund are important to ensure that UI can continue to invest in programs and initiatives, including fraud prevention.

	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27
Base Grant	\$41,149,394	\$39,918,359	\$39,918,359
Expenditures	\$71,648,413	\$73,301,042	\$74,994,798
<b>Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>-\$30,499,019</b>	<b>-\$33,382,683</b>	<b>-\$35,076,439</b>
Base Grant	\$41,149,394	\$39,918,359	\$39,918,359
UI Admin Fund Increase	\$18,928,791	\$18,928,791	\$18,928,791
Tech Fund Increase	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
Expenditures	\$71,648,413	\$73,301,042	\$74,994,798
<b>Budget Surplus*</b>	<b>\$8,429,772</b>	<b>\$5,546,108</b>	<b>\$3,852,352</b>

The UI Admin Fund is for the administration of UI benefits, not the administration of the support surcharge or various funds.

33 [Rep. Bird] Share a breakdown of the administrative costs that the UI Administration Fund will cover.

Response: \$8.9M of the UI Admin Fund will be used for centrally appropriated costs of UI Staff. The other \$10M will be used for UI staff salaries. .

34 [Sen. Bridges] Regarding the request to use cash fund balances when federal funding is delayed, is the Department seeking continuous spending authority on these cash funds, or if not, what is the Department’s proposed statutory verbiage?

The Department is open to language and mechanics that allow the Department to utilize cash funds while waiting for federal funds to be awarded whether through continuous appropriation or through language that allows cash fund reserves to be utilized in-between federal awards.

- 35 *[Rep. Taggart]* What would be the safeguards or sign-off process in having the Department access its cash fund reserve balances to cover delayed federal payments, considering that balances and the amount of delayed federal payments are large?

The Department is open to the language including a safeguard or sign off from another office for this process as long as it provides the Department with a path to utilizing the funds when the Legislature is not in session.

- 36 *[Sen. Bridges]* It seems like the calculations on fund appropriations and support surcharge allocations were made assuming the employer support surcharge collects at least \$100 million in revenue per year. Is it possible for the support surcharge to collect less than \$100 million in revenue, and what would be the consequences to programs funded under this request if this occurred?

If it goes below \$100M for several years in a row it would require the funds to use their cash fund reserves to cover costs. This would deplete the reserves faster and has the possibility to lead to cash flow issues. This is unlikely to happen though as all employers pay the support surcharge and it is adjusted by average weekly wage earnings. A large recession would likely be needed to see a significant shift in this revenue. . .

- 37 *[Sen. Bridges]* What are the long-term solvency considerations for the Workforce Development Fund considering its \$6.8 million balance cap is below the fund's annual expenditure of more than \$20 million?

The \$6.8M balance cap is a 33% reserve for \$20.6M in expenditures. Most cash funds in the state only have a 16.5% reserve. The \$6.8M balance cap is also indexed each year. Under the request, it would be indexed to average weekly wage earnings and increase each year to correspond with growth in revenue. These expenditures are also stable and predictable expenditures that are for centrally appropriated staff costs and state support to the local workforce centers.

The Workforce Development Fund is currently the only state source of funding for local workforce centers. The Division mission is to ensure the state contribution to local workforce centers supports local workforce boards to invest in strategies that meet the workforce needs of their areas.

- 38 *[Sen. Bridges]* How meaningful are excess balance cap transfers from the TABOR-exempt Tech Fund, Workforce Development Fund, and UI Administration Fund towards UITF solvency, especially compared to what the UITF currently gains from employer premium and solvency surcharge revenue?

There is revenue from the various cash funds that is diverted to the UITF but we do not want to overcommit this revenue as it is not a stable source. The Diversion of this revenue is dependent on labor market conditions. If there was a recession, the cash funds would use more of its revenue and less would be diverted to the UITF. This would correspond with a spike in UI claims.

The UITF should rely more on employer premiums for its revenue. The large majority of revenue into the fund is from UI employer premiums with revenue diverted from these other funds being a small amount.

**EDO OFFICES UPDATE**

39 [Sen. Kirkmeyer] Please share an update on funding and FTE associated with the Office of New Americans, Office of Future Work, Office of Just Transitions, and the Colorado Disability Opportunity Office.

(B) Office of New Americans	Fund	FY22 Budget	FY22 FTE	FY23 Budget	FY23 FTE	FY24 Budget	FY24 FTE	FY25 Budget	FY25 FTE
HOUSE BILL 21-1150 (CREATE THE COLORADO OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS) Program Cost	GF			\$195,783	1.5	\$ 201,213	1.5	\$ 328,577	3.0
HOUSE BILL 21-1194 (IMMIGRATION LEGAL DEFENSE FUND)	C	\$100,000	0.1	\$348,653	0.1	\$ 349,071	0.1	\$ 700,000	0.1
Senate Bill 22-140 Virtual Career-aligned English as a Second Language Program, Global Talent Task Force.	GF			\$1,100,000	1.9			\$ -	0.0
HB 23-1283 Transfer refugee services to ONA	GF					\$ 36,523	0.4	\$ 36,523	0.4
HB24-1280 Welcome, Reception, & Integration Grant Program	C							\$ 2,500,000	0.8
Colorado Refugee Services Program	GF							\$ 101,232	1.5

(C) Office of Future of Work	Fund	FY20 Budget	FY20 FTE	FY21 Budget	FY21 FTE	FY22 Budget	FY22 FTE	FY23 Budget	FY23 FTE	FY24 Budget	FY24 FTE	FY25 Budget	FY25 FTE
Executive Order B 2019-009	N/A	0	0.0									\$ -	
House Bill 21-1007 (State Apprenticeship Agency) Program Cost	GF					\$ 321,579	3.1	\$ 752,085	8.0	\$ 785,498	8.0	\$ 838,436	8.0
SB19-171 Apprenticeship Resource Directory Fiscal Note	GF	\$25,507	0.4	\$24,869	0.5	\$ 24,869	0.5	\$ 27,704	0.5	\$ 33,511	0.5	\$ 52,741	0.5
SB21-246 Electric Utility Promote Fiscal Note	GF					\$ 73,351	0.9	\$ 73,351	1.0	\$ 95,213	1.0	\$ 95,213	1.0
Senate Bill 22-140 (Expansion of Experiential Learning Opportunities) Statewide Digital Navigator Program	GF							\$ 2,000,000	0.9	\$ 1,883,687	1.0	\$ 1,551,053	1.0
House Bill 23-1074 (Study Workforce Transitions to Other	GF							\$ 317,318	0.3		0.3	\$ 317,318	0.3

<b>(C) Office of Future of Work</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>FY20 Budget</b>	<b>FY20 FTE</b>	<b>FY21 Budget</b>	<b>FY21 FTE</b>	<b>FY22 Budget</b>	<b>FY22 FTE</b>	<b>FY23 Budget</b>	<b>FY23 FTE</b>	<b>FY24 Budget</b>	<b>FY24 FTE</b>	<b>FY25 Budget</b>	<b>FY25 FTE</b>
Industries)													
House Bill 23-1212 (Promotion of Apprenticeships)	GF							\$ 342,638	2.6		2.6	\$ 224,782	2.6
House Bill 23-1246 (Support in-demand Career Workforce)	GF							\$ 1,400,000	1.2		1.2	\$ 1,296,049	1.2
HB24-1439 Financial Incentives Expand Apprenticeship Programs	C											\$ 1,333,333	2.5
HB24-1439 Financial Incentives Expand Apprenticeship Programs	GF											\$ 103,515	0.8
SB24-104 Career & Technical Education & Apprenticeships	GF											\$ 87,326	0.8
SB24-218 Modernize Energy Distribution Systems	C											\$ 800,000	0.8

<b>(D) Office of Just Transition</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>FY21 Budget</b>	<b>FY21 FTE</b>	<b>FY22 Budget</b>	<b>FY22 FTE</b>	<b>FY23 Budget</b>	<b>FY23 FTE</b>	<b>FY24 Budget</b>	<b>FY24 FTE</b>	<b>FY25 Budget</b>	<b>FY25 FTE</b>
JTO HB19-1314 Program Costs	GF	\$ 158,352	2	\$ 366,625	3.5	\$ 377,724	3.5	\$ 393,332	3.5	\$ 400,885	3.5
<u>Coal Transition Community Assistance</u> <u>HB21-1290, HB22-1193, HB22-1394</u>	C	\$0.00		\$ 8,000,000	2	\$ 2,555,000	2	\$ 7,948,789	2	\$ 10,000,000	0
Coal Transition Worker Assistance HB21-1290, HB22-1193, HB22-1394	C	\$0.00		\$ 7,000,000		\$ 15,000,000		\$ 15,000,000		\$ 5,000,000	

<b>Colorado Disability Opportunity Office</b>	<b>FY25 Budget</b>	<b>FY25 FTE</b>
Colorado Disability Opportunity Office (CDOO) HB 24-1360	\$ 5,538,925	6.0

# R-01 Request



# Intent Behind R-01

Return to same intended utilization of the ESF prior to USDOL mandated conformity legislation

- **Cost Neutral:** This request does not increase the employer support surcharge or UI premiums for employers
- **No Change:** 95.14% of UI premiums are deposited into the trust fund.
- **No Change:** Only 4.86% of UI premiums are held for employer support surcharge

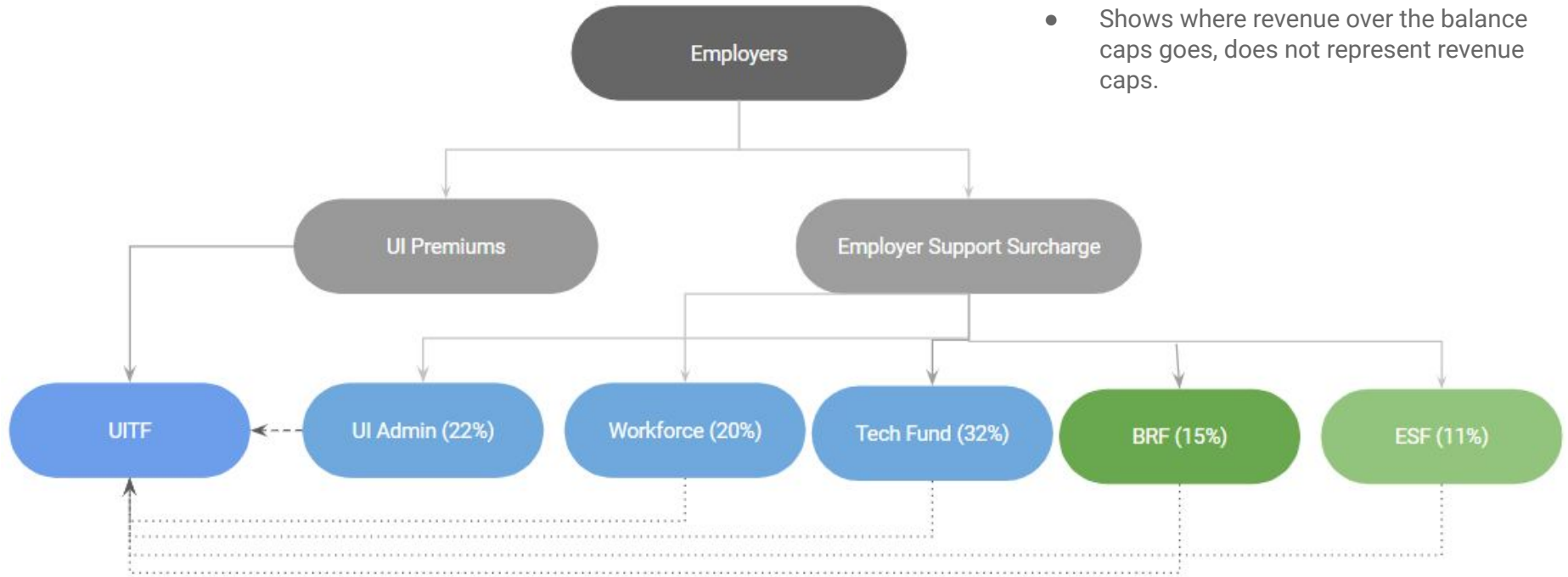
# Intent Behind R-01

1. Updates needed from HB24-1409
  - HB24-1409 did not make any changes to the ESF appropriations in the Executive Director's Office (EDO). These appropriations are for centrally appropriated costs and the cash fund make up should include the Workforce Development Fund and a UI Admin fund. That way the cash funds fund the centrally appropriated costs for their enterprises.
2. Continued alignment with intent of HB09-1363
  - HB09-1363 created the UI enterprise and the intent was for UI and its administration to be part of the enterprise. Increasing Tech Fund spending authority and creating a new UI Admin fund ensures that funds under the enterprise fund all UI technology and administrative expenses not covered by federal funds.
3. Ensuring enough state support for UI to continue to invest in technology, fraud prevention, and other key program needs
  - Federal funds are returning to pre-pandemic levels and are expected to remain flat. This puts pressure on UI expenses. The Tech Fund and new UI Admin fund will ensure adequate state funding to supplement federal funding.

# R-01 Summary

1. Updating the appropriations for the EDO centrally appropriated costs to properly reflect the enterprise cash funds.
2. The creation of a new UI Administration Fund
3. The expansion of the allowable uses of the Tech Fund and updating its cap
4. Technical updates to statute needed because of the other parts of this request and to ensure proper implementation of statute. These technical changes include:
  - a. Updating the percentages of the support surcharge going to the different funds
  - b. Standardizing language for the balance caps across the funds and where money over the caps goes
  - c. Indexing the caps to average weekly wage earnings instead of CPI.

# Part 4 A- Updating the percentages of the support surcharge going to the different funds



\*blue are exempt funds under a enterprise, green are non-exempt funds

# Request Outcomes

**Table 1. Base Grant shortfall is addressed through the requested changes.**

	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	
Base Grant	\$41,149,394	\$39,918,359	\$39,918,359	} Current funding
Expenditures	\$71,648,413	\$73,301,042	\$74,994,798	
<b>Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>-\$30,499,019</b>	<b>-\$33,382,683</b>	<b>-\$35,076,439</b>	
Base Grant	\$41,149,394	\$39,918,359	\$39,918,359	} Requested funding
UI Admin Fund Increase	\$18,928,791	\$18,928,791	\$18,928,791	
Tech Fund Increase	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	
Expenditures	\$71,648,413	\$73,301,042	\$74,994,798	
<b>Budget Surplus*</b>	<b>\$8,429,772</b>	<b>\$5,546,108</b>	<b>\$3,852,352</b>	

\*Remaining balance at the end of a fiscal year can roll-over to the next year as CDLE has three years to spend the federal base grant.

Governor Jared Polis  
 FY 2024-25 RY IT Capital Funding Request



Joe Barela, Executive Director  
 Department of Labor and Employment  
 November 1, 2023

## RY- Department IT Capital Construction Project: [priority number]

Summary of Request	Total Funds		CCF-IT	Cash Funds	Reappropriated Funds	Federal Funds
FY 2024-25	\$ 8,626,812		\$	\$ 8,626,812	\$	\$
FY 2025-26	\$ 12,140,213		\$	\$ 12,140,213	\$	\$
FY 2026-27	\$ 9,964,519		\$	\$ 9,964,519	\$	\$

## Categories of IT Capital Projects

<b>System Replacement</b> (costs escalating, failing technology, software or vendor support ended, or new technology, e.g., DRIVES, CHATS)	<b>System Enhancement Regulatory Compliance</b> (new functionality, improved process or functionality, new demand from citizens, regulatory compliance, e.g, CBMS)	<b>Tangible Savings Process Improvement</b> (conscious effort to reduce or avoid costs, improve efficiency, e.g., LEAN, back office automation)	<b>Citizen Demand</b> “The Ways Things Are” (transformative nature of technology, meet the citizens where they are, e.g., pay online, mobile access)
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## Request Summary:

The Division of Workers’ Compensation (DOWC) is requesting an FY2024-25 Cash Funded Capital IT Appropriation to replace their workers’ compensation computer system and database, commonly known as CoCo. DOWC completed a system modernization project in 2018 which migrated our legacy system off of the mainframe (GGCC). While the state mandate to transition off of a legacy system was met, limited funding prevented a full system modernization. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has expedited our need to transform our system, streamline workflows, and eliminate our reliance on paper filings.

At this time, the CoCo system primarily operates as a database with limited workflow incorporation. This requires many work units to create separate, non-OIT supported, external systems for their workflows. This includes access databases, excel spreadsheets, or snoozing emails until they’re due. All of these items require duplication of effort to document in both the external system and CoCo, along with the added likelihood of user error.

The vendor will analyze workflows, recommend improvement areas, design, develop, and deploy the replacement system. The new system will provide a modern work-related injury claims system that allows DOWC to leverage technology options unavailable within the existing CoCo system.

The new system will be designed and implemented in tandem with the CoCo system, as it is essential that no interruption of existing services occurs. It is anticipated that when the new system is ready, the old system will be irrelevant.

It is anticipated that the new system will provide user controlled access to DOWC/OIT staff, approved vendors, and designated external stakeholders -- including insurance carriers, employers, injured workers, medical providers, and attorneys.

This project has an anticipated duration of 3 calendar years spanning July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027. We anticipate this project to be implemented through project phases: discovery, requirements, design, development, testing, deployment, and maintenance.

### **Project Description:**

The DOWC is requesting a full system replacement of the migrated mainframe legacy workers' compensation application and database, CoCo. The new system will integrate all workers' compensation system related workflows and processes, allow all forms to be filed electronically, eliminate potential entry errors, allow external stakeholder access, improve reliability of data and access to it, and align with other industry accepted filing standards. The implementation and delivery of the new DOWC system will require a multi-year effort and must be completed before current problems reach critical levels. The system will likely require annual licensing fees and regular maintenance and upgrades to accommodate changes in rules, legislation, industry standards, and security standards.

### **Systems Integration Opportunities –**

While the initial migration from the legacy mainframe system was successful, limited funding prevented full modernization of all system components, such as the directory for accredited medical providers and employer proof of coverage systems. Our strategic plan includes integration of new technology to replace our non-modernized system coding language and user-interface components. This modernization will allow our business services to become more closely aligned to stakeholder needs. This system replacement further enables us to successfully navigate the rapidly changing technological landscape for realizing improvements in agency strategies, business intelligence, regulatory requirements, and skills (both technical and business) availability.

### **Other system integrations:**

It is anticipated that the new system will integrate all DOWC related processes and workflows, eliminating unsupported employee designed systems and current risks associated with potentially high-risk email form submissions. The new system will also integrate with the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system aligning with national industry standards. Other opportunities for integration would include improved coverage reporting and artificial

intelligence to identify potential non-compliant employers, shared hearing data from the Office of Administrative Courts, and offer potential real-time monitoring and data-mining for data management partnerships, such as Unemployment Insurance, FAMILI, CDPHE, and CDHS.

### **Risks and Constraints -**

The DOWC relies exclusively on cash fund revenue from the Workers' Compensation Cash Fund to support the Workers Compensation Program. The increased spending authority from the legislature will allow the Department to finance the replacement of the system and enhance the user experience, while allowing the Department to maximize the utilization of existing resources. The risks associated with this project include limited additional funding in instances of scope creep (which will be monitored and managed intensely), limited vendor selection with specific experience designing systems for the workers' compensation industry, increased risk of external data breaches by allowing external stakeholders to have user-controlled system access, and limited time allowed for the project. A risk register within the DOWC business team will contain all identified known risks and exhausted mitigation for each identifiable known risk in this project. Included in the risk register will be a potential for unknown risks, of which there will be triple-constraint consideration (time, cost, and scope) for those potentially unknown realized risks. Dedicated resources and partnership with the Governor's Office of Information Technology will also be key to ensuring the success of this project.

### **Operating Budget Impact -**

The request is for the purchase, design, and implementation of a new technology solution. After the requested funding has been fully expended, there will be ongoing licensing fees for the system, estimated to be up to \$100,000 per year, which will require an increase in spending authority. We also anticipate that this project will require four full time DOWC employees for the duration of this project and future maintenance of the implemented system. The increased spending authority funding will come from the fund balance of the Workers' Compensation Cash Fund and will not require any funding from general, federal, or grant fund sources.

### **Background of Problem or Opportunity:**

When a Colorado worker is injured on the job, the State has a responsibility to regulate the system that provides benefits to the injured worker, pursuant to the Colorado Workers' Compensation Act. CoCo is the DOWC's claims database and management system that has the ability to provide on-demand electronic information for any reported work-related injury in Colorado.

In the early 1990's, DOWC created a computer system that was hosted on the General Government Computing Center (GGCC) platform. This mainframe computer system utilized Adabas/Natural programming language and was supported by the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT). GGCC provided stability in availability and performance and hosted DOWC database records for approximately 23 years, spanning 1991 to 2015.

In 2015, DOWC partnered with OIT and a State-awarded vendor to complete a full system migration that allowed the DOWC to migrate the database and applications off of the GGCC



mainframe, onto a hybrid java environment and MSSQL database platform. Claim information is currently stored on multiple Microsoft SQL2012R2. Application and database servers reside in a secure state cloud environment.

The CoCo database has the ability to provide various types of information relative to individual work-related injury claims, in response to inquiries from stakeholders that include insurance adjusters, employers, attorneys, injured workers, and DOWC staff. A complete chronological history of any work-injury claim submitted to DOWC is archived within the SQL database, including benefit summaries and orders.

Throughout the claims process, insurance carriers, injured workers, employers, medical providers, and attorneys, use forms to supply information to the DOWC and other parties to the claim. At the time of this filing, there are 71 active forms required to navigate a workers' compensation claim or operate in our system. Prior to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, these paper forms were collected by mail or in person and the data was entered into the computer system by DOWC staff.

In 2020, the DOWC transitioned to accepting these forms as a PDF attachment via email through a general filings inbox. This process was implemented as a temporary solution due to an immediate requirement to work from home. Since making this change, DOWC stakeholders are uninterested in returning to a paper filing system. This remains one of our biggest vulnerabilities for potential exposure to phishing and malware attacks. Further, while these requests have been turned into PDF format and are accepted via email, it has not eliminated touchpoints and still requires manual data entry into the CoCo system.

The current system does not interface with external stakeholders, one of our desired system improvements. CoCo primarily operates as a database with limited workflow incorporation, requiring many work units to create stand-alone systems through access databases, manual Excel spreadsheets, and non OIT supported systems.

While the database continues to function and technical staff are performing exceptionally well on maintaining and improving the current system, the skills needed to maintain and the speed required to make relevant changes, require specialized training, and as developers retire or leave for other employment, DOWC and OIT have documented increased challenges in finding qualified individuals to maintain and upgrade the system.

### **Justification:**

The DOWC stakeholder community is in need of a secure and accessible workers' compensation technology system. DOWC has existing cash funds to cover the costs of this new system. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has expedited our need to transform our system to a digital environment and eliminate our reliance on paper, or PDF based, filings. The system will also allow external stakeholders to access pertinent information about their workers' compensation claim. The Division intends to include a focus on accessibility in the design of the new system. At this time, the DOWC CoCo system primarily operates as a database with limited workflow incorporation. This requires many work units to create separate, non-OIT supported external systems for their workflows. This could include an access database, excel spreadsheets, or

snoozing emails until they're due. All of these items require duplication of effort to document in both the external system and CoCo database along with the added likelihood of user error.

Many other states have migrated off of their legacy systems and the Colorado DOWC has a unique opportunity to learn not only from our last experience but also from other state's successes and failures.

While the current system is working properly, updating the new system has proven to be a slow process and the hybrid language used still requires specialized training which creates hiring challenges as the language and desire to work in this system is replaced with newer technology and skill sets. This also creates a limitation in vendors available to support and make future upgrades to the system. This being the case, DOWC has concluded that the most efficient, cost effective, and sustainable option would be replacing the existing system

Additionally, recent process changes that were required to allow a quick transition to a virtual environment have left the DOWC vulnerable to phishing and malware attacks. The DOWC stakeholder community has no interest in returning to a paper filing system and therefore, a new system is required.

The migration that occurred from 2015-2018 would require additional upgrades for best functionality at a later date. The COVID-19 pandemic required DOWC to pivot quickly from an entirely paper-based system to an electronic one. The speed which was required to make that transition, led to temporary solutions that cannot be sustained in the long run, thus expediting our need to move more quickly with the next portion of a system rebuild. In the decision-making that occurred leading up to the 2015 migration, many other states were facing similar system upgrade requirements. We have reached a time where we are able to assess the decisions made by each state, and learn lessons not only from our migration but from many others who chose a different path. In this, there are also vendors that have emerged with specific experience designing workers' compensation systems, limiting our risks of being the first.

#### **Business Process Analysis -**

During the prior system migration, completed in 2018, a significant amount of time and effort was spent to document the DOWC's processes, workflows, and to identify areas for improvement. At that time, the primary goal of the project was to migrate the system off of the mainframe, which was met. To ensure the project's success, the scope and funding remained fairly limited to meet that objective. Through our partnership with OIT, our developers have been able to maintain and work through some of the process improvement and modernization efforts that were identified in the initial scope.

In 2020, the State of Colorado, along with the rest of the nation, was required to rethink all of our processes and implement solutions that allowed for the electronic exchange of information. Very quickly, our agency implemented short-term solutions to meet this requirement. When implemented, the current solutions were intended to be short-term, and over time have shown their vulnerabilities in both security and sustainability. Over the past three years, we have analyzed these new processes and identified additional areas of improvement that will be needed in order to sustain the system for long-term success. Through this process, our Division

has determined that the current model of making updates to the existing CoCo system is no longer feasible for the extent of the changes that are necessary.

Following the system migration, completed in 2018, it was always known that a system upgrade would be needed to improve usability and access to the system. In mid 2020, DOWC had been operating in the migrated system for one and a half years and began considering ways to integrate and improve processes in light of the pandemic and meet demands of changing rules and legislation. With the system operating correctly, OIT resources had to be diverted to helping to develop employee-designed systems such as access databases. These items are not typically supported by OIT but were determined to be the most efficient method for meeting the high demand for the remote workplace. Changes to the CoCo database have proven to be slow and take extended time. This has led us to a situation where we tend to accrue technical debt almost as quickly as we eliminate it, meaning that while progress is made the net technical debt remains relatively unchanged.

The current CoCo system was migrated to do exactly what it had done in the past, with only minimal process improvement occurring at that time. The new approach has led the Department to determine the best option is to build a new system, which integrates our new processes, and makes further improvements on those. The current option of updating the old system to the new processes without vendor support is not feasible.

#### **Cost-Benefit Analysis and Project Alternatives (per H.B. 15-1266) -**

The first alternative we will explore is keeping the system as is. The highest risk of this option is the inability to find developers and vendors familiar with the hybrid-java language used in our current system, requiring specialized expertise and ultimately driving up maintenance costs as time goes on. Progress on updating the system with needed integrations and improvements has proven to be slow and, in the long run, has not resolved technical debt. The current system requires annual licensing fees of over \$80,000/year with anticipated 5-8% license cost increase each successive year beyond 2024. The system requires 4 OIT dedicated developers to maintain the current system. OIT's master contract for the licensing used by DOWC (Maxenso) is no longer in place and other agencies have shifted to different technologies, placing DOWC's current system at risk of being the sole user of this technology, leaving it vulnerable to non-support by OIT in the future. The most significant security risk associated with the current system is that electronic PDF forms must be accepted by a widely published email inbox. The staff who process this inbox must click on links and attachments, sometimes from unknown sources, in order to accept them into our system. While staff stays current with required cybersecurity training, this is a significant risk we have identified with the current system.

A second option available includes keeping the current CoCo database system as-is and investing in other technologies for the additional portions needed, such as digital filing system, digital storage, outreach tools, digital scheduling tools, etc. These technologies would require extensive work to integrate into the current CoCo system, if possible at all. Lack of integration would result in duplicative effort from DOWC staff, increased data entry and processing errors, and require excess license funding and processing for these technologies. If integrated, this would also require us to use and maintain the selected technologies, locking us into rate increases and potential risk as version upgrades are released. The same staffing, technical debt issues related to keeping the current CoCo system would also apply as in option 1. Additional

technologies have been quoted as approximately \$85,000 implementation costs with annual licensing fees ranging \$30,000-\$50,000, per technology needed.

The final option of full system replacement allows DOWC to expedite the elimination of technical debt and integration of workflows into the system. The integration of workflow and external stakeholder system access create improvements for both DOWC and our external stakeholders. Because other states have implemented similar systems, DOWC will not be the first state to undertake this challenge eliminating some of the risk. A new system will also upgrade our technology to current languages enabling us to have a wider pool of DOWC/OIT staff and vendor selection.

The RFI process has been completed with vendor capability and cost estimates taken into consideration for this request. DOWC staff have met and conferred with multiple other states who have implemented system changes since 2015 to receive feedback, explore system options, and expose unidentified risks.

The Division is seeking a vendor based solution for the system build, with post implementation maintenance and upgrades to be maintained in a hybrid model of DOWC and OIT staff and vendor support.

### **Assumptions for Calculations -**

Through market research and discussions with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, the Department has reviewed prospective solutions and the table outlines estimated costs.

**Total Project Cost: \$ 30,731,543 [Summary Calculations Linked Here](#);**

**Total FTE Costs \$2,287,767 [FTE Calculations Here](#):**

This request does not include funding for on-going maintenance support after full system implementation. At this time, the Division believes it has four options for ongoing maintenance: OIT will fully support the system; the Vendor will fully support the system for an unknown cost; DOWC will fully support the system; or a combination of DOWC, OIT & Vendor support for system maintenance. The cost for OIT is part of the annual cost allocation process and we anticipate no change in funding if OIT maintains support. Current maintenance support DOWC receives from OIT is approximately \$1.1M annually and we expect it to be similar with this new system. If a vendor or DOWC is chosen solely for maintenance, a request for additional funding will be done at that time, if needed. Therefore, until the Division has a clear picture of maintenance requirements, no funding is being requested.

### **Consequences if not Funded -**

If the request is not funded, the Department will continue to see a degradation in the current outdated technologies, increased exposure to security threats, increased costs to maintain, develop, and integrate alternative solutions, ultimately preventing the DOWC from serving the stakeholders of the Colorado workers' compensation system. The current system requires the use of a proprietary tool for run time which has reached end of life and is proving difficult and potentially impossible to update for the future, putting the application in serious risk. The specialized skills for developers and database analysts who can manage and improve the system is proving to be increasingly difficult to staff. The stakeholder community is in need of an automated interface with ability to file electronically and access to status and documentation

associated with claims. The current solutions that have been required to be put in place to meet these demands are creating serious risk of phishing and malware attacks.

## **Implementation Plan**

### **Change Management -**

- The change management and overall implementation strategy will use human centered design, an agile approach to iteratively building a new product with a focus on the budget and scope. There will be focus on Organizational Change Management to bring the DOWC community forward, and the external user community will be engaged for usability feedback. It is the intent of DOWC to engage a vendor for this replacement who has experience in the claims management field with a focus on Workers' Compensation processes. If possible, the use of a customizable off the shelf product will be used, engaging industry best practices.

### **Alignment with OIT Best Practices and Standards -**

- This request aligns with the Department goal of ensuring our products align with the architectural and security standards as set forth by the Governor's Office of Information Technology in accordance with Colorado's Chief Information Security Office (CISO). Practices like multi-factor authentication, role based access, a secure stakeholder portal and meeting all security standards, automation, and a positive end user experience are all at forefront in developing a modern Workers' Compensation system for the oversight and management of this program.

### **Procurement -**

- The Department, in partnership with OIT, has worked together to identify the requirements of a system replacement. A Request for Information was completed on June 20, 2022, indicating the project is feasible and identifying reasonable costs for the project. The procurement process will meet the Colorado Procurement Code requirements for competitive, equitable, and fair purchasing. The project has received a conditional approval for Gate 1 through OIT to proceed.

### **Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity -**

- The Department will be seeking, via the solicitation, for the vendor to implement a full Disaster Recovery system to ensure business continuity and secure practices for data storage and retention. Disaster Recovery (Real-Time System Failover) will be a crucial requirement of the awarded vendor pertaining to all planned and unplanned outages within this project duration. Potential Service interruptions are to be minimal (as outage timelines and Service Level Agreements advertise within the mission critical guidelines), as the new system is constructed and implemented within the OIT/Business platform. Best practices for implementation amid Zero-outage initiatives will be the highest priority in all phases of this project. Security features will be predicated upon business requirements of full encryption of all PII data at rest and in transit. The new system and normalized Database will be required to adhere to the CISO (Colorado's Chief Information Security Office) data and computer system security protocols. Each Security

Protocol detail that will be required for awarded Vendor to be in compliance on the new system is listed on the following link:

<https://oit.colorado.gov/standards-policies-guides/technical-standards-policies#technical>

**Accessibility Compliance (Must be addressed) -**

- The new system will offer the ability to address and further enhance accessibility compliance requirements not present or capable of being implemented in the current system. The software vendor will be required to adhere to OIT statutory obligations regarding Accessibility Compliance and new requirements as required in WCAG 2.1 and HB21-1110 for individuals with disabilities.

**Impact to IT Common Policy (For Statewide OIT Projects Only) -**

- It is anticipated that DOWC will require technology contractors to participate in the project (figures included in this request) for architecture, project management, data conversion and migration efforts, and interface builds. Historically, these costs would have been tied to an inter-agency agreement with OIT. However, those costs as of July 1, 2022 have been moved to common policy real time billing.

ADDITIONAL REQUEST INFORMATION	
Please indicate if three-year roll forward spending authority is required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is this a continuation of a project appropriated in a prior year?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If this is a continuation project, what is the State Controller Project Number?	N/A
If this request effects another organization, please provide a comfort letter.	N/A
Please attach a letter from OIT indicating review and approval of this project	See Appendix A

ESTIMATED PROJECT TIME TABLE		
Steps to be completed	Start Date	Completion Date
Line-Item Submission to Governor's Office	7/15/2023	12/31/2023
Business Requirements Gathering	7/15/2023	11/30/2023
Vendor Review & Selection	12/1/2023	5/1/2024
Continued Requirements Gathering & Process Improvement Planning	1/1/2024	7/1/2024
Capital Construction Award - Project Kickoff	7/1/2024	7/1/2024
Assessment & Strategic Planning	7/1/2024	9/30/2024
Stakeholder Engagement/UI Screen Design	7/1/2024	6/30/2025
System Development/Testing/Phased Launch	1/1/2025	12/30/2026

<b>CASH FUND PROJECTIONS (DELETE IF NOT APPLICABLE)</b>			
Cash Fund name and number:	Workers' Compensation Cash Fund (1420) Subsequent Injury Fund (4160) Major Medical Insurance Fund (4170)		
Statutory reference to Cash Fund:	8-44-102 / 8-46-202 / 8-46-101 C.R.S		
Describe how revenue accrues to the fund:	Funding for DOWC is collected via a premium surcharge to workers' compensation insurance carriers and self-insured employers.		
Describe any changes in revenue collections that will be necessary to fund this project:	Surcharge collection rates are reviewed and set annually to ensure appropriate program funding is available.		
<b>FY 2023-24 Projected Ending Fund Balance (1420,4160,4170)</b>	<b>FY 2024-25 Projected Ending Fund Balance with Project Approval (1420,4160,4170)</b>	<b>FY 2025-26 Projected Ending Fund Balance with Project Approval (1420,4160,4170)</b>	<b>FY 2026-27 Projected Ending Fund Balance with Project Approval (1420,4160,4170)</b>
<b>\$32.6M</b>	<b>\$28.2M</b>	<b>\$20.4M</b>	<b>\$13.8M</b>
<b>\$10.4M</b>	<b>\$8.6M</b>	<b>\$6.5M</b>	<b>\$4.5M</b>
<b>\$56.8M</b>	<b>\$53.4M</b>	<b>\$49.6M</b>	<b>\$46.0M</b>



# Appendix A: Requested Letter of Review and Approval from the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT):

6/30/23, 12:35 PM

State.co.us Executive Branch Mail - Conditional Gate 1 approval for



STATE OF  
COLORADO

Bangert - OIT, Michelle <michelle.bangert@state.co.us>

## Conditional Gate 1 approval for

1 message

**Burdick - OIT, David** <david.burdick@state.co.us>

Fri, Jun 30, 2023 at 10:45 AM

To: Michelle Bangert - OIT <michelle.bangert@state.co.us>, Benjamin Moeller - OIT <benjamin.moeller@state.co.us>,  
"Bernhart - OIT, Leslie" <leslie.bernhart@state.co.us>

Cc: "Rodriguez - OIT, Andy" <andy.rodriguez@state.co.us>, "Wurzer - OIT, Natalie" <natalie.wurzer@state.co.us>

Good Morning,

The Manager of the OIT EPMO Governance team has completed a review of DMND1001851 - "CDLE - Work Comp Claims System Replacement" with the project team and is providing a conditional gate 1 for a release of funds to continue the delivery services through the conclusion of the project. The Project Manager is pending assignment and is currently listed as the Michelle Bangert (ITPM). The ITPM will create the project and provide the appropriate project number from ServiceHub.

Please release all funds associated with this effort.

This approval is based on the review of a viable scope and an approved Conditional Project Approval Form as follows:

- Computer System Replacement RFI in Dec 2022; RFP in March 2023; Legislative budget item in 2024 session - approval for funding in July 2024. Required to spend funds in 3 years from date of approval - 2024-2027

Department of Workers Compensation Claims System Replacement needs to be coded with industry standard programming, such as Microsoft .Net or React language.

System user interfaces need to be evaluated and translated to dynamic API modules within native web environment.

Any registered Domain user can access a web portal aligning them to use applications within their program.

For external stakeholders, real-time updates of accepted claim status throughout the lifecycle of the claim.

The formal request and full approved Conditional Project approval form can be viewed [here](#).

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Manager of EPMO Governance.

--

David Burdick, MBA, MSCIT, PMP, PSM1  
Manager, EPMO Governance



COLORADO

Enterprise Project  
Management Office

Governor's Office of Information Technology

720.308.5049

1575 Sherman St, Denver, 80203

david.burdick@state.co.us | [www.colorado.gov/oit](http://www.colorado.gov/oit)

Next Out Of Office: July 3-10





## State Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Quarterly Stakeholders Report

First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024-25

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The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is pleased to present the First Quarter of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Stakeholders Report.

Inside you will find an update on the performance of grants funded by the CWDC through Colorado House Bill 21-1264, along with the utilization of fiscal recovery funds within our state. Throughout this report, you will discover a comprehensive analysis on program performance and financials, along with success stories and the impact SLFRF programs have had on wages.

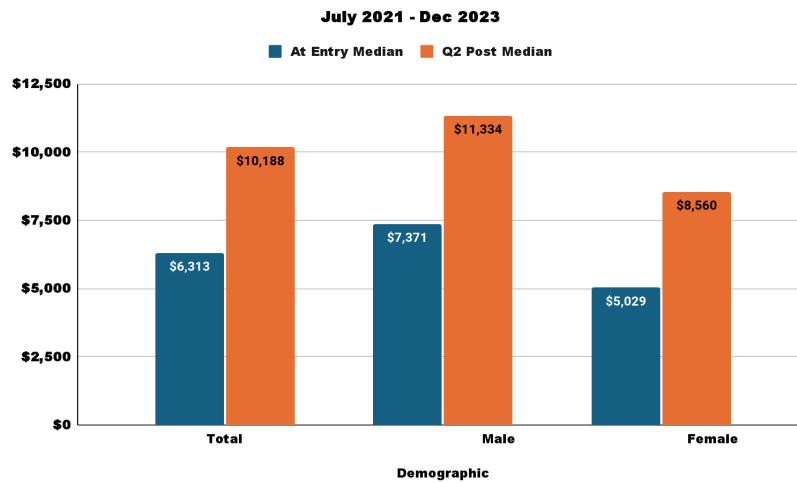
Colorado continues to make good progress, and I offer my sincere appreciation for all of the hard work and accomplishments our grant partners and team have been able to achieve so far. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our team at [cwdc@state.co.us](mailto:cwdc@state.co.us).

Sincerely,  
Lee Wheeler-Berliner  
Managing Director, Colorado Workforce Development Council

## The Positive Impact Stimulus Funds Have on Wages in Colorado

In our previous report we highlighted the wage impact the stimulus programs of RUN and WIG have had on individuals. The most recent updated Unemployment Insurance (UI) data through December 2023 shows continued positive impact on wages. The charts here show the median wage at time of enrollment into the respective programs (RUN/WIG) versus the Median Wage two quarters post-exit from the program.

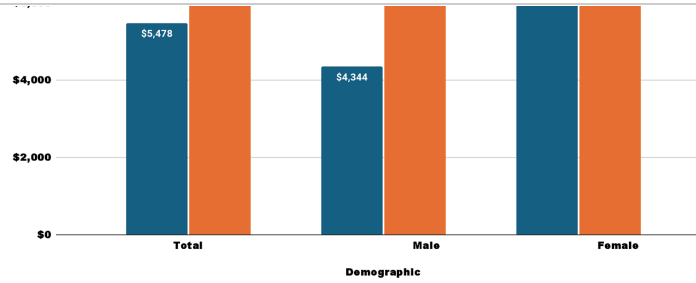
**Figure 1:** UI RUN Wages At Program Entry Median vs. Post Median, July 2021 - December 2023.  
Source: Connecting Colorado. [Table alternative for figure 1: UI RUN Wages At Program Entry Median vs. Post Median](#)



**Figure 2:** UI WIG Wages At Program Entry Median vs. Post Median, July 2021 - December 2023.  
Source: Connecting Colorado. [Table alternative for figure 2: UI Wage Data WIG - Entry Program Median vs. Post Median](#)

FINAL Q1 24-25 Stimulus Stakeholder Report

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### Stimulus Programs in Colorado

**\$60M** funded to CWDC through Colorado House Bill 21-1264

- 1 Provide aid and economic recovery for those impacted by COVID-19
- 2 Improve outcomes for learners and workers, improve job quality
- 3 Increase equity to historically marginalized communities

Since the passage of HB 12-1264, which provided \$60M to the Workforce Development Council to manage, we have successfully granted out 93-percent of those funds to more than 160 grantees including local workforce boards and community-based organizations, as well as funding for program evaluation, grant training, and capacity building support. We expect full utilization of the \$60M investment. Unencumbered funds are being considered for redistribution to various programs.

#### Colorado Stimulus Programs

**Table 1:** Colorado Stimulus Programs Data As of August 31, 2024.

Source: Colorado Operations Resource Engine (CORE).

Program	Fund	Spent	Encumbered	Total Committed	Unencumbered
<b>RUN</b>	\$25,000,000	\$23,071,225 (92.3%)	\$1,402,390 (5.6%)	\$24,473,616 (97.9%)	\$526,384 (2.1%)*
<b>Workforce Innovation</b>	\$35,000,000	\$19,793,778 (56.6%)	\$14,655,546 (41.9%)	\$34,449,324 (98.4%)	\$550,676 (1.6%)**
<b>Total</b>	\$60,000,000	\$42,865,003 (71.4%)	\$16,057,936 (26.8%)	\$58,922,940 (98.2%)	\$1,077,060 (1.8%)

\* This amount includes administrative and indirect funds that cannot be encumbered.

\*\* This includes administrative and payroll funds that cannot be encumbered.

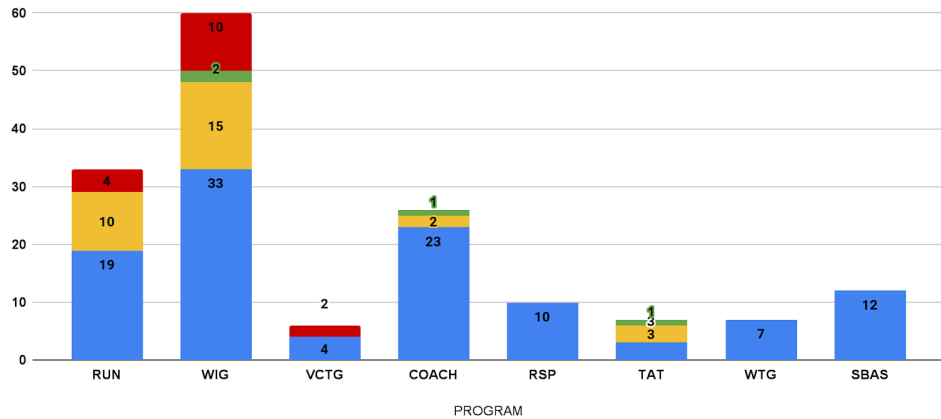
### Grantees Status Summary

**Figure 3:** First Quarter 2024-2025 SLFRF Grant Status.

Source: CDLE. [Table alternative for figure 3: First Quarter 2024-2025](#)

FINAL Q1 24-25 Stimulus Stakeholder Report

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### Stimulus Programs

## 11,668 Coloradans have been enrolled

in Stimulus-funded programs at local workforce areas, with CWDC grant sub-recipients, and through Workforce Innovation grantees working with workforce centers.

Training programs with the highest attendance include:

- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Nursing Assistants
- Construction Laborers
- Registered Nurses
- Forest and Conservation

### Trade Association Training

A portion of the Stimulus funds were targeted directly to business and industry to ensure active involvement in rebuilding the talent pipeline with individuals trained on skills in high demand. Seven groups representing different industry sectors were granted up to \$300,000 to execute training programs that helped lead to employment. Here are few examples:

**The Construction Education Foundation (CEF) successfully trained 309 participants** in their Sustainable Green Building Certification that teaches methods of creating and improving energy efficiency through plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and more.

#### Impact | Construction Education Foundation

“The most successful piece of our training was opening the eyes of high school students as to the breadth of depth—not just of opportunities in the construction industry—but to the

**More than 70 participants have earned credentials through the Colorado Technology Association's program** offering training and certification in data analytics and cybersecurity as well as career-readiness and durable skills training.

## Impact | Colorado Technology Association

Michelle learned about Colorado Technology Association's (CTA) Google Cybersecurity training program through her sister who attended a CTA networking event. Michelle spent much of her career in the hospitality industry and had been in and out of the workforce for years prior to enrolling in the CTA training program. She was very enthusiastic about learning more about cybersecurity and the opportunities the tech industry presented; however, she was very apprehensive and hesitant about her ability to complete the training program and her lack of technology experience.

Through the encouragement of the Director of Workforce Development, Michelle joined the program and worked diligently through the coursework. She earned her Google Cybersecurity Certificate within four months. At times Michelle said she was frustrated and felt like giving up, but through it all she was positive, and had a great work ethic. Michelle took advantage of CTA networking opportunities, including the C-Level at Mile High, Tech Talent Denver, and CTA happy hours. Michelle plans to continue to grow her network within the industry, and attend events to expand her contacts in the industry. Upon earning her certificate, Michelle worked with the Director of Workforce Development on her networking skills as well as her resume and interview prep which she says was "invaluable" to her success in navigating the interview process. Michelle received a job offer and began her new job with the City and County of Denver on September 30, 2024.

**The Colorado Advanced Manufacturing Foundation** has been working with local employers to enroll incumbent employees and candidates in their upskilling and reskilling training program. **Over 50 participants are enrolled** in training pathways which include industrial maintenance, health & safety, and robotics.

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## Capacity Building

A portion of the Stimulus funds were allocated to both community-based organizations and state agencies to accelerate recovery by providing focused resources on key initiatives.

### **Office of the Future of Work**

Provides a recognized expert on strategies to increase digital equity across the state, develops the state's digital equity plan, provides strategic advice and policy recommendations on digital equity, technology literacy, affordable internet programs, and delivery of community-based digital equity services.

### **Office of New Americans**

Global Talent Advisor works directly with Colorado businesses to help access talent available from new immigrant and refugee populations in the state.

### **Community Resource Center**

Grant Corps staff provide consultation services to nonprofits,

## FINAL Q1 24-25 Stimulus Stakeholder Report

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The CWDC Employer Coach presented Colorado's Job Quality tools at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals Conference in Baltimore, MD August 11-13, 2024. The session attracted 50 attendees and received glowing feedback, including:

- "Highly energetic and engaging, with great information that I can apply in my own area. What more could I ask for?"
- "The process of how this model is progressing is excellent information that can be used in my daily workflow."
- "Very engaging presenters that make you want to replicate Colorado's efforts in our state."

On a local level, the Employer Coach has partnered with chambers of commerce and sector partnerships to demonstrate how job quality initiatives can leverage tools like skills-first language for recruitment and retention and apprenticeships for workforce development. Additionally, two recent blogs aimed at employers explore these topics further:

- [Skills First Jobs- From Hiring to Succession Planning](#), and
- [Job Quality for New Businesses](#).

## Workforce Innovation Statewide Initiatives

### Sector Partnerships

## Six Regional Sector Partnerships launched

with the help and support of SLFRF-funded conveners:

- Construction Sector Partnership, August 2023
- San Luis Valley Healthcare Sector Partnership, January 2024
- Pikes Peak Regional Creative Sector Partnership, April 2024
- Boulder Area Professional Services Sector Partnership, April 2024
- Statewide Colorado Cleantech Sector Partnership, May 2024
- Behavioral Health Sector Partnership, July 2024

Upcoming Sector Partnership launches:

- Northern Colorado Financial Services Sector Partnership, October 2024
- Montrose Early Childhood Sector Partnership, November 2024
- Southwest Colorado Broadband Sector Partnership, November 2024

FIBERLOK WAS ONE OF TWELVE LOCAL COMPANIES TO SUPPORT LARIMER COUNTY ECONOMIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT'S (LCEWD) 2024 MANUFACTURING SUMMER SECTOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM, WHICH CONNECTS YOUNG TALENT WITH TOP MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES IN NORTHERN COLORADO. **This year's program achieved record success with 321 student applications thanks to the collaboration between LCEWD and the NoCo Manufacturing Sector Partnership.** Three interns secured permanent positions with their host companies, including one at Fiberlok.

### **Media and Journalism Sector Partnership Supports Colorado Ethnic Media Exchange in Colorado Public Radio Spotlight**

Supported in part by the Media & Journalism Sector Partnership, the Colorado Ethnic Media Exchange (CEME) was recently spotlighted by [Colorado Public Radio](#) for their collaboration in a niche industry. This network consists of publishers of ethnically-owned newspapers and newsmagazines, or those serving a largely ethnic or immigrant audience, including Afrik Digest; Enterate Latino, a Spanish publication serving Western Colorado; the English-language Asian Avenue; and the Aurora Sentinel. These publications serve as an important source of news, community resources, and entertainment for their audiences. Through CEME, leaders of ethnic-serving publications will be able to identify similar goals and try to solve problems they share of visibility, growth, connectedness to their audience and ad sales.

### **South Central Early Childhood Education Sector Partnership Spotlights A Journey of Growth: How Abigail Cordova Found Her Calling in Early Childhood Education**

When Abigail Cordova first walked through the doors of a bustling preschool, she wasn't just starting a new job—she was beginning a journey that would profoundly shape her life and the lives of the children she cares for every day. Originally from Buena Vista, Colorado, Abigail's journey as an educator began unexpectedly but quickly evolved into a deep passion for teaching young children. What began as a way to stay close to her young daughter soon blossomed into a passionate career, driven by a deep love for teaching and a desire to understand the world of early childhood education. Read [Abigail's success story](#).

## Career Navigation and Coaching Collaborative

### **2,747 Coloradans**

have received coaching through the Career Coaching Collaborative, thanks to help from 26 Career Coaches who provide career navigation and coaching services at 12 community-based organizations and 10 workforce areas.

### Impact Story | Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Board

As a career coach, I have been working with a participant named "Frank", a monolingual Spanish speaker. When we first met, Frank's goal was to secure a driving position at the Walmart warehouse. However, he faced three significant barriers: limited English proficiency, the lack of a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), and Walmart's requirement to work at a



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department, where he showed dedication and worked for a full year. During this time, we also focused on enhancing his English language skills, enabling him to communicate more effectively with his coworkers.

Recently, we submitted Frank's application to the Walmart Warehouse, and an employee reached out to him to schedule an interview. The milestone is a significant step toward his goal, and Frank is hopeful about securing the job he worked so hard to achieve.

---

## Vital Careers Training Grant

### **54 Participants enrolled in the first quarter of program activities.**

As of September 30, 2024, 54 participants have enrolled in the four training programs offered by the Vital Careers Training Grant Cohort grantees. These programs aim to provide essential training to individuals in vital industries, and the grantees have been proactive in launching and expanding their training initiatives.

---

## Small Business Apprenticeship Support Grant

### **\$444K Granted to 12 Small Businesses**

The 12 small businesses that received funding through the Small Business Apprenticeship Support Grant are working closely with CWDC and Apprenticeship Colorado to register or expand their apprenticeship programs.

**TechNation Careers**, a nonprofit organization based in Denver Metro, received approval in October for their Registered apprenticeship Program (RAP) in two occupations - Platform Designer and User Interface (UX) Designer. TechNation is partnering with Regis University for related instruction and TouchSource as the employer and looks forward to hiring apprentices from the refugee and New American community.

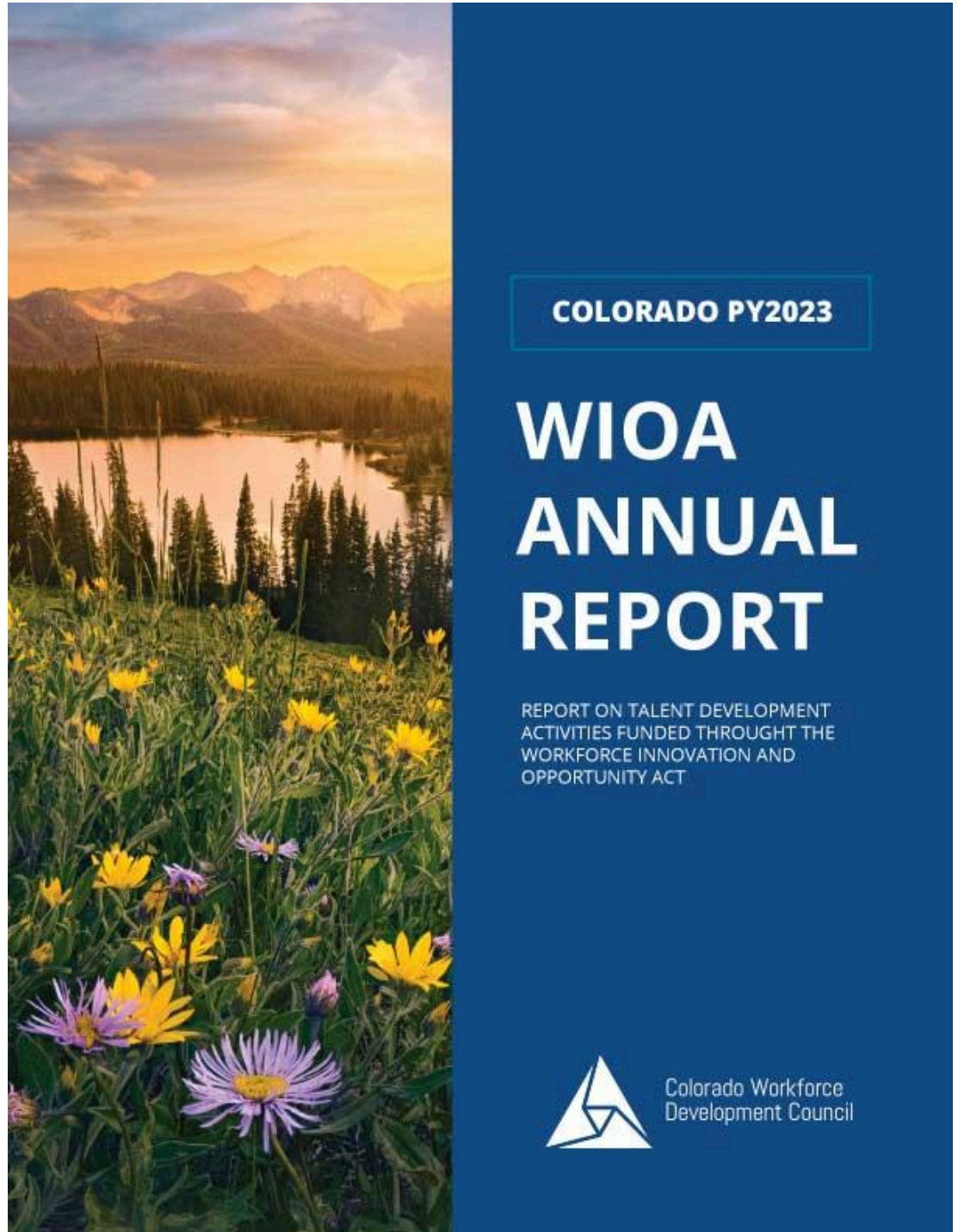
**R&R Head Labs** registered their RAP earlier this year and is working with grant funding to improve and expand their barbering apprenticeship. Through the program, the shop provides training and support for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved community members working towards their barbering license.

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## Workforce Training Grant

### **\$2,215,850 Allocated To Date**





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**COLORADO PY 23 WIOA ANNUAL REPORT - accessibility pass**

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A Letter from the Colorado Workforce Development Council 3

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Goal A: Align state policies and flexible resources to ensure all Coloradans have equitable access to opportunities for quality, life-long education and training connected to the future of work. 5

Goal B: Increase the awareness of the TalentFOUND network so more individuals and businesses utilize the available resources to succeed in the wake of the pandemic. 8

Goal C: Promote career agility for all Coloradans. 9

Goal D: Strengthen partnerships to address job quality as well as individual and community level issues impacting economic mobility. 11

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## COLORADO PY 23 WIOA ANNUAL REPORT - accessibility pass

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Colorado's 2020-2023 Combined State Plan. Partners across the state embraced a bold vision for our talent development network, strengthening collaboration year after year to enhance systems to better serve all Coloradans. By setting ambitious goals, we catalyzed collaboration, fostered systems innovation, and created pathways to align a diverse group of partners in pursuit of shared objectives.

This work is grounded in federal support and strengthened by state and local initiatives tailored to meet the unique needs of Colorado's workforce. This Annual Report on activities funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) serves as a companion to the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report, which offers an in-depth analysis of the state's talent demand and supply landscape.

Colorado made significant progress toward achieving the goals outlined in the modified Combined State Plan, which was updated in 2022 to address the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and adapt to rapidly changing economic conditions.

In PY23, the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) convened partners to develop and align new strategies for the 2024-2027 WIOA Combined State Plan. The plan underwent a thorough review process, including evaluations from Council members, the Governor's Office, partner agencies, along with a 30-day public comment period, before taking effect July 1, 2024.

Within this report, you will find:

- Highlights of our progress and results from all core programs outlined in the strategic sections of Colorado's state plan;
- Innovative practices developed across Colorado's 10 local workforce areas (Exhibit A); and
- State-level outcomes driven by Workforce Development Programs within the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (Exhibit B).

We are proud to share the final achievements of the 2020-2023 Combined State Plan under WIOA, and look forward to continued collaboration in the years to come.



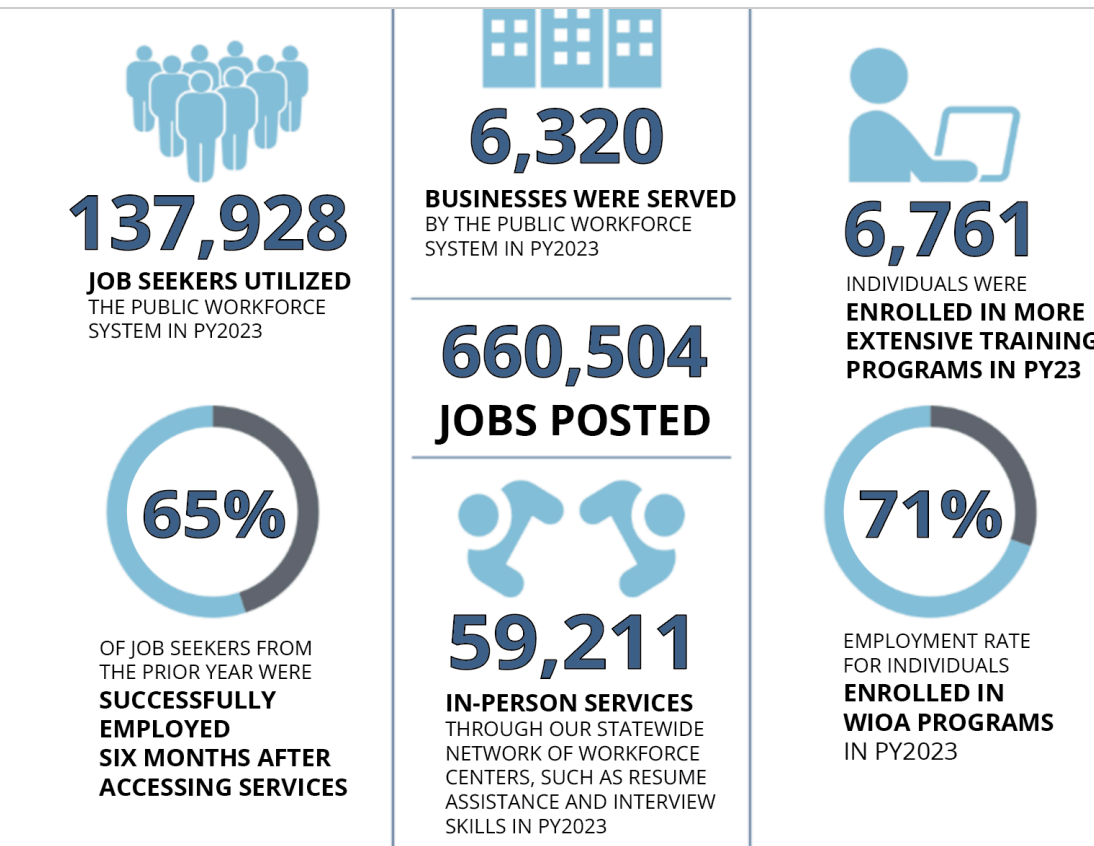
Jonathan Liebert, Chair  
Managing Director



Lee Wheeler-Berliner,

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Overview

Colorado's 2020-2023 State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) went into effect on July 1, 2020. This report provides an update on the strategic work outlined within each of Colorado's four state plan goals between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, as well as updates on additional items requested via TEG 5-18. The report includes information from each of the core WIOA programs: Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Adult Education, Wagner Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The Colorado State Plan was modified in PY22 based on input from partners and the public and in accordance with USDOL rules and requirements, going into effect July 1, 2022. **View the modified WIOA State Plan.**

Strategic Goals for the Talent Development Network  
Colorado is focused on four goals through the 2020-2023 WIOA Combined State Plan.

- **Goal A:** Align state policies and flexible resources to ensure all Coloradans have equitable access to

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quality as well as individual and community level issues impacting economic mobility.

**Goal A: Align state policies and flexible resources to ensure all Coloradans have equitable access to opportunities for quality, life-long education and training connected to the future of work.**

### **Strategy 1: Formulate, test, and scale the braiding of funding across Programs.**

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) collaborated to develop and fund the Paving Access to Careers and Employment (PACE) Program utilizing [Workforce Enterprise Funds (WEF), formerly] Supplemental Employment Support Funds (ESF) and Colorado's Employment First funding.

This enables Program Ambassadors to provide supportive services that will increase the number of SNAP applicants and recipients that engage and enroll in Wagner-Peyser employment services, or other local employment and training programs. PACE leverages existing expertise in Colorado's workforce development system and builds upon already established employment and training-focused partnerships to assist SNAP clients reduce significant employment barriers, such as lack of childcare or stable housing, to become economically self-sufficient. This program enables us to leverage federal matching funds, maximizing the impact of every dollar spent. By drawing down these federal dollars, we effectively increase the resources available to support our goals and initiatives.

Administration for the program kicked-off in 2023/2024, and a goal was established to serve 1500 clients in PACE by September 30, 2025.

### **Strategy 2: Promote collaboration models to align and streamline the delivery of stimulus dollars, SNAP 50/50, Colorado Works, and other benefits.**

CDHS partnered with CDLE in PY23 to expand CW STEP services to eligible Colorado Works clients that reside in Colorado's rural communities. The CW Step program offers people who are eligible or receiving Colorado's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program Colorado Works (meet an income threshold and have a dependent in the home), an opportunity to attach to a work-based learning experience. In CW STEP, people attain a livable wage and permanent job through



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In PY23, Rehire Colorado Transitional Jobs program and the Colorado Works Subsidized Employment (CW Step) enrolled 522 people in work-based learning programs. Rehire Colorado prioritizes serving individuals who are 50 years old and older, veterans, and non-custodial parents (parents who pay child support). Clients who find employment after their transitional job, earn an average wage of \$17.36/hour.

### **Strategy 3: Develop and strengthen programming to support targeted populations.**

*Promote credential attainment by providing program outcomes data and elevating multiple pathways to different education and training opportunities such as quality non-degree credentials, apprenticeships, and other workforce or work-based learning (WBL) credentials.*

In PY23, the state launched a framework and tool for aligning and evaluating the quality of non-degree credentials, in cooperation with CDE, other agencies and industry partners, to increase the value of credentials and learning experiences that take place in non-traditional settings. This lifts up apprenticeship programs as a flexible, high-quality method of training. Another bill was passed to reverse map pathways into registered apprenticeships and ensure seamless transitions into programs through career and technical education (CTE). Apprenticeship Colorado, CDLE and the CTE division of the Colorado Community College System work together to build CTE programs in high school and community college that lead into registered apprenticeship programs, with an emphasis on industries identified in the 2023 Talent Pipeline Report. By aligning these programs, Colorado is ensuring seamless transitions between high school, postsecondary, and career. Students will have the chance to accelerate through CTE coursework directly related to the competencies of a registered apprenticeship.

As Colorado collaborates with our federal and local partners to build a more equitable registered apprenticeship (RA) system, Colorado is investing significant resources in the public workforce and education system to support employers to build inclusive programs and diversify their talent pipeline.

Colorado [received recognition as a State Apprenticeship Agency \(SAA\)](#) by the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship effective July 1, 2023. Governor Polis signed [SB23-051 Conforming Workforce Development Statutes](#) directing SAA to establish the State Apprenticeship Council (SAC) to provide professional and technical expertise and advise the SAA on registered apprenticeship standards, rules, and performance. The apprenticeship model creates multiple career pathways that connect people to paid work experience, educational instruction, and a nationally-recognized credential. Employers also benefit from these programs, as registered apprenticeships help them strengthen

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### *Developing inclusive programming with clear career pathways.*

Programs designed in PY23 threaded through a combination of state and local strategies. CDLE provided trained staff to simplify the registered apprenticeship program (RAP) requirements for sponsors and partners, and serve as the final point of contact prior to registration with USDOL for all grant-funded activity. Apprenticeship Specialists provide direct support to sponsors, employers, and related instruction providers on program design (29 CFR 29) and a new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Specialist supports sponsors and Equal Employment Opportunity partners on EEO in apprenticeship (29 CFR 30).

### *Additional employer supports to develop an equity-driven system.*

Four supplemental strategies were leveraged to raise awareness and provide resources to employers and sponsors. The first employer strategy included a second round of competitive "Scale Up" grants issued from CDLE which are small grants to launch or expand a Registered Apprenticeship Program. As a result of these 14 grants, 17 employers will adopt the registered apprenticeship model, 12 new apprenticeship programs will be registered, and two programs expanded by June 2025. Apprenticeship Colorado also implemented Accelerate Apprenticeship Grants to increase employer expansion of registered apprenticeship across the state. The opportunity is a non-competitive funding opportunity meaning that the funding is first-come, first served. A total of 80 employers have applied for and received a finalized grant agreement under this investment. As of the end of PY23 this grant opportunity has resulted in 26 new programs, 4 expanded programs, and 53 employers engaged.

In PY23, Apprenticeship Colorado recognized [35 Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediaries](#) in Colorado. Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediaries are organizations operating in Colorado that play a crucial role in expanding or enhancing our state's Registered Apprenticeship System through their support of career seekers, apprentices, employers, and/or Sponsors.

The State of Colorado launched an "Apprenticeship Hub" for its fourth employer strategy to provide statewide coordination of and technical assistance to locally-driven apprenticeship business services and career services. Through a collaboration with the local workforce centers, the Hub provides employers a direct pipeline to the talent they need and funding and services, increases workforce areas' understanding of the RA model, and maximizes resources through leveraging other investments. Apprenticeship Consultants and Navigators support local business services and help provide technical support to workforce centers and their partners for business services, add capacity for program development and employer outreach in local communities, and coordinate business services across workforce areas. The Consultants and Navigators complement apprenticeship

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employers in implementing an equity-driven recruitment strategy. Building on the work of a prior investment (the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant), the SAEEL grant increases the total amount of discretionary funds allowable per participant to support related instruction, supportive services, and on-the-job learning, and pairs with increasing system-wide support for career seeker-facing roles. The SAEEL grant coordinator and Apprenticeship Hub conducted a landscape review of gaps in local understanding and implemented the changes resulting from strategic planning sessions conducted in PY22 in order to build out a sustainable infrastructure between the local workforce system and the new State Apprenticeship Agency. The Apprenticeship Hub employs Apprenticeship Consultants and Apprenticeship Navigators under the SAEEL grant to execute and accelerate grant progress. These roles allow the Apprenticeship Hub to better meet the different needs of businesses and career seekers in each local area.

**Expanding access to apprenticeships to more individuals with disabilities.**

DVR and the CDLE Apprenticeship Team deepened their collaboration in PY23 to provide ongoing, system-wide training. A DVR representative is permanently represented on the Monthly Apprenticeship Expansion call, a statewide convening of apprenticeship partners.

**Expanding apprenticeships within the state government.** CDLE collaborated with the Department of Personnel and Administration to review policies and co-promote the use of registered apprenticeships within the state government. In the fall of 2023, Governor Polis signed an [Executive Order](#) set to increase the number of apprenticeships across state departments by 50% by the end of June 2024, creating 10 additional work-based learning programs for positions with high vacancy rates by July 2025 and have every department implement two new work-based learning programs by the end of 2025. Work-based learning programs include apprenticeships, internships or fellowships. In PY23, 10 of 19 state agencies had established registered apprenticeship programs. The Colorado Energy Office received a Scale Up Grant through SAEEL from CDLE to develop an apprenticeship program.

**Goal B: Increase the awareness of the TalentFOUND network so more individuals and businesses utilize the**



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The CWDC continued their focus on the management and promotion of My Colorado Journey, including enhancing relationships with partner organizations, providing overviews of the platform to potential partners, planning and executing an outreach campaign, and releasing two new career pathways (Aerospace and Public Safety) a refreshed career pathway in Public Health, and a communications toolkit for use by state and local government partners, schools, and community-based organizations to spread awareness across multiple stakeholders about these new career pathways as well as the My Colorado Journey platform overall.

### **Strategy 2: Map and promote in-demand industries in a future-ready way with embedded opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships in partnership with businesses and employers.**

Additional in-demand career pathways added to the My Colorado Journey platform. During PY23 new Aerospace and Public Safety, along with a refreshed Public Health, career pathways were developed by the CWDC, CCCS, and partners. In June 2024, they were published on My Colorado Journey. The addition of the new career pathways bring the total number of industries published to 15.

### **Work-based Learning for CTE Students**

As a state, Colorado exceeded the Perkins Work-based Learning (WBL) target by 20.2% for 2023, coming in at 27.2% against a target of 7%. Beginning in FY 2024-25, the secondary WBL target will be 27%. Academic year 20-21 was the first year the state measured performance on this indicator and Colorado exceeded the established performance target, even during the pandemic. As CTE programs continue to move forward, we anticipate work-based learning participation to increase and we have worked with partners across the WIOA network to provide technical assistance, playbooks, and other resources to CTE programs and school districts and we will continue to do so. CTE will have finalized 23-24 data at the end of January 2025 to report to USDOE and use to inform work moving forward.

### **Strategy 4: Tell the story of the public workforce system.**

Telling the story of the public workforce system continues to be a priority. Impacts of the system were highlighted in the 2023 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report and will again be highlighted in 2024. Over 500 attendees registered to attend the virtual launch event in PY23, and over 30 presentations were provided following the event to various stakeholders across the state, highlighting the demand for and supply of talent in Colorado and impacts the public workforce system has on the talent pipeline. After reviewing previous Talent Pipeline Reports and considering requirements, data release timing, and audiences, the decision was made to publish the first Spring Edition 2024 focused on education and training.

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Apprenticeships, and Work-Based Learning and no-cost services the 52 workforce centers statewide provide to both job seekers and employers alike giving them a Competitive Edge to jumpstart their careers or recruit the best talent.

## **Goal C: Promote career agility for all Coloradans.**

### **Strategy 1: Focus on career attachment strategies with a path to prosperity.**

Resources to advance economic mobility for frontline workers.

This strategy was executed in PY22 and reported on in the previous Annual Report. During PY23, the website EmpowermentScore.org continued to measure indicators of economic mobility for Colorado's frontline workforce. The Empowerment Score aims to measure individual, community, and economic characteristics that lead to greater employment stability and increased wages for Colorado workers, and empower state and local decision makers to increase opportunities for individuals to improve their economic status.

### **Strategy 2: Streamline processes to access lifelong upskilling, next-skilling, and reskilling opportunities that do not create undue financial burden.**

RUN programs

Nearly 12,000 Coloradans have enrolled in Reskilling, Upskilling and Next-skilling (RUN) and workforce innovation programs through local workforce areas, CWDC grant sub-recipients, Workforce Innovation grantees of workforce centers, and community-based organizations since the program launch in July 2021. Workers, job seekers, and learners impacted by the pandemic were able to take advantage of stimulus funds to earn a short-term credential leading to an in-demand, well-paying career. Training programs with the highest attendance include heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, nursing assistants, construction laborers, registered nurses, and forest and conservation.

Deploy innovative financing options to expand access to training opportunities.

During PY23 the CWDC partnered with Trailhead Strategies and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to launch the state's first Talent Finance Design Workshop. The design workshop consisted of five multi-part sessions for 12 project teams representing employers, public workforce, educational institutions, training providers, and nonprofits from across the state.

Project teams used the principles of talent finance, tools and key frameworks to develop creative solutions for making training and education for high-demand jobs more accessible while addressing employer skills needs. In November 2023, project teams began implementing talent finance solutions to address inequities in



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resources to help local stakeholders to learn more and engage in talent finance efforts. The virtual meetings are open to all partners, including local/regional/state workforce professionals, board members, Colorado's Sector Partnership Network, industry collaborators, CBOs, training providers, and educational institutions.

**Strategy 3: Provide supports to businesses and employers to enhance job quality and implement skills-based practices that support individuals.**

During PY23, the CWDC Employer Coach engaged all local workforce areas, including individual coaching for several Workforce Centers. Job quality and equity discussions focused on strategies employers can use to enhance job quality features, improve recruitment and retention efforts, and foster greater equity and inclusivity in the workplace. The Employer coach continues to meet with and present the Job Quality Framework to Chambers of Commerce to increase training and conversations on individualized job quality improvement plans for Colorado employers. Additionally, the Employer Coach reached over 800 conference attendees from multiple prominent events, engaged approximately 170 business owners through chamber partnerships and technical assistance through the SBDC Network trainers and Business Services Representatives. The Coach conducted national presentations and provided in-depth coaching for pilot businesses and government partners, and participated in workforce symposiums, sector partnerships, and education symposiums, reaching hundreds of attendees and businesses.

**Strategy 4: Enhance the delivery of career advising and navigation through technology and staff-delivered services across all system partners.**

In PY23, registered My Colorado Journey customers grew by 28%, increasing from 45,103 to 57,672. Outcomes completed increased by 15%, reaching a cumulative total of 3,022. To further expand professional engagement, training and demonstrations were provided to nearly 300 potential professional users, far surpassing the initial goal of 100. The launch of a LinkedIn page has also broadened MCJ's visibility, strengthening connections across the workforce ecosystem. In the spring of 2024, an AI-powered resume and cover letter tool was launched helping students and job seekers create strong, organized resumes by focusing on four categories: work experience, education, awards, and skills.

Connecting Colorado, the state's workforce case management and labor exchange system used to document participation and performance outcomes of workforce training programs through the Public Workforce System in Colorado, has served Coloradans since 2002. CDLE's Employment and Training Division, has contracted with two vendors to implement new Labor Exchange and Case Management systems that will work seamlessly as one system. The vendors have started their implementations and the State expects to launch the new system, offering AI tools

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and coaching services across 12 community based organizations and 10 workforce areas. The Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium hosts a portion of these coaches to provide digital coaching services within a virtual workforce area, expanding access and flexibility for those seeking support. The virtual area offers coaching in both English and Spanish, and operates outside typical business hours, ensuring accessibility for individuals who are unable to travel to a physical location.

### **Goal D: Strengthen partnerships to address job quality as well as individual and community level issues impacting economic mobility.**

#### **Strategy 1: Better serve all individuals in need of support by strengthening the alignment and information sharing across programs, in-person and virtually.**

During PY23, [HB24-1364 Education Based Workforce Readiness](#) was signed into law. This bill establishes and requires the research and implementation of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. This will expand on the previous work of the Colorado Data Trust, and greatly enhance Colorado's ability to securely and responsibly share data.

Significant time was dedicated to aligning partners both virtually, through various technical assistance modules, and in-person at key events such as the Business Services Summit, Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association Conference and Think BIG conference. A series of methods widely adopted by workforce boards across the country was introduced to address challenges, meet customer needs, and foster skill development through human-centered design concepts.

#### **Strategy 2: Support local boards in engaging businesses and key employers to address community issues including childcare, transportation, and affordable housing.**

As previously mentioned, partners within the TalentFOUND network worked together to develop the Colorado Job Quality Framework, which outlines the key attributes of a quality job and provides actionable steps for local communities, employers, and leaders to enhance job quality in Colorado. In PY23, CWDC Employer Coach presented the framework, along with tools and resources at the National Association of Workforce Boards conference.

## Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and

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and unlearning of biases and potentially harmful practices, monthly training addressing these, and other topics, were contracted from October 2023 through May 2024 by local experts in the field. These outside consultants offered training and consultation services to any grantee in the state of Colorado. Topics presented in these trainings included: identity discovery, the cycle of socialization, power, privilege, oppression, elderly abuse, LGBTQIA+ experiences and perspectives in education, racism, and others. The objectives of these training sessions were to provide an educational space for adult education providers in Colorado to learn, discover, challenge, acknowledge, and internally think about diversity, equity, and inclusion in their own lives and in the lives of the communities in which they serve. Additionally, by offering this space, there has been sincere belief that these opportunities will provide a ripple effect of change, compassion, understanding, and inclusion for all adult learners in the state of Colorado; a goal that also compliments CDE's [equity plan](#) and priorities on equity in Colorado's newly adopted [2024-2027 Combined State Plan](#) under WIOA.

### **Accessibility Efforts**

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and Colorado Department of Education collaborated to offer combined training to ensure individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities as those without disabilities through increased awareness and digital accessibility. The training sessions offered directly supported HB 21-1110 and aimed to provide accessibility and disability awareness training to state partners.

Last year, 176 attendees registered for the training sessions including representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies and several not-for-profit organizations. This year the training courses are on track to exceed last year's participation with more than 150 participants registered.

### **Adult Priority of Service and Additional Underserved Populations**

Colorado has implemented a robust [Adult priority of service policy](#) with local service providers seeking to achieve 100% of participants meeting the statutory categories.

### **Statutory Adult Priority of Service Categories for PY23: 1877/2287**

#### **(82.07%) - unique participants**

46.74%	1069	Public assistance recipient
58.70%	1331	Individual/Family income
7.61%	174	Homeless
2.36%	54	Foster Child
12.86%	294	Indiv with disability - single income

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employment as defined in WIOA. During PY23 they achieved the following outcome:

**Adults Served with Barriers to Employment: 95.29%**

### **Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Program**

Colorado's participation in the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI, which ended March 2021) built the foundation for the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) program by establishing working relationships between the workforce system and key disability-focused employment organizations, including Vocational Rehabilitation. Upon close-out of the final round of the DEI, CDLE's Workforce Development Programs (WDP) realized the need to continue the highly successful work of the Disability Resource Coordinators (DRC) from the DEI Grant Round VIII and the importance of leading a statewide focus on serving people with disabilities through the state's local workforce areas.

Employment and Training established partnerships with CDLE's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and local workforce areas, to initiate the Disability Program Navigators (DPNs). The DPNs help job seekers with disabilities by referring them to workforce centers and vocational rehabilitation programs for employment and other services. This collaboration has increased client services funding for the disability community, thereby enabling them to achieve competitive integrated employment with a liveable wage.

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative was unanimously approved by the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) and signed into the Long Appropriations Bill by Governor Polis during the 2024 legislative session. This state funding will allow DVR to draw down additional federal funds, which will sustain the work of the DPN Initiative to align workforce services for individuals with disabilities. This enhances the partnerships between E&T, DVR, and other disability-related providers, and allows for the regular and ongoing collaboration that reduces duplication of services, braids resources, and supports greater opportunities for people with disabilities to use their skills and be fully engaged in various in-demand occupations. These matching funds allow the draw down of \$1.8M, resulting in a total of \$2.36M for the program. These funds pay for 10 DPN positions in local workforce areas, 1 FTE in E&T, and 0.6 FTE in DVR. DVR will also receive an additional \$863,321.00 for case services. Since the inception of the DPN program three years ago, the local workforce areas have accomplished the following:

- 900 individuals served by program navigators (DPN)
- 175 individuals entered employment



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received [leadership awards](#) in navigating employment services for job seekers with disabilities at the National Navigator Exchange meeting hosted by the National Disability Institute on June 11, 2024.

### **Disability Awareness Training: Using the Programmatic Accessibility Course and Toolkit and HB21-1110 Colorado Laws for Persons with Disabilities**

In partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, The Rocky Mountain ADA Center (RMADAC), Employment and Training developed the third annual Disability Awareness Training focusing on HB21-1110. After completing the training, participants receive a certificate of completion provided by RMADAC and can earn continuing education units for credentialing purposes. This training is designed to ensure that participants comply with HB21-1110. Through this state legislation, Colorado is the first state to require both state and local governments to meet web accessibility standards ([House Bill 21-1110](#).)

## Waivers

### **Active Waivers Implemented**

The following waiver was approved for PY23 youth funds for the life of the funds:

- Ability to change youth expenditures from 75% out-of-school/25% in-school to 50% out-of-school/50% in-school for PY23 funds at the state and local levels

### **Projected Outcomes and Actual Results**

The Tri-County local area first implemented this waiver in PY22 and continued in PY23 to target in-school youth (ISY) with drop-out prevention services. Through partnerships with Arvada and Littleton NEXT, Project Search, School to Work Alliance Program, Jefferson County Human Services, and Jefferson County Public Schools, Tri-County engaged and supported **75 (versus 61 in PY22)** young adults to continue and complete their education goals while supporting work readiness prep activities.

Tri-County set the following goals in PY23 and exceeded both:

- **PY23 Goal:** 84% of in-school participants will succeed in dropout prevention by staying enrolled in school and/or graduating high school. **Outcome: 84.38%**
- **PY23 Goal:** Increase credential attainment rate for all Youth

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enrollments for PY23 versus 74 for PY22

- 74 total young adults in-school were provided drop-out services
- 71 continued with high school and or graduated
- 95% success rate
- Credential rate
  - Goal=65%
  - Actual=65.14%

At the state level:

- Because only two of 10 local areas implemented the waiver in PY23 and Youth funding allocations decreased by 8.57% for PY23, youth enrollments at the state level decreased overall and the number of in-school youth enrollments did not increase year over year. However, Colorado met all PY23 youth program performance measures at 95% or above.

All participating local areas in the future will track and report on in-school enrollments, and the dropout prevention rate for participants, to CDLE. CDLE will monitor credential attainment rate for the participating local areas.

### **Active Waivers not Utilized**

In PY23, the following waiver was approved by USDOL through June 30, 2024:

- Allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training (IWT)

Although several local areas served incumbent workers during PY23, no local areas utilized the waiver.

Through its active participation on workforce committees within the National Governors' Association and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, Colorado has taken a leadership role to shape and align waiver initiatives across multiple states and effect workforce policies at the national level.

### **USDOL Approves Five WIOA Waivers**

CDLE requested and was approved for five waivers of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements, allowing local workforce areas greater flexibility in their services to job seekers and businesses. Following are the waivers:

- To allow local areas to reserve up to 50% percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training (IWT) - during PY24-PY27



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- To allow the use of WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY) - during PY24 and PY25
- To allow local workforce areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and TANF funds toward the minimum 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience - during PY24 and PY25

The Employment and Training Policy Team will update its waiver policy guidance letter to assist local areas who choose to implement one or more of these waivers.

## State Evaluation Activities

### Evaluation Initiative with Northern Illinois University (NIU)

WIOA requires WDP to conduct formal evaluations of WIOA program activities to research and test innovative services and strategies and achieve high levels of performance and outcomes. Working with Northern Illinois University (NIU), WDP established a model for WIOA program evaluation using the [Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas](#). WDP and NIU continued to provide technical assistance and training for a cohort of local area staff, the WIOA Evaluation Team, to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach involving quantitative and qualitative strategies. Each local workforce area completed a quantitative analysis in the area and is performing a qualitative analysis to understand the “why” behind the numbers. The evaluation team identified best practices in each local area and incorporated recommendations to improve outcomes for the WIOA participants. The local areas use various tools, including [The Evaluation Tool](#), to independently evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs with an increased emphasis on serving marginalized populations and improving program service delivery. This work has dramatically improved the capacity of state and local workforce area staff to improve yearly program planning to produce equitable access to high-wage employment and to conduct independent program evaluations to make data-driven recommendations that maximize program performance for all customers. Colorado presented the evaluation work at three webinars and the 2023 National Performance Accountability and Reporting Convening hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor. The following tactics were

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Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas in early PY23, which addressed the evaluation of data from PY21.

### **Program Year 2023 Evaluation Team Accomplishments:**

1. Provided technical assistance and training for the local areas' evaluation leads for the year's evaluation efforts.
2. Conducted a survey of the WIOA Title I participants to gain a better understanding of why some of the disproportionate impacts in outcomes might be occurring among race/ethnicity groups.
3. Assisted with the design of state and local evaluation reports and provided training to both the WDP Evaluation Coordinator and statewide evaluation team. This report writing will further use, at the state and local area level, of results for planning and performance improvement purposes.
4. The Evaluation Team (state and local members) will continue to meet and hone evaluation skills. This investment will support local area evaluation given the costs for contracting such services is prohibitive to do on each program yearly. This team developed tools and created reports using the evaluation tools on the federal and state grants under WDP which will further quality investments and enhance service outcomes.
5. Completed participation in USDOL's Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort - Colorado was selected to participate in the Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) to learn from experienced evaluators, and state and national subject matter experts to build upon its developed and tested process for conducting WIOA Title I program evaluation. The primary goal was to build research and evaluation capacity and alignment across all four core WIOA programs and other critical workforce partners. Colorado's EvalPLC state team representing core WIOA programs collaborated to develop a capstone project that tests innovative strategies to achieve significant improvements in services impacting education, employment, housing, justice involved and foster

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- workforce centers.
- In partnership with Northern Illinois University (NIU), CDLE published the finalized PY23 evaluation report: [Colorado's WIOA Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker Annual Evaluation Report](#), which addresses the evaluation of data from PY22.

### **Program Year 2024 Planned Evaluation Team Activities:**

- With Technical Assistance and Training provided by the Northern Illinois University Workforce Policy Lab (formerly the Center for Government Studies), the EVAL Team will create a learning agenda for the PY2024 annual evaluation.
- The EVAL team will create and approve the research questions we will answer in the annual evaluation report.
- The PY2024 annual evaluation team will interview WIOA Title I participants who participated in a training program from 4/1/2019 to the present to correlate with the PY23 Colorado's WIOA Title I - [Adult and Dislocated Worker Annual Evaluation Report](#), which addresses the evaluation of data from PY22.
- The PY24 Annual Evaluation report will be completed on 6/30/2025 and will address evaluation of data from PY23.
- The EVAL Team will provide the WIOA program with continuous improvement recommendations for PY25.

Colorado will participate in and align its current evaluation efforts with those of USDOL, when requested (to date this has not occurred). By providing training to local workforce area staff to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach, Colorado will identify best practices and incorporate recommendations to further evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs. It is anticipated that this increased emphasis on serving barriered populations will increase enrollments and expand service delivery.

### **Colorado Workforce Development Council - Continuous Improvement Process**

The State Council has developed a policy that includes a set of standards for awarding Performance Incentive Funds. This Policy Guidance Letter (PGL) can be accessed at the following link:

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- [Application Guidelines](#)
- [Best Practices Form](#)

Performance Incentive Funds are issued once the state and local performance outcomes are adjusted per USDOL guidelines.

### **Adult Education Evaluation Efforts and Outcomes**

The AEI office offered opportunities for Title II Adult Education programs to gather regionally, share best-practices, learn about current state data trends, and ask questions. In August 2023, AEI held the Western Slope Regional Meeting in which three federal grantees were in attendance to share best practices and to engage in professional development activities. AEI also held a virtual regional office hour in October of the same year for a federal grantee for similar assistance and development. Additionally, the Adult Education Program Coordinators and our Data Manager met routinely with Title II Adult Education providers to assess program specific data and talk through areas of success while offering suggestions on ways to improve learner retention and credential access. Regular data monitoring efforts also took place throughout the year, in efforts to evaluate ongoing grant compliance and progress towards Statewide Performance Measures. Finally, Title II Adult Education providers piloted gathering post-exit Measures: Q2 Employment Rate, Q4 Employment Rate, Median Earnings, and Credential Rate, via surveying for the first time in 23-24. To support this new implementation effort across the state, AEI distributed additional funds to all grantees in January 2024.

### **Workforce Intelligence Data Expert Workgroup (WIDE)**

Local workforce directors appoint local staff to join and participate in a statewide data expert group aimed at ensuring consistency in workforce-related data. Through this partnership—a collaboration between Colorado's Workforce Center System and the Colorado Workforce Development Council—the WIDE group has implemented systematic changes in how all federally funded workforce programs use data to inform program evaluation and design.

WIDE worked closely with directors, State MIS, and other stakeholders to create a data system that provides actual wage data for WIOA Title I and Title III workforce programs to evaluate the effectiveness of programming through earnings outcomes for any program year back to 2010. In this report, the WIDE group is able to evaluate

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implementation:

- Colorado statewide cost per participant for individuals receiving career services through any Title I or III programs.
- Colorado statewide cost per participant for individuals receiving training services through any Title I or III programs.
- In addition, WIDE has compiled the Return on Investment (ROI) for all programs in the previous two bullet points that are outlined in the charts below.

Please note PY22 data is preliminary in the tables below and is subject to change. There is a lag in PY data due to the time required to report longitudinal wage data and Unemployment Insurance wage reporting periods. This lag is generally 1.5 to 2 program years.

**Table 1: All Workforce Programs (Including WP & WIOA)**

*PY22 data is preliminary and subject to change.*

Year	Number of Participants	Allocation	Expense	Cost per Participant	Total ROI
PY 18	191,762	\$30,802,813	\$33,572,679	\$175.07	\$374,144,441
PY 19	313,324	\$29,681,120	\$32,570,428	\$103.95	\$288,909,140
PY 20	376,565	\$28,869,434	\$30,836,570	\$81.89	\$606,028,254
PY 21	144,296	\$34,625,353	\$35,323,951	\$244.80	\$337,237,301
<b>PY 22</b>	<b>162,486</b>	<b>\$43,098,424</b>	<b>\$39,953,476</b>	<b>\$245.89</b>	<b>\$307,473,996</b>
<b>5-year ROI</b>					
<b>Total</b>	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	<b>\$1,913,793,132</b>

**Table 2: WIOA Adult**

*PY22 data is preliminary and subject to change.*

Year	Number of Participants	Allocation	Expense	Cost per Participant	Total ROI
PY 18	3,089	\$7,397,094	\$10,649,881	\$3,447.68	\$19,397,447
PY 19	2,320	\$6,664,946	\$9,321,861	\$4,018.04	\$9,250,946
PY 20	2,289	\$6,159,846	\$9,184,641	\$4,012.51	\$14,027,735
PY 21	2,941	\$8,065,914	\$11,239,786	\$3,821.76	\$21,828,874

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**Table 3: WIOA Dislocated Worker**  
 PY22 data is preliminary and subject to change.

Year	Number of Participants	Allocation	Expense	Cost per Participant	Total ROI
PY 18	1,237	\$6,102,421	\$4,455,415	\$3,601.79	\$17,087,589
PY 19	1,095	\$6,026,154	\$4,764,265	\$4,350.93	\$11,274,591
PY 20	1,284	\$5,991,897	\$5,656,628	\$4,405.47	\$14,663,164
PY 21	1,338	\$7,295,993	\$5,037,820	\$3,765.19	\$17,566,732
<b>PY 22</b>	<b>1,418</b>	<b>\$9,598,805</b>	<b>\$6,791,146</b>	<b>\$4,789.24</b>	<b>\$14,579,638</b>
<b>5-year ROI Total</b>	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	<b>\$59,949,441</b>

**Table 4: WIOA Youth**  
 PY22 data was unavailable at the time of publication. For report purposes, we are including the most recent data.

Year	Number of Participants	Allocation	Expense	Cost per Participant	Total ROI
PY17	2,605	\$8,511,996	\$8,431,623	\$3,236.71	\$2,692,217
PY18	2,626	\$7,952,674	\$8,828,866	\$3,362.10	\$2,582,678
PY19	1,909	\$7,167,065	\$7,907,015	\$4,141.97	\$868,865
PY20	1,464	\$6,773,853	\$6,461,918	\$4,413.88	\$2,204,282
<b>PY 21</b>	<b>1,719</b>	<b>\$8,860,712</b>	<b>\$7,749,981</b>	<b>\$4,508.42</b>	<b>\$3,335,899</b>
<b>5-year ROI Total</b>	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	<b>\$11,683,941</b>

In addition to state and local area ROI reporting, the WIDE group achieved several milestones during PY 21 and PY 22. The team worked closely with the statewide WIOA evaluation workgroup, ensuring alignment and coordination on critical evaluation activities. WIDE continues to work to share best practices among local regions as well as providing the CWDC with additional labor market and economic data support as needed.

**Statewide Performance Measures**

Measures are for PY23, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Colorado met all statewide performance targets.

**Table 5: Title I PY23 - Adult**

PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024

Adult Measures	Statewide	Standards
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Credential Rate	76.65%	76.6%
Measurable Skills Gains	68.54%	63.5%

**Table 6: Title I PY23 - Dislocated Worker**  
*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

Dislocated Worker Measures	Statewide	Standards
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	72.48%	74.0%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	72.97%	76.0%
Median Earnings	\$11,709.00	\$10,500.00
Credential Rate	76.35%	70.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	72.86%	65.0%

**Table 7: Title I PY23 - Youth**  
*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

Youth Measures	Statewide	Standards
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	72.43%	68.2%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	71.14%	67.0%
Median Earnings	\$5,609.00	\$4,073.00
Credential Rate	65.63%	62.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	59.66%	55.0%

**Table 8: Title II PY22 - Adult Education**  
*PY23 data will be submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

Adult Education Measures	Statewide	Standards
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	26.71%	22%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	29.76%	25%
Median Earnings	\$6,933.63	\$5,800
Credential Rate	41.40%	17.7%
Measurable Skills Gains	51.55%	41%

**Table 9: Title III PY22 - Wagner-Peyser**  
*PY23 (unadjusted) data submitted to the National Reporting System in November 2024*

Wagner-Peyser Measures	Statewide	Standards
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	63.39%	53.0%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	62.65%	54.0%
Median Earnings	\$8,700.00	\$6,200.00



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Qtr 2 Entered Employment Rate	55.9%	52.8%
Qtr 4 Entered Employment Rate	56.0%	50.8%
Median Earnings	\$5,037	\$4,633
Credential Rate	23.3%	26.5%
Measurable Skills Gains	38.7%	35.0%

### Effectiveness In Serving Employers

Colorado has previously tracked all three pilot employer measures as defined by USDOL. However, we are now focusing on the Employee Retention Rate as required by USDOL.

### Employee Retention Rate - PY23 Outcome: **64.53%**

- This measure resulted in the highest outcomes of the three pilot measures, and is now the actual measure.

## Customer Satisfaction

### Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser - Workforce Development Programs, CDLE

Through the Statewide Business Services Alignment initiative, local business services staff identified 11 staff-assisted business services available to all business customers. Businesses receiving any of the core services are automatically emailed a customer satisfaction survey. The standardized questions asked on each survey result in metrics that provide staff with valuable information that can be utilized to address issues with their service provision, and create an open feedback loop that supports continuous improvement. A report of outcomes is available on demand, and works in conjunction with a business services report that shows the volume of business activities and highlights the placement rate achieved by businesses in workforce center supported efforts.

Employers receiving services were asked to rate the following statement: "My engagement with the workforce center helped me find the right number of employees with the skills and experience I need." **PY23 Outcome: 97.12% of employers were satisfied or very satisfied.**

### The Office of Adult Education Initiatives, CDE

In the first half of PY23, Title II Adult Education programs received additional funds to gather post-exit employment and income data from learners, due to those data collection efforts, deployment of the customer satisfaction survey was delayed. The



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As a means of measuring customer satisfaction among business customers, DVR's Business Relations Unit (BRU) has an established customer satisfaction process designed to gather feedback across five key satisfaction measures. The satisfaction ratings per key measure for PY23 include: 1) Timely and courteous service (94.85%); 2) Information or service met my needs (94.33%); 3) BRU staff member was knowledgeable on the topic (96.19%); 4) Overall satisfied (94.12%); and 5) How likely are you to seek services from the BRU again (91.96%). When combined, these measures resulted in an overall customer satisfaction rating of 94.29% for the period of PY23. The Business Relations Unit continues to lean into the hybrid business model of providing services to businesses both virtually as well as in-person, based on the preference of the business customer. This has allowed for the Business Relations Unit to be more creative in our service delivery model and meet a variety of business needs and requests. Through this continued adaptation, the Business Relations Unit continues to maintain a high customer satisfaction rating among our business customers.

### **Job Seeker/Customer Satisfaction Data**

#### **Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser – Workforce Development Programs, CDLE**

During PY23 local areas in Colorado conducted independent job seeker customer satisfaction surveys through the use of locally determined survey questions and methodologies. Because of the closure of offices during the pandemic, the transition to virtual services, and the diversion of staff resources to assist customers with unemployment insurance claim issues out of the control of workforce centers, use of surveys was limited until offices reopened. Those that were used primarily focused on customer satisfaction with virtual workshops rather than overall program services or workforce center experiences. In addition, due to variations in methodologies, survey results were not comparable across local areas.

#### **The Office of Adult Education Initiatives, CDE**

Title II Adult Education programs did not collect employer satisfaction data in PY23 or prior years. The majority of allowable activities under Title II funds are customer-facing services rather than employer-facing services. AEI continues to collaborate with Workforce Development Programs at CDLE on the Statewide and Local Performance Report by sharing employer name, address, and FEIN. These data elements are used to match on the measure of Effectiveness in Serving Employers, to be defined as Retention with the Same Employer and no longer collected as a baseline. This update reflects the final rule which took effect March 25, 2024, and defined the Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary

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gather more meaningful information, while increasing the ease of use for stakeholders completing the survey. The survey is available to all internal and external stakeholders who engage with DVR.

Through July 31, 2024, the statewide customer satisfaction rating was 80.49%. 84.38% of respondents found DVR to be welcoming; 81.41% said DVR staff were helpful; 79.53% found DVR staff to be knowledgeable; and 71.88% reported DVR staff were responsive. DVR continues to explore strategies to improve the customer experience and ensure individuals interacting with DVR receive the best experience possible. Current strategies include modernization of DVR's case management system to support efficiencies within the VR process, recruitment and retention of qualified staff, and recruitment of service providers to ensure access to high quality, timely services statewide.

## Performance Accountability System

### **Monitoring System**

CDLE's comprehensive monitoring system, recognized as a model by the US Department of Labor (USDOL), is the result of an on-going monitoring and technical assistance process that has built a strong working relationship between the State and the Local Workforce Areas. Quarterly, State Monitors from CDLE review the local areas they oversee to analyze client service levels, program expenditure rates, and performance outcome results. Through these reviews, staff identifies areas that may require additional technical assistance and training to rectify any deficiencies prior to the start of the annual state compliance monitoring.

For the PY23 annual monitoring cycle, CDLE is in the fourth year of a Unified Monitoring Process with a team consisting of the CDLE Regional Services Unit (RSU), Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU), and Equal Opportunity Officer (EO). Together they will:

- Notify local areas of upcoming annual monitoring reviews
- Conduct a combined annual monitoring entrance and exit
- Conduct a combined annual mitigation process
- Issue a combined annual monitoring report

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performance indicators for each local area. This report contains data from the WIOA reporting system and when evaluated along with data from the state financial system; it paints a picture of the current progress toward program and fiscal performance goals.

### **Common Exit Policy And Data Validation**

The state has updated and reissued two Policy Guidance Letters after review by the US Department of Labor. These PGLs and attachments can be viewed at the following links:

- [MIS-2020-03: Data Integrity and the Participation Cycle for WIOA and TAA Programs](#) - includes common exit policy.
- [MIS-2023-01: Data Validation for WIOA and TAA Programs](#) - includes the following: written procedures, regular training, monitoring protocols, review of program data, documentation, and regular assessment.

## Exhibit A - Local Workforce Area Highlights

### **Adams County Local Area**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

Mission: Create opportunities for success by connecting businesses to a quality workforce.

Vision: To effectively connect a world-class workforce that meets the needs and exceeds the expectations of our partners in the Adams County business community.

#### **Standout Accomplishments PY23: Veterans Priority of Service**

During the CDLE monitoring process in October 2023, it was identified that the Veteran Priority of Service measure at the Adams County Workforce and Business Center (ACWBC) was at 14.2%, significantly below the USDOL standard of 48%. This indicates that our performance in prioritizing services for veterans was not meeting the expected benchmarks. The goal was to increase our Veteran Priority of Service measure to align with the USDOL standard of 48%.

Although all ACWBC team members rotate to assist walk-in customers, the Career Services team proactively developed a strategy to enhance the number of individualized services provided to our Veteran customers. The team began by reviewing the current process and recognized the need for

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letter (PGL). The JVSG representatives then worked with the state to update the language in the PGL which included the adoption of the process map to become a part of the PGL. Once the updated PGL was in place, state representatives from the JVSG program provided training to all ACWBC staff members to ensure all were trained on the process to provide services to all Veterans.

Following this training the Career Services team took it upon themselves to begin running reports and following up with veterans who did not initially receive the necessary services to ensure that all criteria for reporting were met.

These combined efforts resulted in an incredible increase in the number of individualized services offered to our Veteran customers to the rate of 86.11% which far exceeded the USDOL standard.

### **Arapahoe/Douglas Local Area**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: To be a best-in-class workforce development organization responsive to the dynamic needs of job seekers and business/industry.

Mission: To strategically invest in human capital to contribute to regional economic vitality.

#### **Standout Accomplishments PY23:**

The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board has long been dedicated to being data-informed and labor-market driven in all aspects of strategic visioning and workforce development solutions, expertise, and service provision. These efforts help engage, support, and further relevant, customer-centered, business-informed, and innovative workforce development in our local area, region, state, and nationally. The shift in economic conditions following the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the subsequent growing structural scarcity in the labor market, introduced new and unprecedented challenges for business and industry, requiring swift adaptation and innovative solutions. To ensure our workforce development strategies and solutions prepare business, industry, job seekers, and partners for the unprecedented labor market landscape, we employed continuous evaluation and adaptation to ensure the needs of business, industry, job seekers, and labor market are analyzed and addressed to foster economic vitality in the region. This need required the Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board to identify new opportunities for business engagement, the provision of impactful and meaningful jobseeker

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a strong economic infrastructure through development of skills-based learning endeavors, including registered apprenticeships, and long-term learning to meet the demands of business/industry and job seekers within the region," was to identify new avenues to increase engagement and input from business, industry, economic development entities, chambers of commerce, community partners, job seekers, as well as through sourcing expertise from other relevant stakeholders to further inform data intelligence and workforce development services that best meet the needs of our labor market and regional economy, while also providing meaningful, relevant, and impactful business education, business engagement opportunities, and events developed through data-driven and labor-market informed strategies and solutions, ensuring talent and training pipelines are competitive and can meet the needs of today and in the future.

The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board utilized a variety of initiatives and strategies to address this need:

1. Development of Workforce Development Board task forces focused on topics identified by the Board including, Mental Health, Young Adult Outreach and Engagement, and Marketing/Outreach/Engagement. These topics were identified as needed strategies to best address the needs of our customers, local area, and region. Through our task force implementation, we ensured we included a variety of stakeholders, both internal and external, to identify key strategies and initiatives for each group to collectively address. Please see the results section for an overview of each task force's initiatives and outcomes.
2. The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board and Arapahoe/Douglas Works! led a partnership with South Metro Denver Chamber to host a Workforce Development Conference in September 2023 as a way to engage local business, industry, jobseekers, and other key stakeholders in the community, to provide data-informed, business-informed education on key workforce development topics and solutions.

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event, the “Air N Space-A-Palooza,” a full-day event of immersive career exploration learning opportunities and career pathway navigation in August 2024, including a flight simulator.

The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board’s Mental Health task force successfully completed identified strategies for sharing mental health resources, offering business and community mental health education events hosted through Arapahoe/Douglas Works! in partnership with AllHealth Network, developing a collection of mental health resources, and collaborating with education and other workforce partners to provide data supporting new micro credentials that enhance the behavioral health career pathway and sector in our local area and region.

The Young Adult Outreach and Engagement Task force aims to further support young adults and foster increased access and engagement with workforce development programs, services, and resources. Task force participants currently include leaders from local school districts, Career and Technical Education coordinators, representatives from higher education, young adult training providers, teachers, Board members, and Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Staff, as well as other workforce development representatives. In alignment with the goal of increasing young adult involvement and access to workforce development, the task force and Arapahoe/Douglas Works! partnered with two community colleges, Arapahoe Community College (ACC) and Community College of Aurora (CCA), to organize a job fair at each community college location for young adults in March 2024. With over 20 businesses and nearly 30 young adults attending the job fair hosted at the ACC Sturm Collaboration Campus and nearly 80 young adults attending the job fair at CCA. Both Community Colleges want to make this an annual event.

The Marketing/Outreach/Engagement task force aims to expand awareness of workforce development services and resources to job seekers, businesses and other relevant stakeholders and partners in order to increase access and enhance the positive economic impact of Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Efforts have included, but are not limited to, expanded social media campaigns, targeted messaging, collection of feedback on outreach materials, and the use of multimedia formats to share messaging. The task force is also working to identify where there may be gaps in awareness or access to services in the local area and region. As a result of the task force initiatives and their targeted, expanded outreach,



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topics of AI, Untapped Labor Pools, Job Quality, and K-12 and Higher Education. Several Workforce Development Board members participated as panel members to share their areas of expertise, including Dr. Mordecai Brownlee and Dr. Stephanie Fujii as representatives of Higher Education. Attendees included business, industry, jobseekers, and numerous workforce ecosystem partners.

Arapahoe/Douglas Works! as the Aerospace Sector Partnership convener led "Air N Space-A-Palooza" event at the Wings Over the Rockies. This sector and business-informed event resulted in engagement from Aerospace and STEM business leaders, education, and economic development partners, including many Board members as representatives. This event provided an opportunity for career exploration in STEM and Aerospace, including hands-on simulation opportunities, and access to a variety of information and resources tied to Aerospace and STEM career pathways, training opportunities, and employment opportunities. There were over 720 attendees at the event! Furthermore, in alignment with this sector initiative, Arapahoe/Douglas Works! supplied data to the Colorado Workforce Development Council for the development of the Aerospace Career Pathway on My Colorado Journey. Moreover, this event also featured involvement from three teacher externs selected to explore STEM career pathways and develop resources they can share with their schools and classrooms, and culminated with a Lockheed Martin intern graduation ceremony, furthering their partnership with the workforce development system and Arapahoe/Douglas Works!.

While the Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board has been a leader statewide and nationally in delivering data-driven and business-informed strategies and solutions, the current workforce development landscape necessitates new avenues of partnerships, business solutions, customer-centered strategies, and education opportunities to ensure we continue to foster a competitive and vibrant economy and community. These new models of engagement, including the work of the task forces, the workforce showcase, and our sector event, ensure we continue to serve as a vital resource for workforce development strategies, solutions, services, and programming. These innovative practices also allowed for input on key topics in ways that are inclusive of internal and external stakeholders, and that focus on current and evolving business, industry, and jobseeker needs while strengthening partnerships and advancing our responsiveness and relevance in the workforce development ecosystem.

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Mission: To provide comprehensive and effective employment, training, and supportive services to Boulder County residents.

**Standout Accomplishments PY23:**

Green jobs are evolving rapidly, reflecting a broader commitment in Boulder County and beyond to environmental sustainability and transition to a green economy. Green jobs are expanding in various sectors, including renewable energy (solar, wind, and hydro power), energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, and environmental conservation. Governments, nonprofits, and businesses are increasingly investing in green technologies and practices, which drives demand for skilled workers.

In efforts to develop a career path in the sustainability sector, WfBC has partnered with the Boulder County Office of Sustainability (OSCAR). We have hired a Green Jobs Specialist who is working closely with OSCAR to develop a career pathway for Green Jobs through business engagement, WBL opportunities, job development, training program development, and apprenticeship program development.

Here are specific ways in which this effort has resulted in impact for the following categories:

**Work-based learning opportunities (Youth, Adult/DW, transitional jobs, incumbent workers)**

- Many green jobs, particularly in fields like engineering, environmental science, and advanced technology, do require specialized education and technical skills.
- The requirement for advanced degrees or technical skills in many green jobs can pose barriers for individuals from lower-income backgrounds. Higher education, particularly in specialized fields, can be expensive and may not be accessible to everyone. This can limit opportunities for people from underrepresented, BIPOC, and historically marginalized communities to take advantage of the growing green economy.
- Addressing disparities in educational access and affordability is crucial for increasing diversity in green jobs.

We will be working to develop partnerships and WBL opportunities specifically in green trades that



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- Developing career pathways which are driven by business needs and supported by WfBC and community partners, will ensure skills needed to enable a green workforce are being taught to job seekers.
- Green jobs and green trades are rapidly evolving, providing a forum for businesses to continually provide feedback into job training programs is essential. Currently, many businesses are “going it alone”, since collaborating while building and innovating the green economy is not a priority.

The WfBC Green Jobs initiative will fill this gap by creating a forum for the collective voice of businesses to be heard and career pathways to be developed. We will be working closely with community partners, businesses, and training providers to establish career pathways for young adults and adults into green jobs.

#### **Business Engagement, Enhancement, WIOA Services**

- The green job sector encompasses a wide range of roles, from technical positions such as engineers and scientists to administrative and support roles in environmental organizations, policy-making, and green business management.
- Many green jobs, like an energy auditor or electric vehicle technician did not exist a decade ago. Currently, green jobs share DOL job codes with nonjob codes, making it difficult for employers to gauge trends and identify talents. Now these roles, and many others, are paving the way for well-paid sustainable careers.

Actively engaging with business to understand their needs and support recruitment into their positions is critical for a green economy to be successful. While green jobs are growing and offer promising career paths, there are significant challenges related to access, education, and social equity. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from community partners, educational institutions, and the private sector to ensure that the transition to a green economy benefits all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic background. We will be conducting

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in the green trades. WfBC Green Trades Program aims to provide pathways into green careers through hands-on training, certification programs, and scholarships, which can help make green jobs more accessible to a broader demographic.

Increasing the number of underrepresented workers in green trades, such as electrification, solar, heat pump technology (HVAC-R), and energy auditing, involves developing a variety of goals and strategies to address barriers and create more inclusive pathways. The targets include:

- 1) Creating Partnerships and Collaborations in the Green Jobs Industry
  - a. **Business Engagement:** Develop partnerships between green trade and green technology companies and educational institutions (FRCC and Energy Efficiency Business Coalition) to create training, internship, and apprenticeship programs for underrepresented students.
  - b. **Career Pathways:** Develop Mentorship Programs for young adults: Working with WfBC's Young Adult team, establish mentorship programs pairing individuals from underrepresented groups with experienced professionals in green trades. This can provide guidance, networking opportunities, and career advice.
- 2) Supporting Industry and Community Educational and Training Programs:
  - a. **Career pathways:** Led by industry and supported by public partners, develop career pathways that build skills and credentials that meet the green trades industry demand and prepare job seekers for jobs and careers.
  - b. **Business Engagement:** Partner with industry to expand and develop targeted training initiatives: Working with industry and community partners, leverage specialized training programs and certifications in green trades that are accessible to underrepresented groups.

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- experience to enter the workforce.
- d. **WBL:** Explore opportunities to use grant funding to help with financial support for job seekers: Provide financial support through grant and other funding opportunities specifically for qualified individuals from underrepresented backgrounds who are pursuing education and training in green technologies.
- 3) Awareness and Outreach
    - a. **All:** Identify and maximize community engagement opportunities throughout Boulder Country: Conduct outreach and awareness campaigns, including Green Job Panels and Green Trade job fairs, in communities that are underrepresented in green trades. Highlight the benefits, career opportunities, and long-term impacts of working in these fields.
    - b. **Business Engagement:** Launch regular workshops and seminars in English and Spanish: Working with industry and community partners, host workshops, and seminars focused on green trades, featuring mentors and professionals from diverse backgrounds to inspire and inform potential candidates.
  - 4) Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting
    - a. **All:** Research Barriers to entering the green trades workforce for underrepresented and young adult groups: Conduct research to understand the specific barriers faced by underrepresented groups in entering and advancing in green trades. Use this information to inform targeted interventions.
    - b. **All:** Highlight Role Models: If employers and newly employed individuals feel

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supporting job seekers in securing employment in other trades with the intent to apply best practices to the green trades program. This review included assessing existing training programs, job placement services, and outreach efforts specific to energy auditing, heat pump technology, electrical work, and insulation.

As part of this exploration, WfBC partnered with OSCAR (Office of Sustainability, Climate Action, and Resiliency) to hire a Green Trades Specialist, devoted to creating a Green Jobs and Green Trades Workforce Program.

We conducted research and gathered feedback from industry professionals, partner office, and educational institutions. This involved:

- Industry Insights: Consulting with experts in energy auditing, heat pump technology, electrical work, and insulation to identify industry needs and trends.
- Educational Institutions: Collaborating with FRCC and EEBBC schools and vocational training centers to assess current green trade curricula and opportunities.
- Certifying organizations: Identify fast-track certifications, like the North American Technician Excellence Ready to Work certificate, for job seekers looking to enter the workforce immediately.

Our strategy focuses on:

- Who we will serve: Workforce members who are currently underrepresented in green trades, including those from diverse backgrounds and those with limited access to related education or training.
- What we will do: The increase in historically underrepresented workforce participation in green trades through improved access to training, mentorship, and job opportunities.
- Form partnerships between green trade and technology companies, community partners, and educational institutions (e.g., FRCC, Energy Efficiency Business Coalition, Denver Office of Sustainability, FRBEN, OSCAR).

Additional expected results in 2024 include:

- 1) Developing Career Pathways with industry leaders, including

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- 3) Supporting green trades certificate programs, including NATE Ready to Work for heat pump and HVAC-R technicians and EPA 608 certification.
- 4) Consult Green Job Panels and Green Trade job fairs in partnership with local businesses including HVAC technicians and Electric Vehicle companies.

**Lessons Learned:**

Implementing a Green Trades Program focused on encouraging historically marginalized and BIPOC communities to enter the environmental field has already yielded several important lessons. Here are some examples of our lessons learned:

- 1) **Focus on inclusion and equity in outreach.** Effective outreach strategies need to be culturally relevant and address specific barriers faced by marginalized communities, especially language barriers. By engaging with the City of Longmont and the Latino Chamber, and identifying training in job seekers native language we expect to provide better access to services and jobs for these populations . Understanding the best ways to connect with these communities can significantly enhance recruitment efforts.
- 2) **Work with the early adopter businesses first.** Green technology adoption is growing, but is not part of every business model, therefore a multi-level approach to identifying apprenticeship and WBL opportunities is needed. While some businesses have adopted green technologies like Heat Pumps and Hot Water Heat Pumps, other HVAC companies still rely on natural gas technologies they have been installing and maintaining for the life of their business. Workforce offices will find the most success starting with companies that already use green technology and need talented workers, while allowing the sustainability office to market and create programs to encourage laggard businesses to move in the green direction.
- 3) **Start small.** Focus on specific green trades, and then grow the model. Lessons about what works for heat




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green trades are evolving, which means job skills are evolving, means career pathways and work-based learning approaches must be fluid. There are several green trades that can benefit from work-based learning and career pathways, but since green technology is evolving rapidly, trying to make the outcomes flexible and meeting the current business rather than making them perfect will create scalable results.

By focusing on communities that are often disproportionately affected by environmental issues, the program can help address disparities and advocate for more equitable environmental policies. A Green Trades Program aimed at encouraging historically marginalized and BIPOC communities to enter the environmental field and green trades is innovative in its approach to increasing social equity and environmental justice. Expected outcomes:

- 1) **Social equity:** Better job opportunities and economic benefits can lead to improved social outcomes, including lower crime rates, better health, and higher educational attainment within these communities. The Green Trades jobs will lead to a more diverse workforce in green trades and environmental fields, bringing a variety of perspectives and experiences to these sectors and by providing access to good-paying jobs, the program can help elevate economic status within marginalized communities, contributing to greater financial stability and wealth accumulation.
- 2) **Environmental Justice and Community Impact:** As more individuals from these communities enter the field, there is a positive impact on local environmental projects, leading to improved environmental conditions and community well-being. The program fosters greater awareness about environmental issues and green careers within marginalized communities, encouraging broader engagement in sustainability efforts. By focusing on communities that are often disproportionately affected by environmental issues, the program can help address disparities and

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- Collaborate with local businesses, community partners, training providers, and other stake holders to combine resources, streamline efforts, and as a result accelerate and deepen the impact that can be made in the community as it relates to business engagement, WBL, and career pathway development.
- Focus on specific sectors at one time to better align needs and opportunities.
- Seek customer input along the way; job seekers and businesses alike.
- Engage traditionally under-represented communities to help address labor shortages, provide more equitable access to job opportunities and career paths, and to increase talent pipeline for the future.

### **Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: Every Colorado business has access to a skilled workforce and every Coloradan has access to meaningful employment, resulting in statewide economic vitality.

Mission: To foster business-focused workforce partnerships, effectively preparing rural Coloradans for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

#### **Standout Accomplishments PY23:**

During this program year a reorganization of all functions was implemented. Prior to the reorganization, the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium (CRWC) faced several challenges, including fragmented service delivery, inconsistent communication across teams, and a lack of alignment in roles and responsibilities. These issues led to inefficiencies in meeting the needs of our diverse rural communities, difficulties in providing consistent and equitable services across all 51 counties, as well as lack of sufficient fiscal accountability and notable gaps in performance compliance.

The primary goal of the reorganization was to create a more agile, efficient, and cohesive workforce system that could better serve the rural communities of Colorado. Specific objectives included realigning staff roles and responsibilities

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team, managers, and staff across all zones.  
Key actions included:

- **Leadership Realignment:** New leadership positions were created or reassigned to ensure that each region had strong, focused leadership. This included the appointment of new Talent Development Managers, Career Services Managers, and Business Strategy Team leaders.
- **Role Clarification and Standardization:** Position descriptions for Labor & Employment Specialists (LES) I, II, III, and IV were standardized to align with the new organizational structure, promoting consistency in job duties and expectations across the CRWC.
- **Communication and Feedback Loops:** Weekly ReOrg ReCap emails were implemented to keep all staff informed of changes and updates, fostering transparency and open communication.
- **Training and Transition Support:** A series of sharing sessions and training programs were conducted to help staff transition smoothly into their new roles and understand the new organizational processes. Additionally, tools like the Career Services tracking and referral system were introduced to enhance service delivery.

The reorganization resulted in a more streamlined and efficient CRWC, with significant improvements in service delivery and staff engagement. Some of the key outcomes included:

- **Enhanced Service Delivery:** The realignment led to more consistent and equitable services across all regions, as reflected in the improved coordination between Talent Development, Career Services, Sector and Industry, Quality Assurance and Business Strategy teams. As an example, the newly formed Business Strategy team underwent comprehensive training that incorporated job quality principles and resulted in the CRWC exceeding the engagement goals by serving



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- engagement. Employees felt more informed and involved in the organizational changes.
- **Increased Accountability:** A key focus of the CRWC reorganization was to ensure programmatic excellence and quality while delivering consistent, replicable services across all 51 counties. A central element of this plan was the creation of the Quality Assurance team, established in October 2023, which has led to the following improvements:
    - **Dedicated Auditor:** Conducts file audits to assist with overall compliance.
    - **Dedicated Specialists:** Available to answer questions and troubleshoot eligibility issues.
    - **Dedicated Analyst:** Performs follow-ups and quality checks at program exit.
    - **Extensive Quality Reviews:** Nearly 800 file reviews have been conducted since the Quality Assurance & Compliance Team's inception. All eligibility determinations and expenditures are thoroughly reviewed to ensure accuracy, clarity, and proper documentation. This level of oversight has already had a positive impact, promoting a consistent approach to eligibility and expenditure approvals while identifying valuable training opportunities for the Talent Development teams.
    - **Improved Performance Metrics:** At the conclusion of the program year, the CRWC exceeded all WIOA/WP measures, indicating that the reorganization had a positive impact on the Consortium's overall performance. Additionally, for the first time, the CRWC was able to demonstrate the meeting of the 20% Youth work-based learning spending requirement. This is particularly noteworthy because this was a measure that the State had experienced challenges in meeting the measure overall.

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ongoing feedback loops and training ensured that the transition was smooth and that all employees were prepared to excel in their new roles.

### Denver Local Area

#### Mission & Vision:

Vision: Our economic strategy must be boldly ambitious, with innovative, forward-thinking policies that are intent upon delivering a world-class city where everyone matters. The Denver Workforce Development Board will be the sought-after partnership model of business, workforce, community, educational, and civic leaders that empowers all job seekers to learn and grow so they can contribute to and fulfill the needs of a vibrant business community.

Mission: Denver Economic Development and Opportunity will be a driving force that advances economic prosperity for the City of Denver, its businesses, neighborhoods, and residents through purposeful and intentional economic development that:

- 1) broadens the tax base;
- 2) stimulates balanced economic growth through business assistance, neighborhood revitalization, and the development of a skilled workforce; and
- 3) focuses on innovation, sustainability, and education. The Denver WDB convenes key workforce partners including business leaders, education partners, and the Mayor's economic and workforce development team who plan and oversee the use of federal, state, and local funds to deliver talent development solutions to Denver area businesses so they can generate employment opportunities for all job seekers and provide Denver citizens with a thriving economy.

#### Standout Accomplishments PY23:

For Denver Construction Careers Program, several areas could be considered as best practice. For this report, we feel Career Pathway Development is an area we consider as a best practice. Over the past year, DCCP has worked diligently to provide funding support for our local training partners. Our funding partners are focused on pre apprenticeship and incumbent worker training. Our best practice was created in consultation with DEDO's Data & Technology team.

This is the first year DCCP has offered funding support for businesses and training providers

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from the pilot allowed our partners to easily enter outcomes and deliverables as per the contract. We are now able to document and track the progress of our program partners in real time and within a fraction of the time required in Connecting Colorado.

The goal is to ensure the funding provided by DCCP is tracked and documented in a place where all parties can easily and accurately enter program deliverables and outcome/results.

We can track outcomes and deliverables in real time along with tracking the project spending levels. This is both innovative and extremely useful in managing multiple contracts and allows us to compare how our funded partners are doing. It is also a document that can be used to determine if contract extensions are warranted.

For others, it would be beneficial to work with your team or data analyst who can help formulate your data in a visually compelling display. It is not just good enough to have the numbers, we need to make sure the numbers tell the story in ways that can be easily interpreted.

### **Larimer County Local Area**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

**Vision:** We are a vital, energetic, recognized leader employing a deep understanding of economic and workforce trends to positively influence the Northern Colorado economy and to create better lives for all who live and work here.

**Mission:** Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development connects people to meaningful work and businesses to talent and resources, improving our community's economic well-being. We care and our customers matter.

**Values:** Customer Focuses, Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Culture of Innovation, Inclusivity

#### **Standout Accomplishments PY23:**

Prior to the implementation of the Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC), created in 1993, there were limited opportunities for young adults in Larimer County to engage in work-based learning experiences focused on environmental conservation and stewardship with the component of providing service to the community. The community lacked a structured program that combined hands-on work with educational components to address pressing environmental issues such as water and energy conservation, fire

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environmental challenges in the community. The program aimed to foster environmental stewardship, improve local ecosystems, and prepare participants for work, some of whom desired future careers in conservation and related fields and others who simply were seeking an opportunity to gain work experience.

The Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development department collaborated with a private employer, and local government agencies and community organizations to design and implement the inaugural Larimer County Conservation Corps. Over time, the service model has expanded from a summer-only program to a rich, year-round set of diverse programming that incorporates a variety of conservation and service elements that introduce corps members to career pathways of the future. The network of partners has grown, including but not limited to connections to federal programming (AmeriCorps), the implementation of the state-wide Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA), and dozens of past and present funders that value the outcomes of our work. Key actions in the design of a corps model include:

- Community mapping and stakeholder conversations to understand what opportunities and problems to solve would occur if a conservation corps entered our community.
- Identifying a myriad of funding opportunities to build the revenue structure to implement a paid work-based learning program. This includes revenue beyond staff time and corps member training and wages in areas such as tools and vehicle assets.
- Recruiting and training young adults for conservation projects.
- Partnering with experts in water and energy conservation, fire and flood mitigation, and trail restoration to provide specialized training and supervision.
- Adapting internal infrastructure to move towards a fee-for-service contract model that positions LCCC to obtain paid revenues.
- Organizing work crews to carry out projects such as installing energy-efficient fixtures, creating defensible spaces to reduce fire risk, constructing and maintaining trails, and implementing flood mitigation measures.
- Incorporating educational workshops and certifications to

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The program successfully engaged over 57 corps members in the 2023 calendar year, who collectively served over 26,000 hours on various conservation projects. Quantifiable outcomes included:

- Completion of 396 free efficiency assessments and installation of 167 high efficiency toilets in the Fort Collins and Loveland communities.
- Maintenance of 14 miles of trail improving accessibility and promoting outdoor recreation.
- Implementation of fire mitigation measures in 200 acres of high-risk areas, significantly reducing the threat of wildfires.
- Execution of flood mitigation projects that enhanced water management in flood-prone zones, protecting over 300 homes and properties.
- Completion of 98 acres of fire mitigation including creation of 642 slash piles in high-risk fire areas for the protection of the local watershed.
- Certification of 32 members in Wilderness First Aid and S-212 wildland fire chainsaws.
- Execution of LCCC hiring event for corpsmembers and alumni as well as over five career exploration days.
- Successful post-program job placement of all water and energy crew members.
- Completion of 5,000 hours of education and training, including resume workshops, mental health training, and career panels.

This practice is innovative because it integrates multiple aspects of environmental conservation into a cohesive, hands-on learning experience for young adults, in a career field that is directly related to the growing climate challenges we face. By combining practical work with education and certifications, the program not only addresses immediate environmental needs, but also prepares participants for future careers in conservation and climate resilience.

The collaborative approach, involving various stakeholders, ensures a comprehensive and impactful program that can be replicated in other communities. Being embedded at the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development department has allowed a unique level of partnering and influence leveraging to aid both

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Vision: We promote the economic vitality of the Pikes Peak Area. We are agile at responding to emerging needs of the diverse and growing workforce. We change the lives of job seekers with proven training and employment opportunities. Our employer partners know and acknowledge the value we add to their bottom line. We are a model for the responsible use of federal funds and a leader in workforce development, organizational effectiveness, and collaborative partnerships. And, we are a great place to work!

Mission: To promote the economic vitality of the Pikes Peak Area by fulfilling its mission to

connect vital businesses with work-ready job seekers and employer-driven services.

### **Standout Accomplishments PY23:**

**Job Quality** - Employers in our region have been unsure about how to highlight what benefits they offer with potential applicants. The goal was to ensure employers understood what Job Quality is and how to effectively communicate the benefits they already offer to prospective candidates. We polled local employers to identify the various job quality aspects they offer. In response, we created attractive table tents which display various benefits, such as Internships & Apprenticeships, Internal Promotions, Professional Development, Educational Benefits, Paid Transportation, etc., to advertise these aspects.

Employers used these table tents at job fairs to attract job seekers to their tables. During these events, job seekers were quickly able to identify what job qualities the business was highlighting. This led to us creating a resource handout for job seekers with potential questions to ask hiring managers/recruiters regarding job quality. It gives employers an opportunity to connect and promote their business to job seekers resulting in a more interactive event.

We have had multiple businesses ask for more information about job quality and wonder why we are offering these table tents at our events. Our staff has to reprint many of these job quality table tents as most employers like to take them to use at other events.

By identifying the ten most common job quality aspects, employers were better prepared for meaningful and relevant discussions with job seekers. Many employers were pleased to learn they were already meeting job quality expectations – and discovered new ways to talk about their company and open positions.

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with PWFC.

**Sector Partnerships** - The healthcare partnership identified Career Pathways and Behavioral Health as top workforce issues. They were lacking clear career paths, and entry-level positions were not clearly defined. Additionally, job titles for the same position varied depending on the employer.

The goal was to align education pathways, and the skills needed in the field, as well as to provide a clearer path for job seekers entering healthcare. Additionally, the goal was to offer billable services for proper reimbursement.

Healthcare partners collaborated with Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) to provide input on the Behavioral Health bachelor's degree curriculum and on stackable certificates that allow individuals to enter a career in Behavioral Health and provide opportunities to upskill.

Common Spirit (a multi-state healthcare system with over 21,000 caregivers) and PPWFC established an advisory board, which includes healthcare partners, to provide industry input.

The new Behavioral Health Bachelor's degree will be offered at PPSC starting in Fall 2025, along with a new Behavioral Health Bootcamp offered through PPSC in Fall 2024.

This type of collaboration between education and industry did not exist before. By working together, education and industry are now providing a clear career path for students, as well as stackable certifications. This will increase the pipeline for a better workforce in the behavioral health field in the region.

### **Workforce Development Board's Youth Committee**

In 2021, the Pikes Peak Workforce Board established a Youth Committee to oversee PPWFC's In-School Youth Program. Initially, the committee lacked a solid direction or mission on how to effectively support the program and make an impact in the community.

The goals were to raise awareness in the community, increase student and teacher involvement, and better align with Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) directors.

Efforts were made to increase awareness and activity for in-school youth. This included strategic involvement from the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and the Youth Committee in supporting initiatives led by the Pikes Peak Business and Education Alliance



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Opportunity Now grant, initiating conversations with Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) for a PPBEA Liaison, having tough conversations with schools, and focusing on business engagement.

Our Workforce Development Board members actively participated in WBL activities organized or endorsed by the PPWFC In-School Youth Program, aligning training with industry needs and improving the relevance and impact of these initiatives.

In addition, the Workforce Center's Business & Education Alliance engaged with businesses to host 47 high school interns this year, including four in Teller County – a significant increase over 32 from last year.

The focus on raising awareness for K-12 education that they need to produce a “product” that businesses want to “buy” (hire) has been innovative. There has been a lot of clutter in the K-12 space, and the committee focused on what they do best: reaching students and parents and acting as an intermediary between schools and businesses.

### **Tri-County Local Area**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

Mission: To promote economic vitality by identifying, developing, and matching a talented workforce to business.

Vision: The vision is to ensure that all residents along the continuum of needs in these various areas have a streamlined ability to access the critical program options that best support their individual/family goals.

#### **Standout Accomplishments PY23:**

Challenges addressed in alignment with State, Regional and Local Workforce priorities:

- **Access/Child Care**  
**Deserts:** Approximately 51% of Colorado residents live in child care deserts, where there are insufficient licensed child care spots to meet the demand ([Center for American Progress](#)). This shortage is particularly acute in low-income, rural, and minority communities.



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Progress).

- **Workforce Equity Issues:** In Jefferson County, Colorado, early childhood educators typically start with wages close to the minimum wage. However, with experience and industry-recognized credentials, such as a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, the entry-level wage increases to \$16-\$18.00 per hour. Additionally, the average annual salary for an early childhood teacher in Jefferson County is approximately \$40,584, reflecting a more comprehensive compensation package when accounting for qualifications, experience, and the type of setting where they work. ([Salary.com](#))

To develop and build an early childhood education talent pipeline, we aim to increase child care access for working parents by supporting Head Start families interested in (ECE) to earn their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. This initiative will enable these parents to secure employment at centers where their children attend, either at a discount or for no cost. Partners include:

- **Head Start:** Office of Head Start
- **Employment First:** Funded by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- **Colorado Works:** CDHS and the Administration for Children and Families
- **Workforce Development:** WIOA-AD and YT, QUEST DWG, RUN grants
- **Jeffco Prosperity Partners**

Through coordination with eight different funding sources and five case management teams, we placed 12 Head Start parents into ECE classroom work-based learning positions. While earning their CDA, these parents secured employment in ECE for the 2024-2025 school year, allowing them to work similar hours to their children's school schedule and receive child care at a discount or for no cost. Parents also attended work readiness workshops, strengthening their workplace skills. The teams supported families in overcoming absences due to sickness, transportation issues, and housing instability.

The innovative aspect of this program lies in the collaboration of five distinct funding sources to provide comprehensive support. This enabled parents to complete their education, gain marketable skills, and enter the ECE career pathway successfully.

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Services of Weld County (ESWC) to operate an innovative, adaptive, and customer-driven workforce system which ensures:

- Customer services are based upon individual needs and choices;
- Services provided are competitive and valuable;
- Outcomes are measurable, and results-oriented;
- Responsiveness to changing labor market conditions, customer profiles, and program regulations; and
- Services are fiscally responsible.

### Standout Accomplishments PY23:

When arriving at Employment Services of Weld County's Greeley office, all visitors must check in at the front desk. When Military Veterans check in for Resource Room (Wagner Peyser) services, they are placed in the service queue with a "VET" notation to indicate their Priority of Service. To streamline the check-in process for Veterans, thereby improving their overall experience and providing expedited access to essential resources.

In Program Year 2023, Employment Services of Weld County implemented an innovative Veteran Priority Flag System in its resource room. When a Veteran checks in at the front desk of the workforce center, a physical flag is raised on the Resource Room counter. This flag serves as a visual cue for Career Resource Representatives, signaling that a Veteran is waiting for assistance, in addition to the notation in the service queue. This novelty was created by one (1) of the Wagner Peyser team members, who acknowledged the unique needs and sacrifices of Military Veterans and desired to enhance their Priority of Service status. Our outcomes include:

- **Immediate Recognition and Prioritization:** This simple yet effective system ensures that Veterans are immediately recognized and aligns with Federal guidelines that mandate Priority of Service for Veterans.
- **Streamlined Service Delivery:** The Flag System optimizes our ability to swiftly address the unique needs of Veterans, significantly curtailing wait times. By prominently highlighting the presence of a Veteran, in a visual way, Career Resource Representatives can reassess their current task at hand to ensure the Veteran receives immediate attention and dedicated support. This streamlined approach fosters a

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ESWC staff about the importance of prioritizing Veterans. It serves as a constant visual reminder of the workforce center's commitment to serving those who have served our country. The culture of respect and responsiveness was already a key component of service to all visitors; however, the Flag System has amplified this commitment.

- Positive Feedback and Recognition:** The Veteran Priority Flag System has received positive feedback from Veterans, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), and the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). Veterans appreciate the prompt attention and respect they receive, while staff have found the system to be an effective tool for managing service delivery in the queue.

The Veteran Priority Flag System was highlighted during the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Veterans Audit in PY23, where it was recognized as an exemplary practice. The system was well-received by the audit team, who commended its effectiveness in ensuring that Veterans receive prioritized and respectful service at Employment Services of Weld County.

This best practice highlights Employment Services of Weld County's commitment to honoring Veterans and ensuring they receive the highest level of service. The Veteran Priority Flag System is a tangible demonstration of the center's dedication to meeting the needs of those who have served, reinforcing the center's role as a key resource for Veterans in the community.

## Exhibit B - Employment and Training Division Strategic Initiatives

Exhibit B in the following pages provides additional information on the outcomes and impact of the Employment and Training Division strategic initiatives through PY23.

**Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Values:** Accountability | Agility | Collaboration | Respect  
**Employment and Training Division Vision:** A working economy that elevates all of Colorado.

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Training (E&T) is the grant recipient for the US Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs. In this capacity, E&T has responsibility for:

### **Strengthening the Public Workforce System in Colorado:**

- Oversight of various workforce development initiatives and programs that address the needs of jobseekers to include, but not limited to specific populations, such as youth, dislocated workers, and individuals with disabilities.
- Support and oversight of the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium

### **Advocacy and Policy Work:**

- Participating in national workforce policy development organizations and initiatives.
- Developing policies and providing training and technical assistance

### **Public Workforce System Oversight:**

- Disseminating funds to local workforce areas and other sub-recipients
- Overseeing the statewide one-stop delivery system
- Monitoring local areas and sub-recipients for program and fiscal integrity
- Maintaining systems to allow reporting of activities and performance outcomes

### **Grant Seeking & Acquisition:**

- Identify, research and pursue funding opportunities
- Pursuing supplemental funding sources and administering discretionary grants

### **Workforce Technology Innovation and System Advances:**

- Developing virtual technologies and other innovative service delivery strategies
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive digital strategy
- Expanding online access to services
- Improving data collection and analysis
- Implementing artificial intelligence (AI) solutions

### **Career Services and Business Service Management & Administration:**

- Oversight over a wide range of resources and activities designed to

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- Supporting the training of current and future workforce.
- Equipping businesses with data-driven insights on labor market trends, industry needs, and workforce demographics.
- Providing businesses with comprehensive recruitment solutions, including access to qualified candidates, recruitment tools, and Workforce Center expertise.

### **Collaboration and Partnerships:**

- E&T collaborates with various stakeholders, including educational institutions, community organizations, and other government agencies, to create a comprehensive and effective workforce development system in Colorado.

The E&T Division is responsible for fostering a dynamic and robust labor market in Colorado by ensuring that job seekers are connected with the Public Workforce System for opportunities, supporting businesses with workforce needs, and administering programs that promote economic growth and stability.

To accomplish this, the E&T team collaborates with a wide variety of workforce system partners, including [local workforce areas](#), businesses, educational institutions, economic development, human services, and community-based organizations across the state to provide not only direct services, but also funding, guidance, technical support, and oversight to all of the critical services provided. We do it to create connections, to increase productivity and sustainability, and to support our state's diverse and talented workforce. We do it to keep Colorado working and the Colorado economy strong.

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access**

Employment and Training supports the smooth fiscal and programmatic operation of the statewide locally delivered workforce service delivery system divided into ten local workforce areas to ensure the best use of public resources to support the success of Colorado job seekers and businesses. By embedding [equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility](#) in our culture and in our work, E&T promotes a similar approach among our partners to create equitable opportunities for all. In partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, The Rocky Mountain ADA Center (RMADAC), E&T developed the third annual Disability Awareness Training focusing on content required to comply with HB21-1110 to improve access to state agency digital

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Employment and Training secures and administers a broad range of funding that includes competitive discretionary grants in addition to formula funding at the state and federal levels to deliver a more robust ecosystem for Colorado. E&T's PY23 outcomes contributed to the following ongoing key results:

- Build a pipeline of skilled talent and quality jobs for Colorado workers to prosper
- Innovate and advance strategies to educate stakeholders of the talent and workforce development ecosystem in Colorado and nationally
- Return on investment of public funds is realized and demonstrated throughout the public workforce system
- Created a seamless customer experience, regardless of the channel of engagement
- Increased our reach and brand awareness of the public workforce system through data-driven strategies, which led to higher program success rates and outcomes
- Provided tailored, efficient, and effective services that met the workforce needs of businesses, resulting in increased job placements, improved employee skills and retention while fostering partnerships with chambers and economic development

### Specifically:

- Provided employment services to 198,000 job seekers
- Served 17,500 businesses at no cost to businesses, along with the posting of 576,000 job openings
- Provided training services to 5,500 job seekers
- Served 30,487 youth through the Governor's Summer Job Hunt Program
- Certified \$83,195,600 in potential tax credits for Colorado businesses
- Brings in over \$55 million in new funding each year
- Brings in up to additional funds totaling more than \$10 million in competitive, non-competitive, and discretionary funds each year

### Policy Development

Through active participation on workforce committees at the federal, state, and local levels, E&T has taken a leadership role in shaping and aligning initiatives across multiple states and affecting workforce policies at the national level.

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(SNAP), Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other workforce partners. To implement this integration, E&T leads the development of state policy guidance.

The Employment and Training Policy Team has also initiated the development of a statewide policy team, including director champions and policy representatives from each local workforce area to:

- Elevate state policy throughout the system by developing shared priorities
- Increase communication and training around state policy
- Improve the statewide process for developing state policy

E&T was approved for five waivers of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements, allowing local workforce areas greater flexibility in their services to job seekers and businesses. The following are the waivers:

- To allow local areas to reserve up to 50% percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training (IWT) - during PY24-PY27
- To waive the requirement for an incumbent worker to have an established employment history of six months or longer with the employer to participate - during PY24-PY27
- To allow an increase of the on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees - during PY24-PY27
- To allow the use of WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY) - during PY24 and PY25
- To allow local workforce areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and TANF funds toward the minimum 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience - during PY24 and PY25

### **Staff in E&T serve the system through the following leadership positions:**

The National Governors Association (NGA)

- Center for Best Practices State Liaisons
- State Liaisons Policy Subcommittee

National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

- WIOA Information Technology Steering Committee
- Employment and Training Committee
- Veterans Committee



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[Association Executive Committee](#)  
[Colorado Governor's Behavioral Mental Health Commission](#)  
[Colorado Governor's Rural Cabinet Working Group](#)  
 Opportunity Now State Board  
 Economic Development Council of Colorado  
 Communications Committee Co-Chair for CREC Project  
 Board Members on Colorado's Ten WIOA Local Workforce Area Boards  
 Colorado Migrant and Rural Coalition Co-Chair  
 Northern Area Migrant Coalition Co-Chair

### **Partnership Collaboration**

Employment and Training has been able to expand its operations and take advantage of additional resources by collaborating with other agencies and organizations. In the previous year, the E&T Division established partnerships with CDLE's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to establish the [Disability Program Navigators \(DPNs\)](#) in each local workforce area. The DPNs help job seekers with disabilities by referring them to workforce centers and vocational rehabilitation offices for employment and other services. This collaboration has increased client services funding for the disability community to enable competitive integrated employment with a liveable wage. Since the inception of the DPN program, the local workforce areas have assisted more than 700 job seekers with disabilities.

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and the E&T Division collaborated to develop and fund the Paving Access to Careers and Employment (PACE) Program utilizing E&T's Workforce Enterprise Funds (WEF) and Colorado's Employment First funding. This will enable Program Ambassadors in workforce centers to provide Supportive Services that will increase the number of SNAP applicants and recipients that engage and enroll in Employment First or other local employment and training programs. PACE will leverage existing expertise in the Public Workforce System throughout Colorado and build upon already established employment and training-focused partnerships working with SNAP clients to assist the hardest-to-serve individuals to become economically self-sufficient. Through this program and utilization of WEF state dollars, the program will be able to draw down federal funds through the USDA Food Nutrition Services office.

The E&T Division shares a project manager position with the State of Colorado Health Care Policy and Finance Department (HCPF) to develop Direct Care career pathways and expand access to this work. In addition to a shared position, E&T leadership participates with HCPF in a national Technical Assistance program that is focused on innovative ways to grow the direct care workforce. The E&T Division is working with the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) to develop a virtual reality



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Inquiry Report, summarizing findings and recommendations from the Appreciative Inquiry interviews conducted with 118 state agency partners, local area directors, and local board members. This work anticipates the needs of future workers and businesses to inform strategic planning, local and state planning, legislation, policy, waivers, program administration, grant applications, and partnership development. Next steps include collaboration with partners to develop actionable plans to prepare the workforce system for the future.

Connecting Colorado, the state's workforce case management and labor exchange system used to document participation and performance outcomes of workforce training programs through the Public Workforce System in Colorado, has served Coloradans well since 2002. CDLE, the Employment and Training Division, has contracted with two vendors to implement new Labor Exchange and Case Management systems that will work seamlessly as one system. The vendors have started their implementations and the State expects to launch the new system, offering AI tools never before available to all job seekers and businesses in Colorado, in Spring of 2025. E&T was awarded a \$2.9 million Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant by the US Department of Labor. The award will further expand the Statewide Longitudinal Data System by adding additional partner data to support agile and data driven decisions. The funding will allow Colorado to advance evidence-based approaches to support workers that are essential to connecting jobseekers with the skills needed to obtain high quality jobs. And it will help Colorado enhance the capacity of workforce programs by improving the quality and range of workforce data to benefit jobseekers, workers and employers.

### **Statewide Business Services Approach**

In the Division of Employment and Training, the Colorado Business Services team focuses on a statewide approach to provide seamless business services in a way that maximizes business opportunities to employ qualified workers to ensure Colorado's economic success. The Business Services Leadership Team (BSLT), made up of leadership representatives from the ten local workforce areas, work together to deliver a set of core services to businesses across the state. These core services focus on supporting businesses to Recruit, Train, Retain, and Access the talent and resources they need to thrive and grow. In the past year, a statewide business services summit was held in Colorado Springs, Business Services Leadership Team virtual meetings were held on a monthly basis, and four task forces worked to continue to focus on statewide work-based learning, business engagement, core service recommendations, and apprenticeship growth.

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work based learning processes statewide to grow regional and statewide work based learning activities, creating resources and business connections to New Americans across Colorado and finally defining processes to support Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors across the state either on a local level or a regional/statewide level. Using this task force approach supports our ability to be nimble and respond to changes in the labor market quickly, and together as a business services statewide team.

### **Program Monitoring**

E&T's unified monitoring system, designed to maximize the effective use of public funds while addressing program performance, financial, and equal opportunity elements for each program, is recognized as a model by the US Department of Labor. The ongoing monitoring, training, and technical assistance process has fostered a collaborative relationship between the state and the local workforce areas. Monitors review WIOA, discretionary, and state grants in all ten local workforce areas to educate partners on funding eligibility requirements in order to leverage more participation and more resources that ensure the success of job seekers and employers statewide.

### **Program Evaluation**

WIOA requires E&T to conduct formal evaluations of WIOA program activities to research and test innovative services and strategies to achieve high levels of performance outcomes. Working with Northern Illinois University, E&T established a model for WIOA program evaluation using the Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas. E&T and NIU continued to provide technical assistance and training for a cohort of local area staff and the WIOA Evaluation Team to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach involving quantitative and qualitative strategies. Each local workforce area completed a quantitative analysis to understand what is driving the quantitative data. The evaluation team identified best practices in each local workforce area and incorporated recommendations to improve outcomes for the WIOA participants. The local areas use various tools, including The Evaluation Tool, to independently evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs with an increased emphasis on serving marginalized populations and improving program service delivery. This work has dramatically improved the capacity of state and local workforce area staff to improve yearly program planning and to ensure equitable access to high-wage employment. Colorado presented the evaluation work at three webinars and the 2023 National Performance Accountability and Reporting Convening hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor. In partnership with Northern Illinois University (NIU), CDLE published the finalized PY23 evaluation report: Colorado's WIOA Title I - Adult

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challenges with technology. Seth took the initiative and met with a member of the Community Learning and Support Team in Boulder County—otherwise known as the training team. A member of the Training Team worked with Seth, offering support, guidance, and assistance with his resume. The team member helped him find job postings that fit his skills and experience well. Seth applied for a part-time position with a “Ross” department store in Longmont and was hired! He has continued to stay in contact, emailing multiple times to express his gratitude for the support, encouragement, resources, and access to employment opportunities provided by WfBC. Seth shared that as an older jobseeker with limited digital skills, seeking part-time work has been a great accomplishment that has helped him support himself—highlighting what great success can be achieved with just a little help from places like WfBC!

### **Success Story 2, “Opportunity Found”**

Nataliia grew up in Lviv, Ukraine, and had the opportunity ten years ago as a teenager to visit the U.S. through a school exchange program. After finishing her education in Ukraine, Nataliia taught English to children and was planning to open her own school. Then the unimaginable happened—war broke out in her home country. In Sept. 2022, a Boulder resident saw Nataliia’s Facebook posts requesting assistance; with the aid of “United for Ukraine”, Nataliia returned to the U.S. to live with a sponsor family in Boulder, CO.

Nataliia learned of Workforce Boulder County (WfBC) through other Ukrainian friends and went in person to explore the services. There, she met with a Service Navigator, learned about in-demand industries, began her research, and became interested in Human Resource jobs. She returned to WfBC and was referred to a Career Support Specialist who assisted Nataliia with funding a one-semester online HR Certificate at the University of Cornell. Nataliia completed her HR training at the end of 2023 and secured an internship as a Human Resource Generalist at Boulder Community Health. There, she learned about Compensation Benefits and Recruitment and gained confidence in a supportive environment. She completed her 131-hour internship in January 2024 and shared the good news with her WBL Career Support Specialist—Nataliia had found a full-time HR position at “Home Instead” in Denver, earning \$22/hour with full benefits.

One and half years after Nataliia arrived in the U.S., she met her goal of starting a new life with a new profession in a new country. She attributes her success to her ambition and the support she received from United for Ukraine and Workforce Boulder County!

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Adjustment Assistance participant at the workforce center.

Judy faced significant competition with other prospective employees during her job search. She decided that it was time for her to advance her skills and upgrade her professional credentials to finally break into the top-level executive field of finance, an area where women continue to be underrepresented.

We are proud to say that Judy recently earned her Master of Finance and Accounting & Financial Management degree (and then obtained a CPA license) to work as a Treasurer/Controller. Judy graduated with the highest and most distinguished honors!

### **Success Story 4, "Filling the Gap"**

Christine moved her family to Colorado to take a leadership role at her job. Six months later, she was laid off and found herself unsure of her next steps. Most of her work experience had been in the garment industry, and her connections were not generating successful outcomes as she searched for full-time employment.

After working with a career coach on her resume and discussing her goals, it was decided that the Prosci "Change Management Certificate" would be the perfect training to add to her skill set. Christine followed directions carefully, wrote an outstanding justification letter, and completed the job posting and search requirements for potential course candidates. Christine took the training and loved it! Next, she revamped her resume, took the Resume Workshop to seek professional feedback, and hit the trail looking for her next position. Christine's diligence and dedication left a lasting impression on the staff she worked with; her commitment to identifying and submitting her job search was unparalleled.

At the beginning of 2024, Christine obtained a one-year contractor position doing global supply change for real estate. By June, she had been hired full-time with benefits, making \$140,000 with a guaranteed bonus of 16%. Christine's success story was made possible by her dedication and hard work, taking every suggestion from her career coach to heart.

### **Program Accomplishments**

In addition to ensuring that the workforce system has the funding, policy, and technical resources it needs to ensure the success of all Coloradans, Employment and Training administers a number of programs at the state level. Follow the links below to see a high-level performance report for each program.

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- **Foreign Labor Certification**
  - **Governor's Summer Job Hunt**
  - **Hospitality Grant Program**
  - **Jobs for Veterans State Grant**
  - **Monitor Advocate and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers**
  - **Pathful Program**
  - **Rapid Response Layoff Assistance and Aversion Services**
  - **Trade Adjustment Assistance**
  - **Veterans Service to Career Program**
  - **Work-Based Learning Incentive (WBLI)**
  - **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**
  - **Wagner-Peyser Employment Services**