



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

BILL 3: FORESTRY & FIREFIGHTER WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

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Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the bill draft requested by the Wildfire Matters Review Committee.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill authorizes Colorado State University to implement various initiatives to engage youth in opportunities related to forestry, wildfire, and natural resources. It also requires the Department of Public Safety to award grants for firefighter certifications, provide train-the-trainer opportunities, and conduct an outreach campaign related to firefighting opportunities.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas through FY 2027-28 for the Colorado State University and on an ongoing basis for the Department of Public Safety:

- State Expenditures
- Local Government

Appropriations. For FY 2025-26, the bill requires an appropriation of up to \$1.2 million to multiple state agencies.

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts**

Type of Impact ¹	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	up to \$1,238,446	up to \$1,373,681	up to \$1,290,210
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	2.0 FTE	2.2 FTE	2.2 FTE

¹ Fund sources for these impacts are shown in the table below.

**Table 1A
State Expenditures**

Fund Source	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
General Fund	\$1,198,794	\$1,330,049	\$1,246,578
Cash Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Centrally Appropriated	\$39,652	\$43,632	\$43,632
Total Expenditures	\$1,238,446	\$1,373,681	\$1,290,210
Total FTE	2.0 FTE	2.2 FTE	2.2 FTE

Summary of Legislation

Outreach Program

For FY 2025-26 through FY 2027-28, the bill specifies that Colorado Cooperative Extension Service at Colorado State University (CSU) may create outreach programs and initiatives to engage youth and provide opportunities in forestry, wildland fire, and natural resources. Programs may include 4-H programs, internships and industry certifications, and career, workforce, and educational options.

CSU must submit a report by October 1, 2026, and the two years thereafter, that evaluates each program or initiative and includes the amount of funding used. CSU may accept and expend gifts, grants and donations for these initiatives, and the indirect administrative costs for off-campus programs may not exceed 10 percent of program costs.

Firefighter Training

Under current law, the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) in the Department of Public Safety awards grants to fire departments to replace damaged equipment or provide training to increase safety. The bill:

- allows grants to be awarded for firefighter certification courses and materials;
- requires that DPFC create a train-the-trainer program to ensure that all instructors providing the grant-funded certification classes use a standard curriculum that can be shared across the fire service; and
- requires that DPFC develop an outreach campaign to inspire a new generation of firefighters, including maintaining an online portal for interested individuals and developing a variety of outreach and marketing content.

Assumptions

Colorado State University

The bill authorizes Colorado Cooperative Extension Service at CSU to implement a variety of outreach initiatives related to forestry, wildland fire, and natural resources, but does not specify which initiatives, if any, are required. As a result, the fiscal note reflects a maximum cost to implement all initiatives, including 4-H and STEM outreach activities, internships, regional outreach, and course work; however, actual funding is at the discretion of the General Assembly.

Division of Fire Prevention and Control

DFPC currently awards grants to fire departments to replace damaged equipment or provide training to increase safety. Since the program's inception, DFPC has received \$57 million in requests, for a total of \$18 million in awards. Due to the demand for existing funds, the fiscal note assumes additional funding is needed to award grants for firefighter certification.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures by \$1.2 million in FY 2025-26 and \$1.4 million in FY 2026-27 and \$1.3 million in FY 2027-28 in the Department of Public Safety (CDPS) and Colorado State University, paid from the General Fund. Costs are shown in Tables 2A and 2B and described in the sections below. Costs in CSU are for three years, while CDPS costs continue on an ongoing basis.

Table 2
State Expenditures
All Departments

Department	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
Department of Public Safety	\$511,248	\$500,503	\$500,503
Colorado State University	\$727,198	\$873,178	\$789,707
Total Costs	\$1,238,446	\$1,373,681	\$1,290,210

Department of Public Safety

The bill increases expenditure in CDPS by about \$500,000 per year, beginning in FY 2025-26 to award grants for firefighter certification, establish a train-the-trainer model, and conduct an outreach campaign.

Staff

Beginning in FY 2025-26, CDPS requires 2.2 FTE to implement the bill. Staff includes 1.0 FTE to manage the marketing and outreach campaign, 1.0 FTE to manage the grant program and train-the-trainer program, and 0.2 FTE to manage financial tasks related to the grant program. Staff costs are prorated for an August start date in FY 2025-26, and include standard operating and capital outlay costs.

Travel, Vehicle, and Equipment Costs

CDPS will lease one vehicle with a fire package for training around the state and will incur travel costs for staff. Costs include an annual lease of \$14,000 and mileage costs. Additionally, CDPS requires one-time purchase of firefighting equipment for FTE managing the training program, estimated at \$7,580, and one-time purchase of equipment to develop the media and outreach campaign, estimated at \$10,000.

Grants

As discussed above in the Assumptions section, the bill assumes that additional grant funding is required to award certification and training grants due to the demand for the existing grant program, estimated at \$250,000 per year. Actual funding is at the discretion of the General Assembly.

**Table 2A
State Expenditures
Department of Public Safety**

Cost Component	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
Personal Services	\$157,836	\$173,775	\$173,775
Operating Expenses	\$2,560	\$2,816	\$2,816
Capital Outlay Costs	\$13,340	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Vehicle Lease & Mileage	\$20,280	\$20,280	\$20,280
One-Time Equipment	\$17,580	\$0	\$0
Training Grants	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Centrally Appropriated Costs	\$39,652	\$43,632	\$43,632
Total Costs	\$511,248	\$500,503	\$500,503
Total FTE	2.0 FTE	2.2 FTE	2.2 FTE

Colorado State University

The bill increases costs for CSU for three years, beginning in FY 2025-26. As discussed above, the fiscal note assumes full implementation of the initiatives identified in the bill; however, actual funding is at the discretion of the General Assembly, which is why costs are shown as “up to.”

Staff

CSU will incur staff costs of approximately \$560,000 in FY 2025-26, \$703,700 in FY 2026-27, and \$625,300 in FY 2027-28 to implement a variety of workforce and outreach initiatives. Staff is approximately 4.4 FTE, including a program manager, data evaluation, and regional coordinators to conduct outreach activities.

Travel

CSU will incur travel costs of about \$20,000 per year for the regional coordinators to visit high schools and conduct outreach around the state, as well as to cover travel costs for participants in the internship program.

Certification, Internships and Tuition

Outreach initiatives will include covering certification courses and select college credit for participating students. These costs are estimated at \$7,700 per year for three years.

Operating and Materials

CSU will incur about \$65,000 per year in operating and material costs, including curriculum development, advertising, translation, printing, and field equipment.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are estimated at 10 percent of expenditures, as specified by the bill.

Table 2B
State Expenditures
Colorado State University

Cost Component	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
Personal Services (approx. 4.4 FTE)	\$560,304	\$703,734	\$625,264
Travel	\$20,100	\$22,650	\$22,650
Certification, Internships, Tuition Costs	\$52,750	\$52,750	\$52,750
Operating and Materials	\$21,617	\$21,617	\$16,617
Indirect Costs	\$72,427	\$72,427	\$72,427
Total Costs	up to \$727,198	up to \$873,178	up to \$789,707

Other State Agencies

Implementation of the educational and outreach program may increase workload for other institutions of higher education, including the State Forest Service at CSU. No change in appropriations is required.

Centrally Appropriated Costs

Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which include employee insurance and supplemental employee retirement payments, are shown in the expenditure tables above.

Local Government

Implementation of the educational and outreach program may increase workload for school districts, local fire departments, or conservation districts. Participation is at the discretion of each local government.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

State Appropriations

For FY 2025-26, the bill requires the following General Fund appropriations:

- \$471,596 to the Department of Public Safety, and 2.0 FTE; and
- \$727,198 to the Department of Higher Education, for allocation to the governing board of Colorado State University.

State and Local Government Contacts

Forest Service

Higher Education

Public Safety

The revenue and expenditure impacts in this fiscal note represent changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year. For additional information about fiscal notes, please visit the General Assembly website.