



**COLORADO PY2023**

# WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT ON TALENT DEVELOPMENT  
ACTIVITIES FUNDED THROUGH THE  
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND  
OPPORTUNITY ACT



Colorado Workforce  
Development Council

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# A Letter from the Colorado Workforce Development Council

We are excited to share the successes of the final year of 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

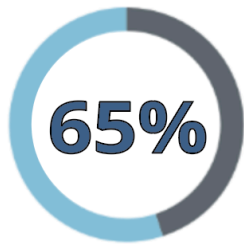


Lee Wheeler-Berliner, Managing Director



**137,928**

**JOB SEEKERS UTILIZED**  
THE PUBLIC WORKFORCE  
SYSTEM IN PY2023



OF JOB SEEKERS FROM  
THE PRIOR YEAR WERE  
**SUCCESSFULLY  
EMPLOYED**  
**SIX MONTHS AFTER  
ACCESSING SERVICES**



**6,320**

**BUSINESSES WERE SERVED**  
BY THE PUBLIC WORKFORCE  
SYSTEM IN PY2023

**660,504**  
**JOBS POSTED**



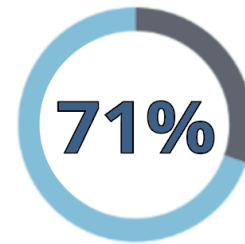
**59,211**

**IN-PERSON SERVICES**  
THROUGH OUR STATEWIDE  
NETWORK OF WORKFORCE  
CENTERS, SUCH AS RESUME  
ASSISTANCE AND INTERVIEW  
SKILLS IN PY2023



**6,761**

INDIVIDUALS WERE  
**ENROLLED IN MORE  
EXTENSIVE TRAINING  
PROGRAMS IN PY23**



EMPLOYMENT RATE  
FOR INDIVIDUALS  
**ENROLLED IN  
WIOA PROGRAMS**  
IN PY2023

## 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 opportunities for quality, life-long education and training connected to the future of work.
- **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.
- **Goal C:** Promote career agility for all Coloradans.
- **Goal D:** Strengthen partnerships to address job 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 work-based learning opportunities including transitional jobs, apprenticeships, paid internships, and supportive services that reduce challenges to finding and maintaining employment. In the 2023 - 2024 program year, CW STEP clients who completed the program earned an average wage of \$17.08/hour.

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 their talent pipelines. Given that many Coloradans cannot afford to quit working in order to pursue training or education, apprenticeships also serve as a powerful tool to help address inequities in the labor market. In PY23, the State Apprenticeship Agency registered 96 new programs with 50 unique sponsors.

*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 development with both apprenticeship grant funds and existing leveraged resources from other workforce investments.

*Diversifying apprentices within occupations where they are currently underrepresented.*

The Apprenticeship Hub is the primary strategy within the SAAEI grant to support sponsors and employers in implementing an equity-driven recruitment strategy. Building on the work of a prior investment (the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant), the SAAEI 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 SAAEI 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 SAAEI 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 available resources to succeed in the wake of the pandemic.**

**Strategy 1: Educate Coloradans on targeted in demand career pathways and recovery opportunities through the enhancement of My Colorado Journey.**

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.

Additionally, in September 2023 CDLE and the TalentFOUND network celebrated Workforce Development Month, providing weekly themes and activities along with resources to boost public awareness of Colorado's workforce system and the ways in which it supports businesses and job seekers. Weekly themes included the Future of Work; Programs and support for individuals with disabilities and New Americans; 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 Colorado's labor market. Colorado launched a monthly Innovative Finance Community of Practice (IFCOP) for employers, CBOs, and education and training providers to discuss and explore outcomes-based finance tools, skilled savings accounts, and pay-it-forward funds. As part of the IFCOP, participants are also introduced to talent finance service providers and potential funders. Monthly Talent Finance Primers were offered to provide information and 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 never before available to all job seekers and businesses in Colorado, in Spring of 2025.

### Career Coaching Collaborative Campaign

In PY23, more than 2,525 Coloradans benefited from the Career Coaching Collaborative. This initiative strengthens and builds capacity in Colorado's workforce ecosystem by employing 26 career coaches who offer career navigation 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 Accessibility

Colorado acknowledges the importance of continuous learning opportunities when it comes to equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. In an effort to continue to provide space for learning 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
58.20%	1331	Individual/Family income
7.61%	174	Homeless
2.36%	54	Foster Child
12.86%	294	Indiv with disability - single income
5.77%	132	Free Lunch Recipient
16.00%	366	Basic skills deficient
7.87%	180	Underemployed

(some participants are counted in multiple categories)

Local service providers are actively pursuing outreach to individuals with barriers to 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
- 212 individuals co-enrolled in other employment and training programs, including WIOA
- 267 individuals received training

DPNs Blake Dowling, Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development Department; Lia Weiler Gallagher, Arapahoe Douglas Works!; and Robert Morris II, Workforce Boulder County, 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 participants from 71% (PY22 goal) to 72.22%. **Outcome: 75.93%**

The Arapahoe/Douglas local area implemented this waiver during PY23 with the following outcomes:

- 100 WIOA Youth in-school 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
- 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

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 and are being employed by NIU to improve and enhance Colorado’s use of quantitative and qualitative evaluation:

### **Program Year 2022 Evaluation Team Accomplishments:**

1. In partnership with Northern Illinois University (NIU), CDLE published the finalized PY22 evaluation report, [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 youth, as well as all other groups of disconnected youth. This project further built upon the work Colorado is doing to effectively reach youth in the disability community through cross-agency Disability Awareness Training and Disability Program Navigators positioned in workforce centers.
6. 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:**

1. 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.
2. The EVAL team will create and approve the research questions we will answer in the annual evaluation report.
3. 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.
4. The PY24 Annual Evaluation report will be completed on 6/30/2025 and will address evaluation of data from PY23.
5. 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: GRT-2023-01: PY23 Performance Incentive Funds and includes the following:

- Rating Scale
- Reporting Template
- 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 outcomes utilizing actual median earnings data for any exit cohort based on the following data points: 2 Quarters Prior to Program Registration; Entry Quarter Registration; 2 Quarters Post Exit; 4 Quarters Post Exit; Year 2 Post Exit; Year 3 Post Exit; Year 4 Post Exit. Based on the methodology, the following measures were found for the Colorado Workforce System after WIOA 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 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
<b>PY 22</b>	<b>3,394</b>	<b>\$10,570,360</b>	<b>\$12,148,090</b>	<b>\$3,579.28</b>	<b>\$26,392,430</b>
<b>5-year ROI Total</b>	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	<b>\$90,897,432</b>

**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
Qtr 2 Employment Rate	72.77%	75.0%
Qtr 4 Employment Rate	73.31%	70.0%
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>
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%

### 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 Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) continues to direct the efforts of a contractor to update the statewide adult education platform to reflect lessons learned during the customer satisfaction data collection pilot of PY22. The customer satisfaction survey will be implemented by all Title II Adult Education programs in PY24.

### Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, CDLE

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 indicator of performance, as required by WIOA section 116(b)(2), as Retention with the Same Employer.

#### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, CDLE**

During PY23, DVR continued to work toward improving customer satisfaction. A customer satisfaction survey was updated in August 2023 to 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

For more detailed information regarding the Unified Monitoring Process, please see the following Policy Guidance Letter: [ADM-2021-02: Unified Monitoring Process](#)

### **At-A-Glance Reports**

A key support to these reviews are the quarterly At-A-Glance reports that capture critical 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 additional training. Employing Lean Management methodology, an ACWBC staff member facilitated a process mapping session that included Career Services staff and representatives from the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) partner. This session resulted in a detailed process map for serving veterans and highlighted the need for updated language in the state program guidance 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 service provision, and enhanced partner collaboration.

The goal of the Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board, in alignment with our strategic priorities of “enhance responsive data-driven products and services in collaboration with local, regional and national partners” and “building 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.

3. Arapahoe/Douglas Works!, as the convenor of the Aerospace Sector Partnership, applied for and was awarded funding through the Strong Sector, Good Jobs grant by the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC). This initiative led to the Aerospace and STEM Sector 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, 17,893 unique customers were served in PY23, a 23% increase from PY22.

Over 150 participants attended the Arapahoe/Douglas Works! led Workforce Development Conference, which featured 5 individual speakers, including video remarks from Governor Polis, panel discussions that addressed 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.

## **Boulder County Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: To promote workforce development through service integration and a flexible response to the changing needs of our clients and customers.

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 can provide opportunities for individuals in these fields. Additionally, we will be exploring apprenticeship opportunities with employers who already have a training program in place as a way to expand training into the fields.

**Career Pathway Development**

- 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 outreach to our local businesses that have green jobs via 1:1 outreach as well as group panels, and discussions to explore sector challenges and opportunities for collaboration and support from WfBC.

Our targets focus on Green Trades Programs that provide fast track apprenticeships and certification 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. Make this training accessible to Boulder County job seekers and employers.
  - c. **WBL:** Identify and promote certificate programs through green technology training and trade groups to enable job seekers to gain valuable 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 County: 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 under-represented 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 inspired to share their story, celebrate success stories and profiles of individuals from underrepresented backgrounds who have excelled in green trades.

We began by evaluating our current approach to 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 fast-track apprentice and WBL opportunities for young adults.
- 2) Engage with job seekers through industry-backed training to help them gain valuable skills and certifications relevant to green trades, enhancing their employability and career growth prospects.
- 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 pump and solar installers and maintenance workers, can inform efforts to scale or replicate the program in other trades like electrical vehicle technicians and electrical charging maintenance workers.
- 4) **Be flexible:** Understanding that 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 advocate for more equitable environmental policies.

Overall, the program has the potential to drive meaningful change both within the green trades and in the broader community by fostering inclusion, equity, and sustainability. Tips for success:

- 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 to promote consistent service delivery, enhancing communication and collaboration across teams, and ensuring that the organizational structure supported the strategic goals of the CRWC.

The reorganization was a comprehensive effort involving the entire CRWC leadership 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 **over 3,800** businesses across Rural Colorado.
- **Increased Staff Engagement:** Regular communication and feedback mechanisms, such as the ReOrg ReCap emails and sharing sessions, resulted in higher staff morale and 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.

This reorganization was innovative in its approach to creating a more agile and responsive workforce system. By leveraging a combination of leadership realignment, role standardization, and enhanced communication, the CRWC was able to transform its organizational structure in a way that supports both staff and community needs. The use of 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 within the construction industry. As a first-year funder, we have been very mindful of tracking deliverables and outcomes. Initially, we were tasked with using Connecting Colorado as our system of record. Although some of our programs use Connecting Colorado, we were given permission to pilot a reporting mechanism through Zengine & Power BI. The data that came 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 and flood mitigation, and trail creation and restoration.

The goal was to create a comprehensive program that would provide young adults with meaningful work-based learning opportunities, equipping them with valuable skills and knowledge while addressing critical 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 enhance participants' understanding of environmental conservation and sustainability.
- Post-corps experience to aid young adults in their pursuit in the next step of their career pathway.

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 public workforce system goals but also LCCC goals.

## **Pikes Peak Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

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.

This simple and low-cost technique was one of our first steps toward improving job quality expectations among our employers. We shared pictures of our setup and were featured on the Job Quality and Technical Assistance Series for Business Services Professionals by Erin Young with CWDC.

**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 (PPBEA), which is the Workforce Center's In-School Youth Program. Our combined efforts emphasized career pathway development, fostering long-term career readiness, and skill development to meet the evolving needs of the workforce.

The outcomes included securing the 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.
- **Affordability:** Child care remains unaffordable for many families, with costs often exceeding \$15,000 per year for infant care. This makes child care expenses a significant burden, especially for low-income families ([Colorado Department of Early Childhood](#)) ([Center for American 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.

## **Weld County Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Mission: To keep the workforce system responsive to employers, employees, and job seekers.

Vision: To direct the efforts of Employment 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 smoother efficient and seamless service delivery process, reducing wait times in the queue.

- **Increased Awareness and Staff Engagement:** In addition to our teams' new hire training on Priority of Service, the Flag System has heightened awareness among all 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.

**Employment and Training Division Mission:** Working together to promote a thriving employment environment with opportunities for every Coloradan to prosper.

### **Purpose**

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Division of Employment and 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 help individuals navigate their career paths.
- Oversight of compliance and funding related to career service activities throughout the state within the Public Workforce System.
- Oversight of grants to businesses supporting the training of their 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 content, physical accessibility, and disability etiquette. After completing the training, participants receive a certificate of completion provided by RMADAC and have the option to earn continuing education units for credentialing purposes.

### **Key Results**

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. Colorado has fully embraced the key principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to achieve total integration of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, and Trade Act employment and training programs, and enhanced state and local partnerships with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (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
- Apprenticeship/Work-Based Learning Committee
- Policy Subcommittee

National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP)

- Board of Directors
- Executive Committee

Rocky Mountain Workforce Development 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 curriculum for a Weatherization Technician position. The E&T Division is also partnering with the CEO to apply for a Department of Energy grant to create a pre-apprenticeship pathway into Weatherization, Electrification and Decarbonization career pathways.

### **System Improvement**

The E&T Division published the Appreciative 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. This collaborative approach ensures a consistently high level of service to businesses.

The BSLT includes task forces created to address topics that need to have a statewide focus to enhance service delivery on an ongoing basis. The current task force work being completed is targeted at modernizing our service offering to business to continually meet their needs, aligning 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 and Dislocated Worker Annual Evaluation Report, which addresses the evaluation of data from PY22.

### **Success Stories**

### **Success Story 1 “A Little Help Goes a Long Way”**

Seth was an older jobseeker who needed to find a part-time job in order to make ends meet and take care of his needs. He did not qualify for the AARP Skills Builder program, and he experienced some 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!

### **Success Story 3, “From Laid-off to a Master's Degree & a CPA!”**

Judy connected with Pikes Peak Workforce Center after she lost her job as an accountant. She worked at a manufacturing company that laid off all its workers and closed its plant after five decades in business due to foreign trade. The good news was that she was eligible to be a Trade 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.

- **[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**