

Regions outlined are based upon OEDIT's 14 Regional Economies

[Statewide](#)

[Central Mountains \(includes Upper Arkansas\)](#)

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[Northwest Colorado \(includes Yampa Valley\)](#)

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Opportunity Now Grantees by Region

Statewide

ActivateWork

Associated General Contractors of Colorado (AGC)

Energy Efficiency Business Coalition (EEBC)

Zivaro, Inc

Central Mountains

Skill Distillery

Western States College of Construction

Youthentity

Eastern Plains

Colorado State University (CSU)

Morgan Community College (Eastern Plains)

Morgan County School District

Northeast Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)

Public Education and Business Coalition (PEBC)

Mountain Resort

CareerWise Colorado

Colorado Mountain College

Colorado Mountain College

Mountain Family Health Centers

YouthPower365

Northern Colorado

Banner Health of Colorado via the Banner Health Foundation

BuildStrong Academy of Colorado

Colorado Safety-Net Collaborative

Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce
Innosphere Ventures
Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development
National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement, Inc.
St. Vrain Valley Schools
Teach by Tech, Inc
The Master's Apprentice

Northwest Colorado

Small Business Majority Foundation, Inc.
Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship & Sustainability (YVPS3)

Southern Colorado

Arizona State University
The Attainment Network
Boys and Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley
Build Pagosa Inc.
Campo School District RE-6
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
Colorado State University Pueblo
Education Strategy Group
Emergent Campus LLC
Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families (JI)
La Plata County Economic Development Alliance
La Raza Services, Inc. Dbá Servicios de La Raza
La Veta School District RE-2
Microchip Technology
Peak Education
Pikes Peak BOCES
Pikes Peak State College
Public Education and Business Coalition (PEBC)
Public Education & Business Coalition
SkillUp Coalition
South Central BOCES
Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative
TASCC LLC.
Western States College of Construction

Western Slope

Colorado Mesa University - Tech (CMU-Tech)
Colorado River Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CR BOCES)
Colorado River Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CR BOCES)
Colorado West Regional Mental Health, Inc. d.b.a Health Solutions West, Inc.
The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce
Intermountain Health (IHC Health Services, Inc.)

Family Health West Foundation
Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center, Inc Dba Axis Health System
Western Colorado University

Front Range

Denver Hybrid College dba AdvanceEDU
Denver Hybrid College dba AdvanceEDU
African-American Trade Association (AATA)
African-American Trade Association (AATA)
Apex Energy USA
Aurora Public Schools
BuildStrong Academy of Colorado
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
Clayton Early Learning
Colorado Autism Consultants
Colorado Community College System (CCCS)
Colorado Institute of Family Medicine
Colorado Safety-Net Collaborative
Coorstek
CrossPurpose
CrossPurpose
Comfort Home Healthcare, LLC
Community College of Denver (CCD)
CrossPurpose
Defined, LLC
Denver Economic Development & Opportunity
Education Strategy Group
Energy Resource Colorado
Goodwill of Colorado
McLain Community High School
Medecipher, Inc.
Mile High Early Learning
Montessori Collective
National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement, Inc.
New America College
PBS12
Relay Graduate School of Education
SparkFun Electronics
Second Chance Center, Inc.
Teach by Tech, Inc
Treeline Pass (TLP)
Tepeyac Community Health Center
Turing School of Software & Design

Statewide

ActivateWork

Award Amount: \$2,366,789

<https://www.activatework.org>

ActivateWork is convening a large group of employer and education partners to create a streamlined IT workforce ecosystem. Information Technology, Operational Technology, and Cybersecurity (IOC) roles, critical to the security of Colorado's infrastructure, are needed in a myriad of tech and tech-adjacent industries. Trimble will co-chair the Tech Talent Partnership (TTP) steering committee with ActivateWork to identify target jobs, assess gaps and training needs, and provide guidance on skills, behaviors, and credentials. A taskforce of education partners will build stackable learning and earning pathways to reach these target jobs. In addition to serving as an intermediary for this solution, ActivateWork will provide training, job matching, coaching, and wraparound support for learners through the Tech Skills Training Center (TSTC). Together the TTP and TSTC will provide career pathways for learners from diverse, low-income backgrounds, those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and transitioning military, creating economic prosperity for Coloradans.

Associated General Contractors of Colorado (AGC)

Award Amount: \$2,873,884

<https://www.agccolorado.org>

Colorado's construction trades, a vital cog in the State's economy, are experiencing a shortage of more than 40,000 workers; these unfilled, high-quality jobs have experienced a 47% increase in wages since 2018. The Associated General Contractors of Colorado and the statewide Home Builders Association, in partnership with Careers in Construction Colorado (CICC), industry partners, Colorado Succeeds (CS), and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), wish to address this gap and expand into a partnership with Project SCALE (Scaling Construction Access for Learners and Earners). The current CICC career pathways model trains 7th through 12th-grade students and accelerates entry into the workforce via pre-apprenticeship certificates and career navigation assistance. The expansion into Project SCALE will build true credential 'stackability' into the traditional trade education path and provide high school graduates across the state expanded opportunities including job-attached apprenticeships/on-the-job training and/or the option to work toward a higher-level education credential.

Energy Efficiency Business Coalition (EEBC)

Award Amount: \$49,900

<https://www.eebco.org>

EEBC's goal in launching Job Creation through Green Building and Building Electrification in Colorado is to plan a model to address industry needs in the workforce ecosystem in an equitable manner. Through this planning phase, the team will outline and solidify partnerships, required resources, stakeholders, and implementation actions to achieve three primary initiatives: 1) Data mapping to identify the status, needs, and gaps of Colorado's construction industry ecosystem, 2)

Connecting Industry and Training to Accelerate Workforce Growth, and 3) Alignment of the Building Electrification Ecosystem Stakeholders. Through these initiatives we will identify Colorado's training programs along with the numbers and demographics of trained job seekers and jobs available. We will use that and other data to connect job seekers statewide to needed training and living-wage jobs and facilitate connections in the industry ecosystem that will create new jobs and help solve the statewide clean energy/green (Green) construction industry labor shortage.

Zivaro, Inc

Award Amount: \$47,700.00

<https://zivaro.com>

Zivaro looks to extend an inclusive learning environment to students in rural school districts who currently lack a dedicated technology educator in order to expand opportunities for career advancement and development of marketable skills in the fast-growing cybersecurity industry.

Central Mountains

Skill Distillery - Chaffee County

Award Amount: \$804,497

<https://skilldistillery.com>

Our program is designed to bridge the workforce gap in Chaffee County and other rural areas by upskilling potential talents and aligning them with the county's employment needs. Recognizing the unique challenges of rural Colorado, the initiative collaborates with local liaisons for an employment needs assessment, skill gap analysis, and curriculum customization. Through targeted promotion and outreach, we aim to resonate with the community's ethos, ensuring maximum program uptake. The curriculum's agility and responsiveness are fortified by collaboration with seasoned consultants, enhancing its relevance to the local job market. Additionally, scholarships and hiring incentives are implemented to attract talent and ensure seamless graduate placements. The goal is not just to provide training but to establish a community-driven solution that addresses Chaffee County's rural workforce challenges, ensuring sustainable economic growth and community development. To date we have placed close to 500 graduates in high-paying jobs with approximately 100 in Colorado.

Western States College of Construction - Arkansas Valley

Award Amount: \$3,362,839.00

<https://westernstatescollege.org>

Our solution makes apprenticeship programs in the skilled construction trades more accessible and welcoming to women, minorities, and other underserved populations, while also improving overall apprenticeship completion rates. We accomplish this through three strategies: 1) increasing recruitment activities, especially amongst youth who are preparing to graduate or have recently graduated high school at local school districts, GED or equivalent holders, and diversity-based

community organizations; 2) hiring and providing updated training for all apprenticeship instructors at Western States College of Construction; and 3) re-establishing our pre-apprenticeship program, the Skilled Trades Education Program (STEP), to help students learn more about careers in the trades and prepare them for success in their apprenticeship. These strategies will grow and strengthen the pipeline from secondary school into jobs with family-sustaining wages, namely plumbing, pipefitting, HVACR, and sheet metal. Our solution serves workers, students, industry partners, secondary schools, postsecondary education, and the Colorado economy.

Youthentity

Award Amount: \$49,900

<https://www.youthentity.org>

Youthentity will use Opportunity Now grant funds to convene local stakeholders and collaboratively develop a Healthcare Career Academy to provide high school students with exposure and pathways to careers in the healthcare industries for the school year 2024-2025. This program will give students the opportunity to earn college credits, industry certifications, high school credits, and work side-by-side with healthcare industry professionals to help them determine the right path for their aspirations. The Healthcare Career Academy will directly address the healthcare worker shortages in Eagle, Pitkin, and Garfield counties by preparing students to enter careers in healthcare. By leveraging healthcare industry partnerships, bridging to higher education, and emphasizing recruitment of historically marginalized populations, the Healthcare Career Academy will develop qualified local healthcare candidates. Students who successfully complete the Academy will be eligible for entry-level job placement with local healthcare providers and/or earn prerequisites for college degrees in healthcare.

Eastern Plains

Colorado State University (CSU) - Eastern Plains and Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,812

<https://www.colostate.edu/>

The purpose of this project is to engage in the planning of a new pathway at CSU that provides access to paraprofessionals working in school districts to become licensed early childhood educators. Those engaged in the planning will 1) establish the pathway program as an Apprenticeship program through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, 2) partner with leadership from Morgan County School District (Fort Morgan) on the apprenticeship pathway, 3) work with Dr. Robert Fulton from Center for Rural Education to recruit paraprofessionals from rural school districts across the state, and 4) develop a marketing and recruitment plan for paraprofessionals working at school districts across the state.

Morgan Community College (Eastern Plains)- Fort Morgan

Award Amount: \$739,916

<https://www.morgancc.edu>

This initiative addresses a major economic challenge - the insufficient pipeline of educators. It is widely known that the K-12 system suffers from a history of teacher shortages. This shortage is severe in rural areas across the state. The development of a Bachelor of Applied Science in Education will meet both regional and statewide workforce development needs in the secondary education workforce sector. This program will provide intentional pathways for individuals seeking to transition into a higher wage position while retaining their job and remaining in their communities. The unique advantage of this project is that it will address more than one workforce need shortage. It directly addresses the shortage of teachers while also impacting the shortage of workers in areas such as construction, welders, electricians. The project provides teachers for these content areas, ultimately exposing students to these industries. This may result in more students pursuing careers in these fields.

Morgan County School District - Golden Plains

Award Amount: \$49,550.00

<https://www.fortmorgank12.com>

Our teacher preparation program aims to connect programs at the high school level with funding mechanisms at the postsecondary level to create a model that supports underrepresented students through their bachelor's degree and teaching license to start their education careers in an accelerated manner at low to no cost for them. The program ties in work-based learning experiences, career exploration, and concurrent enrollment courses in high school. In year thirteen students will participate in the Teacher Recruitment Education and Preparation Program (TREP) and will have the opportunity to live on campus at Western Colorado University. Students will return to their home districts in year fourteen as residents under a mentor teacher and will complete their education courses virtually through the same college. Post year 14 students will be able to be full teachers of record in elementary education or special education in their home school districts.

Northeast Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) - Golden Plains

Award Amount: \$1,496,193.40

<https://www.neboces.org>

Northeast BOCES will create career pathways and form regional partnerships to meet workforce needs in the northeast region of Colorado via intentional alignment and collaboration among employers, industry leaders, secondary and postsecondary education institutions, workforce development and training providers. This will lead to long-term change in the practices of and alignment among these entities to meet local area and statewide economic demands. Career pathways to be developed within the northeast region via this program include Health Care, Education, specifically K-12 and early childhood, Infrastructure, including construction and other trades, specifically plumbing, electrical, welding, Transportation, and Computer and Information Technology. Each of these pathways will lead to careers included in Colorado's Top Jobs, offering

youth improved access to careers that provide a living and/or family sustaining wage. Economic data reveals this five county region has a population nearing the retirement age that is higher than the national average, increasing the need for a skilled workforce to replace the current workforce (Lightcast Q3 2022 Data Set, 2022). Employers will have access to well-trained employees able to fill in demand occupations. Youth will participate in career awareness and exploration, internships, apprenticeships, industry certifications, concurrent enrollment, postsecondary planning, Associate Degree and/or Bachelor Degree programs. Upon graduation from high school, youth will enter the workforce with skills, industry certifications, and/or apprenticeships allowing them to immediately begin careers in jobs that pay a living wage, while other youth will continue on to postsecondary education to complete a career pathway that matches their interests, aptitudes, and skills.

Public Education and Business Coalition (PEBC) - Eastern Plains, Western Slope and San Luis Valley - Denver

Award Amount: \$2,033,486

<https://www.pebc.org>

Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC), in partnership with six regionally diverse rural Colorado school districts (herein referred to as the Rural Residency Collective (RRC) will use funding to stem the teacher workforce shortage grades ECE -12. This project targets new workforce opportunities for those in rural areas who have disproportionately been affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19, Early Childhood Education, and underserved Black and Latinx. Aspiring teachers will enter PEBC's renowned Teacher Residency and be placed within their desired rural school district for an immersed year-long teacher training with the intent of employment by RCC districts. Residency support is also leveraged for all educators within each district through PEBC's Professional Learning (PL). By expanding the RCC's burgeoning district relationships, we will partner to recruit, train, and retain effective teachers while increasing the living wage for those who yearn to become educators.

Mountain Resort

CareerWise Colorado

Award Amount: \$944,280.00

<https://www.careerwisecolorado.org/en>

CareerWise plans to address Colorado's dire teacher shortage by leveraging the key advantages of apprenticeships to improve the teacher preparation process for students and schools alike. They will partner with Colorado Mountain College, Reach University, and local school districts as employers of student-apprentices. Specifically, they seek to incorporate paid, on-the-job work experience in K-12 classrooms into an existing approved teacher preparation program (CMC's), by redesigning the program to offer online, hybrid (some asynchronous, some live) coursework accessible from anywhere and offered outside the traditional school-day timeframe. This will allow students to pursue a bachelor's-degree-bearing licensure process to become a teacher while remaining

employed full-time in a classroom setting in their own communities. Critically, this program will redesign coursework requirements for credit (e.g. theoretical papers) as applied exercises carried out through on-the-job learning during apprenticeship employment. This innovation has been implemented in other states under the authority of the pioneering institution, Reach University; however, under Colorado's current regulatory limitations, only approved training programs, like CMC's, qualify students for licensure. Hence, Reach University will advise CMC on adaptations to their curriculum to enable the benefit for Colorado's future teachers. Additionally, under pending legislation, new authorizations for this approach would also streamline the hiring and upskilling process for school-employers, reduce the time to licensure, and introduce more competition in the market for teacher preparation programs to stimulate innovation and modernization.

Colorado Mountain College

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://coloradomtn.edu>

Through this planning grant, CMC will coordinate a bilingual (English/Spanish) stakeholder engagement process with Colorado Succeeds and Northwest Colorado Workforce and directly apply the insights gathered to respond to industry and community needs in our Northwest Colorado region, through developing a plan for a regional skilled trades training center which incorporates programming driven by authentic, up-to-date and future-oriented hiring needs and sustained long-term through ongoing industry and community partnerships. Several key elements for success will be addressed in conversations with our stakeholders, including identification of job-specific talent gaps now and in the future, practical requirements for training delivery to be ideal and/or feasible, K12 to career pathway development, and partnership establishment for maximum impact and sustainability. This planning grant will prepare CMC to design skilled trades training for Northwest Colorado that allows diverse learners to enter training at any stage and gain relevant, high-demand skills while earning industry-credentialed certifications.

Colorado Mountain College

Award Amount: \$1,000,000

<https://coloradomtn.edu>

Colorado Mountain College (CMC) offers learners a stackable credit pathway, embedding paid internships and short-term, industry-recognized credentials (Certified Addictions Technician-CAT and Certified Addictions Specialist-CAS) into an accredited pathway leading to stacking associate and bachelor's degrees in human services. Established in 2022, the program responds to a critical shortage of behavioral health professionals across CMC's 7,500 square mile district of rural central and western Colorado, with eight counties served by CMC's 11 campuses. Addressing demands faced by human services departments, municipal and government agencies for entry-level workers, CMC's program prepares individuals for the behavioral health field, which spans worksites including counseling offices, medical clinics and hospitals, correctional facilities, schools, and community mental health agencies. CMC partners with local employers to rapidly place learners into 100% paid internships and offer pathways for advancement.

Mountain Family Health Centers

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://mountainfamily.org>

Led by the region's FQHC, Mountain Family Health Centers, West Mountain Elevate Educational and Career Pathways initiative (WM EECPP) will bring healthcare and education partners together to plan a system to elevate educational and career pathways to increase employment opportunities, Tier 2 and 1 employment, and economic mobility for this population. WM EECPP partners will utilize the requested Opportunity Now Colorado (ONC) grant to hire a local facilitator to lead a six-month planning process. The partners will work together to identify barriers for entry-level healthcare workers to securing employment, education and training, and economic mobility. Then, they will develop collaborative solutions for addressing these barriers and a system for elevating educational and career pathways and apply for an OEC Seed Grant for implementation. Concurrently, the partners will be creating a system to address critical healthcare workforce shortages in the WMR and State of Colorado by building a bilingual (Spanish), bicultural workforce.

YouthPower365

Award Amount: \$48,936.70

<https://youthpower365.org>

YouthPower365's Early Childhood Education Pathways Program aims to create more qualified workers in early childhood education, filling a critical staffing shortage among early childhood providers in Eagle County. The organization will use its Opportunity Now grant funds to convene local stakeholders in early childhood education and collaboratively create an advising tool of early childhood education pathways in Eagle County, emphasizing nontraditional pathways to recruit populations that statistically attend college at lower rates.

Northern Colorado

Banner Health of Colorado via the Banner Health Foundation - Greeley

Award Amount: \$809,715

<https://www.bannerhealth.com>

The challenge we are seeking to address is the high demand for health care workers in Northern Colorado and its rural communities. We are proposing to create the Healthcare Education, Advancement, and Leadership (HEAL) Program – a paid internship program for high school seniors in their second semester who are interested in exploring administrative, professional, and clinical careers within healthcare. Interested students will be placed at one of Banner Health's five hospitals within Northern Colorado for a semester long, work-based learning experience. The ultimate goal of HEAL will be to help interns transition into permanent careers at Banner and connect them to growth opportunities including higher education and career advancement.

BuildStrong Academy of Colorado - Northern Colorado/Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$748,497.00

<https://buildstrongacademy.org/colorado>

Since its inception, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado (BSAC) has been working to provide real-world, hands-on training to address the shortage of skilled workers in the Colorado construction industry. Since 2017, we have provided affordable and accessible construction training to individuals in underserved communities, with the goal of helping them achieve financial security and a livable wage. Overall, our program aims to address the skilled labor gap in the Colorado construction industry by providing low-cost training, mentorship, and job placement opportunities to underserved students who may not have access to such resources otherwise. With the Opportunity Now grant funding, we will be able to serve even more people across the front range with training, support, and employment in the construction industry.

Colorado Safety-Net Collaborative - Northern Colorado/Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$49,600.00

<https://www.cosafetynet.org>

Safety Net Clinics serve people who are uninsured or have Medicaid in a culturally appropriate and welcoming way in their community. Due to COVID fatigue in healthcare providers, clinics are being poached for staff. Safety net clinic margins are not significant enough to provide large signing bonuses like some providers do, but they have upped their game to pay competitive wages. However, they are still struggling to hire skilled staff. Staff shortages cause exhaustion and anxiety for the staff and fewer appointment slots for the community, affecting sustainable healthcare in the community. Clinics recognize the need to shift from finding staff in the traditional fashion to growing their own staff and would like to do that from their own communities for purposes of culturally appropriate care and better staff retention. These communities are historically underserved groups and areas, including members of rural communities, lower-wealth communities, and communities of color, and Colorado Safety-Net Collaborative aims to fill these gaps.

Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce - Fort Collins

Award Amount: \$49,500

<https://fortcollinschamber.com>

Region 2's Health Sector Partnership (HSP) will use this planning grant to finalize implementation plans for better connecting health industry employers, education providers, public partners, and learners/earners throughout the region. Implementing the plan will better connect an enlarged healthcare workforce with the career engagement and training needed to address workforce shortages, especially in our highest priority health care and behavioral health occupations, including nursing, health technicians and support occupations, and behavioral health workers. Completing this planning process will allow our region to rapidly realign our activities to raise awareness, education levels, credentialing and job opportunities for learners/earners who have aptitude and interest in health professions. Collaborative planning will allow effective and efficient latticing of multiple education and workforce training opportunities across diverse education and industry partners in a manner that is most responsive to industry needs and provides for ongoing systemic infrastructure for meeting evolving needs in future years.

Innosphere Ventures - Fort Collins

Award Amount: \$1,358,277

<https://innosphereventures.org>

The Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine (CO-WY Engine) proposes an ambitious workforce program to address the critical shortage of systems engineers in our region and Colorado, a concern that aligns with the National Science Board's 2024 report on STEM education and workforce development. Through structured internship and apprenticeship programs, this initiative seeks to cultivate a new generation of systems engineers equipped to meet the demands of our rapidly evolving climate technology sector and broader STEM fields.

Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development - Fort Collins

Award Amount: \$40,837

<https://www.larimer.gov/ewd>

This Planning Grant will enable Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development to develop a pilot "CareCorps", or two year paid, service corps of home care providers, to address the extreme shortage of non-medical care workers in Northern Colorado as well as improve retention and employment opportunities for individuals in these positions. The CareCorp will be a public/private partnership aimed at improving employment outcomes for employees; reducing turnover and thus hiring costs for employers; increasing consistency and quality of care; and improving the health outcomes for home care clients. Cohort hiring and training (utilizing existing employer trainings supplemented with a research informed care giver certificate + workforce readiness support) will ensure members develop knowledge and skills they can leverage after service in occupations with high demand and livable wages. The CareCorps funding model will increase wages for corps members, reducing the impact of the volatility of the industry on these workers.

National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement, Inc. - Denver/Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,084.00

<https://www.nimaa.edu>

The National Institute for Medical Assistants (NIMAA) planning grant will address the unmet labor needs of Colorado's healthcare industry facing a critical shortage of skilled health care workers. NIMAA's accredited training model combines full-distance (on-line) education with a concurrent on-the ground externship at clinical partner sites, and content focused on the team-based care model used by high-performing primary care practices. The challenge we seek to address through our planning grant is to identify how to make our current medical assistant (MA) training program more accessible to prospective students and clinical partners (small medical practice training sites) in rural communities. The planning grant will allow NIMAA to: 1) engage with prospective industry partners, and partners who have suspended program participation, to better understand how to modify the program to better meet their capacity and, 2) examine in depth needed program structure and curriculum modifications in order to implement an alternative model.

St. Vrain Valley Schools - Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$7,000,000.000

<https://www.svvsd.org>

St. Vrain Valley School District RE-1J, in partnership with Adams 12 Five Star Schools, Weld RE-3J School District, Estes Park School District, Colorado Education Initiative, Workforce Boulder, University of Colorado Denver, and the Boulder Chamber, will implement three comprehensive career pathways in education, advanced manufacturing, and information technology. Pathways are designed to introduce, inspire, train, and place participants into high-wage, high-demand roles in each of the pathways at no cost to participants or their families.

Teach by Tech, Inc - Denver/Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$45,066.00

<https://www.teachbytech.org>

This planning grant will leverage the resources from partners to develop training programs that help lower-wealth individuals and New Americans (immigrant and refugee populations) gain the skills needed for entry-level jobs such as food production associate, food manufacturer, and packaging operator. The salary ranges for these positions are between \$17.50 - \$20.50 per hour. Digital skills gaps occur across all industries but are especially high in the construction, transportation, and storage sectors, where half (50%) of all workers have limited or no digital skills. More than one-third of workers in several other major industries also have digital skill gaps, including retail (37%), and manufacturing (35%). The solution serves the target population by connecting them directly to jobs that can provide economic stability and upward mobility. Manufacturing jobs provide a predictable schedule, health benefits, overtime opportunities /differential pay, and other features that help lower-wealth Coloradans and New Americans build their family wealth.

The Master's Apprentice

Award Amount: \$499,996.58

<https://themastersapprentice.org>

The Master's Apprentice program provides a tuition-free six-week pre-apprentice course that includes the hard and soft skills needed to obtain a registered apprenticeship in the skilled trades. The curriculum consists of construction math, financial literacy, career planning, work ethic, basic hand and power tools in the woodshop, hands-on experience in welding, wiring switches and sheet metal, plumbing, and wood projects. MAP staff provides intervention, counsels students to overcome challenges, and supports students to graduate successfully. As a result, MAP graduates receive multiple employment offers, an average of \$20-\$23 per hour to begin and receive increases at least every six months. A typical apprentice will earn over \$200,000 on the four-year journey to becoming a journeyman, well above the living wage criteria. The construction industry provides economic mobility, allowing low-income people to transition to the middle class, which is an absolute possibility and reality for low-income communities and families.

Northwest Colorado

Small Business Majority Foundation, Inc.

Award Amount: \$49,900

<https://smallbusinessmajority.org>

Small Business Majority will work with Valley Settlement and the Colorado Association of Family Child Care (CAFCC) to develop a program that fortifies entrepreneurship and the workforce by engaging new American immigrants in rural Northwest Colorado. The passage of SB 21-199 removed barriers to public benefits and occupational/business licensing for undocumented Coloradans. Our project will develop an outreach and education model tailored for Spanish-speakers and undocumented immigrants interested in the childcare industry. Long-term, our goal is to increase the number of licensed childcare providers offering quality, culturally appropriate slots in our target region. Success will produce a plan that demonstrates how we can increase available childcare slots and support undocumented business owners and workers in accessing needed credentials. We will develop an outcomes-driven model that is adaptive for other industries in Colorado, particularly to meet small business hiring needs, and replicable in other states with similar policy landscapes.

Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship & Sustainability (YVPS3)
(Northwest Colorado) - Craig

Award Amount: \$2,912,774

<https://www.yvps3.org>

The Colorado Rural Talent Network (CRTN) includes 4 regional non-profit intermediaries working for rural Coloradans: Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship & Sustainability (YVPS3) (serving as Lead Applicant), Fremont Multi-District Initiative (FMI), Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative (SWCEC), and the Western Slope Schools Career Collaborative (WSSCC). Each intermediary represents small K-12 school districts, regional key industries, community nonprofits, higher education institutions, and tribes (in applicable areas). The overall goal is for rural students to access career-connected learning and experiences that lead to economic mobility through meaningful employment. Based on local needs, our approach is to create locally responsive career pathways from schools to higher education with job-shadowing, internships, and industry training. The coalition will share their regional learnings, building similar workforce pathways in parallel throughout the regions. Collectively, this blended coalition will serve 20 school districts in 12 counties, 15 higher education/training partners, and non-profit business and industry partners in each region.

Southern Colorado

Arizona State University - San Luis Valley/Raton Basin /Pueblo/Central & SE
Colorado

Award Amount: \$525,806.00

<https://www.asu.edu>

This project will network together several key partners in Colorado's educational ecosystem responsible for recruiting new employees into the educator workforce and simultaneously help build the infrastructure to redesign education jobs into which Coloradans will want to work. As proposed, Arizona State University's Next Education Workforce initiative will partner with Colorado school

systems and Colorado educational support organizations to redesign the way they staff schools and how they recruit new teachers into the profession. In Next Education Workforce staffing models, educators work on teams and share responsibility for meeting student's academic and socio-emotional needs. These team-based staffing models create better ways for educators to enter the profession, specialize and advance. Early outcomes from implementing team-based models in Arizona are promising: educators are much more satisfied, students are learning more, and schools are better able to recruit and retain teachers. At its core, this program aims to create more attractive conditions into which to recruit new teachers in Colorado, particularly in rural areas.

The Attainment Network (San Luis Valley)

Award Amount: \$3,024,849

<https://attainmentnetwork.org>

The Attainment Network made an initial investment in San Luis Valley to create an education-to-workforce partnership, including 4 healthcare providers, 2 higher education institutions, 14 school districts and 3 community organizations. The partnership is focused on addressing critical healthcare employee shortages in the local workforce and closing equity gaps on pathways. Each partner serves unique constituencies and supports a key part of the pathway. This investment supports scaling evidence-based practices, data development, evaluation, continuous improvement, project management, and will build capacity to sustain and scale workforce development initiatives. Over a short period, this partnership has increased early access to education/training and work-based learning; increased skilled nursing workforce; and coordinated essential wrap-around supports for learners. Through Opportunity Now funds, this project will expand capacity and continue to support a full pipeline from high school to a high-demand job in healthcare with upskilling opportunities. This project was built by San Luis Valley partners with community input.

Boys and Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley

Award Amount: \$45,022

<https://www.bgcslv.org>

BGCSLV and the ECS are planning for integrated workforce pipelines from ages 12 and up, focusing on opportunities to engage or re-engage individuals at varying stages of professional experience. The plan will bolster pathways for youth looking to enter the early care and learning profession, including dedicated credentials of Basic Babysitting and essential First Aid. The plan will identify current gaps and needs for those entering, currently working in, and re-entering the profession and provide clear pathways for skilling, upskilling, and reskilling. These professions include Early Childhood Teachers, Family Child Care Educators, Administrators and Directors of Center-Based Programs, Family Specialists and Counselors, Technical Assistance Specialists, Professional Development Specialists, Education Consultants and Researchers, Early Childhood Program Managers, Higher Education Faculty Regulators, and Sales Representatives.

Build Pagosa Inc. – Southwest Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://buildpagosa.org>

The Regional Workforce Center for Career and Technical Education and Workforce Training (RWC) project addresses workforce skill and talent needs and involves industry partners to match residents with living-wage careers throughout their life stages. It mitigates challenges outlined in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report through education, training, upskilling, and supports that yield skilled workers to fill critical gaps and move underemployed workers into higher-paying jobs. Of the Tier One jobs in the report, the RWC will serve construction, transportation, and automotive careers, architecture and engineering occupations, farming and forestry, healthcare, culinary, recreation, and computer jobs and significantly reduce the expense of travel/relocation to seek this training. The planning grant will support the completion of our innovative project design outlining roles of educational consortium members, involvement of industry partners, projected program and pathways, final architectural plans, and additional grassroots stakeholder planning meetings throughout the region.

Campo School District RE-6

Award Amount: \$49,799

<https://www.campok12.org>

The southeastern region of Colorado is at a critical juncture. This region is sparsely populated, and not well known by most Coloradans. Yet, this is an essential region of the state, and one that continues to be a vibrant component of greater Colorado. The six towns that comprise Baca County produce leaders in agriculture, health care, earth sciences, and small businesses that can withstand any challenge or barrier that is constructed. This grant addresses the need for the formulation and development of a cohesive and inclusive plan that requires key community stakeholders (including schools, houses of worship, businesses, ranches/farms, and a multitude of other components) to identify and define the next 50 years in southeastern Colorado. This project examines opportunities related to residential and commercial growth, the establishment of new locally owned businesses, and developing capacity to provide necessary services to a new population that will call southeastern Colorado home.

Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) - Denver Metro/Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$49,898.50

<https://www.ceoworks.org>

With this planning grant we will form a collective made up of four Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs): Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), Mile High Workshop (MHW), Women's Bean Project (WBP), and Prodigy Ventures (Prodigy). ESEs provide skills development, paid on-the-job training, and job matching services to populations who face significant barriers to employment. They not only empower individuals chronically left out of the workforce, but their unique model stimulates the local economy, works to reduce individual and systemic barriers to employment, and empowers individuals to access more opportunities that support economic growth. This collective will increase the capacity of each ESE to serve underrepresented talent by addressing the needs and challenges of those we serve and local employers, expanding access to advanced opportunities and industry-recognized credential training programs, and streamlining interorganizational referrals and collaborative programming.

Colorado State University Pueblo - Southern Colorado, Eastern Plains and San Luis Valley

Award Amount: \$1,396,683.58

<https://www.csupueblo.edu>

Colorado State University Pueblo's locally grown, collaborative, and regionally based, sector-wide solution, "Grow where you're planted": Southern Colorado Partners Leading Advancement in Nursing Track (PLANT), is rooted in evidence-based practices, seeded through existing partnerships, and stemmed from the crisis in healthcare in Colorado. Colorado faces a healthcare crisis, especially for people who are Hispanic, are rural, and live in poverty. All 15 counties they will serve are designated as either a Medically Underserved Areas/ Populations (lack of access to primary care services) or Health Professional Shortage Areas (designated based income levels, infant mortality rate, percent of population whose age is 65 and over, and the number of full-time primary care physicians providing care in the area), or both. These designations indicate that there is a clear need for attention to healthcare and economic mobility in Southern Colorado, and they will produce new nurses and highly skilled nurse practitioners through nursing education.

Education Strategy Group - Denver Metro/Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$49,633.00

<https://edstrategy.org>

ESG plans to design, launch, and support a place-based initiative to build and scale high-quality, demand-driven career pathways that will build a purposeful two-generation model that engages both high school students and their parents. These pathways start in high school, continue into and through higher education, and lead all students—but especially learners in poverty and learners of color—to in-demand jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage. Simultaneously engaging two generations will expand opportunities for both students in the K-12 system and parenting adults seeking to complete their first credential or upskill. This, in turn, improves learner success and positively impacts the community economy. Colorado's regions offer the basis for a demand-driven model around which to organize Colorado Regional Pathways Network (CRPN). CRPN will focus on collaboration across school districts, community colleges, and the workforce to build and scale career pathways that respond to their region's industry needs.

Emergent Campus LLC - Trinidad

Award Amount: \$3,509,529

<https://emergentcampus.com>

Colorado has a significant shortage in technology-based talent that is inhibiting growth in this critical industry. Tech sector growth has been concentrated in urban centers, underutilizing rural Coloradans as a key demographic in meeting workforce needs. Emergent Campus (EC), an award-winning technology center located in rural Fremont County, offers a scalable workforce development model that increases rural access to in-demand, high-wage jobs and relevant training thereby strengthening Colorado's ability to remain a technology leader. This broadens economic development opportunities across Colorado by leveraging untapped rural potential. Through recruiting businesses, providing startups with low-rent space and skilling/upskilling rural workforce, ECI has generated 155+ tech jobs and supported 50+ paid internships, in Fremont County,

with \$25M annual economic impact. EC industry partners, K12, and higher education will collaborate to scale the EC formula for rural job creation and expand to Trinidad, providing work-based learning opportunities alongside a business relocation/expansion engine.

Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families (JI) – Southern Colorado, Colorado Springs

Award Amount: \$622,624

<https://www.jointinitiatives.org>

Joint Initiatives (JI) and its partner Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) will leverage JI's Early Childhood (EC) quality oversight program, the local employer taskforce, and Career Advance Colorado funding to create a training continuum for Early Childhood educators. First, two no-cost flexible-track courses offered by PPSC, coupled with direct financial support, will help attract and retain EC sector employees. Track one targets professionals new to the EC education field, equipping them to gain a PDIS Level I certification. Track two moves currently certified Teacher Assistants to Lead Teachers – PDIS Level 2. Second, Track 3 supports CDA+ students receive necessary training, technical assistance, observation and coaching to successfully gain their Child Development Associate's degree including participation in PPSC's Earn-to-Learn program. JI's Career Navigators train to become CDA Specialists, building a local system of full CDA completion. All strategies close current gaps in our community's workforce development continuum.

La Plata County Economic Development Alliance – Southwest Region

Award Amount: \$1,245,984.95

<https://yeslpc.com>

The La Plata County Economic Development Alliance (the Alliance) and Fort Lewis College (FLC) formed the Rural Upskill Network "Project RUN" to provide adult learners with accessible and high-quality education through professional certificates driven by industry needs. Project RUN will train, upskill, and retain a skilled and diverse workforce, driving economic mobility. This initiative focuses on serving diverse populations – defined as traditionally underserved populations including rural, lower wealth, and diverse communities of color – especially as, Southwest Colorado (Region 9) is home to large Latinx and Indigenous populations. Feedback from regional industry leaders regarding workforce challenges are consistent: Number of candidates possessing skills for managerial positions has decreased "soft skills" required for upward mobility are needed, but difficult to offer Industry's lack of an integrated, collaborative approach to workforce development hurts local businesses Technical and soft skills are highest priority Recruiting and retaining high caliber employees is a challenge due to numerous external factors (wages, childcare, leadership diversity). Their project will build a rural-focused, cost-effective program that addresses the regional workforce skill gaps and focuses on increasing diverse representation in livable and family sustaining wage jobs. Project RUN will build leadership and technical expertise professional certificates to advance career pathways in regional priority sectors and industries. Certificate content will be co-designed by industry and adult learners through a series of Design Sprints. With a commitment to incorporating diverse voices, an Advisory Board will provide leadership and oversight to ensure offerings meet workforce needs and spur economic mobility.

La Raza Services, Inc. Dbá Servicios de La Raza – Front Range, Southern Colorado, Pueblo

Award Amount: \$900,000

<https://serviciosdelaraza.org>

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the American Dream as “the ideal that every citizen of the United States should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative.” Unfortunately, for Latinos, the American dream is just that ... a dream. Our project, Mi Sueno de America (“My American Dream”), will create equitable and intentional pathways toward economic security and prosperity for low-income Latinos in the Denver Metro and Pueblo regions by developing a shared strategy with our multiple education and industry partners that are working to address critical shortages in the transportation, infrastructure, warehousing, construction, and skilled trades sectors. Servicios will deploy evidence-based workforce development curriculum coupled with stackable credentialing opportunities through our academic/training partners, low-barrier employment with opportunities to grow and advance pay through our industry partners, and ongoing case management supports from Servicios to foster long-term client success.

La Veta School District RE-2 – Southern Colorado/Raton Basin

Award Amount: \$49,973.00

<https://www.lvk12.org/en-US>

Credit-for-work experiences and pre-apprenticeships with local businesses and nonprofits is a main goal of the La Veta School District RE-2 Work-Based Learning program. Students who are enrolled in CTE, VoAg, and Business classes will have the opportunity to engage with local employers to gain on-the-job training while completing their coursework. Local businesses and nonprofits will benefit from having workforce ready employees. Students will receive training that will enable them to compete for local employment, be well-prepared to list diverse accomplishments for post-secondary education applications, and leave high-school with certificates that enhance their chances for being hired upon graduation.

Microchip Technology – Southern Colorado, Colorado Springs

Award Amount: \$1,056,792

<https://www.microchip.com>

Microchip Technology's program partners, Innovaflex and Entegris, with Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) on a developed Semiconductor Certification. This program takes current Microchip, Innovaflex and Entegris staff in entry level Production Specialist, Process Enhancement Specialist, and Equipment Technician based roles and places them in a 1 year certification program that will upskill talent to better qualify for career growth. The market for Equipment Technician talent is minimal, especially on a local scale to El Paso County and the state of Colorado. This program produces retention of local talent to Colorado and opportunity to better Coloradans financial stability. This program further reflects in our partnership with Pikes Peak Business and Education Alliance (PPBEA) and our outreach efforts to middle and high school students in El Paso County. The impact will be recurring.

Peak Education – Southern Colorado, Colorado Springs

Award Amount: \$49,900

<https://www.peakedu.org>

Peak Education will utilize the planning grant to help better finalize our model focusing on the educator shortage in the workforce. Due to the nature of the workforce gap we are seeking to address, our current partners are both training and industry partners. A Planning Grant would allow us to better define the necessary next steps for a fully successful program to be launched in late 2024. In Phase 1 of Opportunity Now we were fortunate to advance past the LOI stage and apply for a Seed Grant. That proposal focused on partnerships and workforce gaps in education, healthcare, and technology. While we still deem all of these fields as being in need, we have since become involved in other partnerships that may address the healthcare and technology aspects and we would like to pursue a Planning Grant to fully focus on just the education workforce needs.

Pikes Peak BOCES – Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://www.ppbores.org>

The PPBOCES "Building a Cooperative Industry Driven Pathway System" will be designed using the Opportunity Now Planning Grant resources. This program aims to provide high school students with a comprehensive industry-driven pathway for successful careers. It will focus on curriculum development, industry partnerships, cooperative learning, and the establishment of a dedicated facility. The focus areas are (1) Curriculum Development and Mapping to Certification/Postgraduate Degrees: Collaborating with BOCES districts and industry professionals, we will develop a curriculum aligned with local industry needs (2) Industry Partnerships: Strong partnerships will be established with local industries and employers and (3) Facility Development: A dedicated facility will be established to serve as a centralized hub for the program. This facility will provide students with access to specialized resources, industry-specific equipment, and collaborative spaces. The program will bridge the gap between education and industry, offering a clear pathway for students to pursue thriving careers in their chosen fields.

Pikes Peak State College – Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$46,856.00

<https://www.pikespeak.edu>

Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) plans to address the regional need for Engineering Technicians by leveraging current partnerships with regional K-12 schools, industry and community partners to create a more robust and inclusive Engineering Technician pathway. The College will gather feedback from our industry partners about the skills required of Engineering Technician graduates, collaborate with community partners and our K-12 partners to align curricula, evaluate the potential of a dedicated Concurrent Enrollment program for engineering technicians, and invite all partners to create professional development opportunities for students, faculty, and employers, centered on diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness issues in engineering. All of these activities will lead to an Engineering Technician pathway that will meet a critical employment need in the Pikes Peak region and provide students with a financially rewarding career.

Public Education and Business Coalition (PEBC) (Eastern Plains, Western Slope and San Luis Valley)

Award Amount: \$2,033,486

<https://www.pebc.org>

Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC), in partnership with six regionally diverse rural Colorado school districts (herein referred to as the Rural Residency Collective (RRC) will use funding to stem the teacher workforce shortage grades ECE -12. This project targets new workforce opportunities for those in rural areas who have disproportionately been affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19, Early Childhood Education, and underserved Black and Latinx. Aspiring teachers will enter PEBC's renowned Teacher Residency and be placed within their desired rural school district for an immersed year-long teacher training with the intent of employment by RCC districts. Residency support is also leveraged for all educators within each district through PEBC's Professional Learning (PL). By expanding the RCC's burgeoning district relationships, we will partner to recruit, train, and retain effective teachers while increasing the living wage for those who yearn to become educators.

Public Education & Business Coalition - San Luis Valley

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://www.pebc.org>

Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC) and the Spring Institute (SI) aim to develop a supportive pathway to recruit New Americans to stem the teacher shortage throughout Colorado in grades P-12, by creating the New American Teacher Pathway. These organizations will work together to fill these urgent state needs in critical workforce shortage areas of ECE and primary and secondary education in urban and rural areas. While also increasing the number of highly trained, culturally and linguistically diverse educators, the plan also benefits our Colorado students with more educators with shared and lived experiences. PEBC operates the PEBC Teacher Residency program, training well-qualified new teachers for Colorado schools. PEBC's mission is to develop educators worthy of each and every learner. SI for Intercultural Learning's mission is to empower people and organizations to succeed across languages and cultures. Spring provides English-language acquisition through its programs and helps internationally trained healthcare and education professionals re-establish their careers in Colorado.

SkillUp Coalition - Pueblo

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://skillup.org>

SkillUp:CO will bridge the divide between worker and family-sustaining jobs, creating an end-to-end solution for a diverse pipeline of learners and workers across the entire career exploration journey. Our model includes a web-based platform that connects workers with the right tools, resources, and support, so they can make confident career shifts, find quality living-wage jobs, and position themselves for promising career growth. We do this by curating and connecting our target audience to catalogs that include high-quality, in demand jobs and training programs for this region. This grant project will focus on expanding these resources in the Pueblo community as well as

building relationships with key regional employers to identify and understand workforce needs that will enable industry expansion and economic recovery.

South Central BOCES - Southern Colorado and Eastern Plains, based in Pueblo

Award Amount: \$2,143,745

<https://www.sc-boces.org>

The South Central BOCES is on a mission to build dynamic career pathways for 14 to 24 year olds, accelerating their growth and success in the construction and education sectors within our region of the state. Our vision involves forging robust partnerships between school districts, higher education institutions, training centers, and industry leaders, and we aim to bridge the talent gap that has precipitated a severe hiring crisis and economic stagnation in our region. In the construction field, we are establishing a hub model, with school districts in various subregions specializing and opening their doors to students from neighboring districts. Meanwhile, the education career pathway will be hosted by the SC BOCES, offering centralized programming accessible to the entire region in a hybrid format, complemented by internships within students' home districts. With concurrent enrollment opportunities and industry-certified credentials, our students will seamlessly transition into full-time employment within their chosen field.

Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative - San Juan Valley

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://www.swcoedcollaborative.org>

SWCEC will research and design an innovative approach towards training current and future building trades workforce while supporting current public sector industries with affordable housing solutions. Through convening a group of relevant stakeholders (K-12, higher education, local government, workforce centers, and building trades and healthcare industries), SWCEC will design the opening of a manufacturing facility that will train high school and 18-24 year old workforce within the building trades industry to build manufactured homes that will be sold at cost to local public sector industries. Students in their junior and senior year of high school for building trades will be able to complete their high school degree, earn industry credentials, and an Associate's Degree in Construction Technology. Through the incentive of affordable housing K-12, higher education, and public sector industries will be able to utilize affordable housing as a recruitment strategy to obtain and retain key workforce employees.

TASCC LLC. - Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$49,840.00

<https://tascc.co>

TASCC serves rural school districts throughout Colorado, providing a USDOL approved teacher apprenticeship pathway. TASCC provides supervision and coaching for these apprentices through the use of teacher coaching professionals. The TASCC Teacher Apprenticeship approved by the USDOL benefits the region allowing for more opportunities for regional workers to be more economically mobile and earn a living wage in an in-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupation while earning college credits towards earning their teaching license. TASCC has partnered with the

University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) to create an intentional pathway connecting postsecondary course work that directly relates to practice for the apprentice teacher in the classroom. The courses are designed and managed by UCCS while being taught by a TASC coach allowing for a wrap-around practice of support for the apprentice teacher.

Western States College of Construction - Denver Metro/Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$3,362,839.00

<https://westernstatescollege.org>

Our solution makes apprenticeship programs in the skilled construction trades more accessible and welcoming to women, minorities, and other underserved populations, while also improving overall apprenticeship completion rates. We accomplish this through three strategies: 1) increasing recruitment activities, especially amongst youth who are preparing to graduate or have recently graduated high school at local school districts, GED or equivalent holders, and diversity-based community organizations; 2) hiring and providing updated training for all apprenticeship instructors at Western States College of Construction; and 3) re-establishing our pre-apprenticeship program, the Skilled Trades Education Program (STEP), to help students learn more about careers in the trades and prepare them for success in their apprenticeship. These strategies will grow and strengthen the pipeline from secondary school into jobs with family-sustaining wages, namely plumbing, pipefitting, HVACR, and sheet metal. Our solution serves workers, students, industry partners, secondary schools, postsecondary education, and the Colorado economy.

Western Slope

Colorado Mesa Technical University (CMU-Tech)

Award Amount: \$1,625,468

<https://www.coloradomesa.edu/tech>

Our comprehensive health care program will offer vital health and dental care training throughout rural western Colorado with three key goals: (1) Address talent shortages through 20 private and regional partnerships (2) Foster education-industry collaboration through sharing of space, equipment and faculty (3) Connect Coloradans with high-demand, living-wage jobs. The program establishes a dental hygiene clinic and training facility in partnership with MarillacHealth and 9 private dental practices. This facility aims to address the dental care needs of the Mesa County area and the surrounding counties, while also offering educational opportunities in dental care for the local community. A mobile learning lab (MLL) will support medical assistant (MA), nurse aide (CNA), and EMT/paramedic training programs in rural western slope communities to address the high demand for health care workers supported by 7 private and public entities. Having well-trained health care professionals in rural communities is essential for providing quality healthcare services to residents.

Colorado River Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CR BOCES) - Western Slope

Award Amount: \$999,634

<https://www.crboces.org>

The EPIC Infrastructure Training and Employment Collaborative, led by the Colorado River BOCES in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Roaring Fork Valley (RFV), is designed to address critical workforce shortages in construction and advanced manufacturing across rural communities on Colorado's Western Slope. CR BOCES' program provides hands-on, industry-aligned training through the Modular Production and Advanced Manufacturing Training Facility. This facility, will train Coloradans annually in net-zero, sustainable modular construction techniques, preparing them for high-demand careers in infrastructure and addressing regional workforce shortages and affordable housing needs.

Colorado River Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CR BOCES) - Western Slope

Award Amount: \$1,496,958.38

<https://www.crboces.org>

The Educational Pathways to Innovative Careers (EPIC) program addresses the interdependent issues of a skilled-labor shortage, the disconnect between current educational programming and market needs, and affordable housing. EPIC is an innovative career and technology education (CTE) program that connects students to a wide range of high-wage, in-demand career opportunities that include construction and advanced manufacturing. Industry and education partners have collaborated to co-create and pilot a new skilled trades program, offering real-world experience to students through the design and production of tiny homes. EPIC is the only program in the region that helps students to earn in-demand industry-recognized certificates in construction and directly connect to local employers. Simultaneously, students are learning about the different factors impacting affordable housing in our state and producing homes to help address the challenge. Colorado has the 5th highest median home value and mountain towns combat a heightened affordable housing crisis, further exacerbated by COVID and the influx of remote workers. Colorado River Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CR BOCES) serves the Roaring Fork and Colorado Valleys. Member school districts reflect a vibrant mix of small rural and affluent mountain communities with a growing Latinx population, many experiencing the realities of Colorado's housing crisis exacerbated by extreme housing costs, insufficient workforce, and gaps in education and training programs that lead to high-wage, high-demand jobs in the construction field.

Colorado West Regional Mental Health, Inc. d.b.a Health Solutions West, Inc.

Award Amount: \$998,320

<https://www.healthsolutionswest.org>

The Expanded Internship Program at Health Solutions West addresses the need for behavioral health care specialists in Western Colorado by connecting education to employment. The program offers financial and educational support for students completing their degrees in behavioral health while

serving the needs of rural Colorado. It surpasses standard internship requirements by alleviating financial obstacles to advanced education and facilitating job placement. Interns receive wages and coverage for job specific training and certification fees. Additionally, Health Solutions West will develop an Addiction Counselor Clinical Training Program, providing required courses for new clinical therapist certification and licensure.

These outreach methods with educational partners will be more impactful, raising student awareness about the behavioral health talent shortage, our internship program, and careers in the behavioral health industry. The organization aims to provide a comprehensive program, support job placement, and advance students in the workplace to increase the number of certified clinicians serving Western Colorado.

The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

Award Amount: \$49,750

<https://gjchamber.org>

Find Your Future connects students and young adults with work-based learning opportunities and jobs throughout the Grand Valley that will help them achieve livable wages. The goal of this program is to also help lower the gap intensity in our top industries that feel workforce needs are not being met. Find Your Future will be the hub for all work-based learning, education, and employment resources for job seekers and learners.

Intermountain Health (IHC Health Services, Inc.)

Award Amount: \$1,944,938

<https://intermountainhealthcare.org>

A holistic ecosystem is needed to overcome barriers to quality jobs for Coloradans without a four-year degree, particularly in health care. Pandemic impacts and the digital revolution exacerbate this challenge, underscoring an urgency for collaboration on a system-level. Pathfinders Program (Pathfinders), led by Intermountain Health (Intermountain), is an ecosystem providing guided, resourced pathways to personalized learning and career progression. The Pathfinders pilot introduces an innovative pathway where jobseekers are guided and supported throughout exploration, employment, learning, and career progression. The interconnected ecosystem uses AI-powered technology and strategic education and industry-leader partnerships to provide targeted outreach, job placement, job-based learning, hiring-manager development, transportation, and financial and career coaching. The robust evaluation plan ensures the pilot is rooted in transparency, equity, and improvement, positioning Pathfinders to grow from 60 participants to thousands. The partner network and Advisory Council aim to develop a new standard for scalable, statewide demand-driven workforce development and economic mobility.

Family Health West Foundation - Western Slope

Award Amount: \$1,559,427.40

<https://fhw.org/foundation>

Mesa County includes many rural communities and is struggling to find skilled healthcare workers. Family Health West Foundation will offer career advancement and training opportunities, which includes economic mobility and career ladder, to its local residents. It will address workforce needs and development for the Western Slope of Colorado in partnership with the Colorado Institute of Family Medicine (CIFM) as part of their implementation of Project Quest, following their modeling by tying into their statewide approach. Coordinating with CIFM efforts, their solutions will inform ways to address systemic and regulatory barriers related to the nursing and healthcare pathways. They have partnered with the Western Colorado Area Health Education Center, WCCC, and CMU to provide education for students, as well as removing barriers to careers in healthcare. They will employ community collaborations and a proven approach for long-term sustainability. Their solutions primarily benefit those affected by barriers to receiving healthcare education, which includes students and workers living in rural Mesa County, lower-wealth students/families and those who have had job/career and educational interruptions as a result of COVID-19. Due to CMU's large reach within 14 Western Colorado counties, they have the capacity to serve nearly 1/3 of the state's current need for RNs, Respiratory and inpatient/outpatient therapy, phlebotomy and radiology training.

Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center, Inc DbA Axis Health System - Southwest Colorado - Durango

Award Amount: \$1,289,584

<https://www.axishealthsystem.org>

The Healthcare Education Access Launchpad Southwest (HEAL SW) will be an innovative rural work-based learning (WBL) program led by Axis Health System (Axis) and Pueblo Community College Southwest (PCCSW) with a consortium of industry, education, and tribal partners in southwest Colorado. HEAL SW will address the healthcare workforce shortage and inequities in starting health care careers, leading to economic mobility for low-income, rural, Latinx, and Indigenous people. Through this grant, PCCSW will establish a state-of-the-art health science learning hub at Axis' Durango Integrated Healthcare (DIH) clinic. Staff will be hired to support outreach, student pathway development, and consortium activities. The consortium will co-develop enhanced skills curricula to ensure immersive WBL experiences and learning objectives align with industry needs to enhance job placement and fit that lead to retention, wage gain, and advancement over the long term. HEAL SW will advance statewide efforts to bolster equitable labor force participation in Colorado.

Western Colorado University - Gunnison

Award Amount: \$1,513,818

<https://western.edu>

Gunnison Valley Health (GVH), the primary health care services provider for Gunnison County and surrounding regions, cannot meet its nursing workforce needs. Other rural health care providers face similar challenges. The shortage is evidenced by persistent nursing vacancies and has led to increased costs and burn-out/dissatisfaction among current staff. Learners in Gunnison County interested in a nursing career or current GVH staff interested in upskilling or re-skilling have no local options and must leave the county to pursue nursing education. Those who leave typically do not return. Western Colorado University (Western) will collaborate with GVH and other providers to

develop a blend of academic programs offering multiple pathways to nursing careers. Western will offer certified nursing assistant (CNA) training and credentials, allowing for rapid entry into the workforce; a 12-month accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) for individuals who already have a bachelor's degree; and a traditional four-year BSN.

Front Range

Denver Hybrid College dba AdvanceEDU

Award Amount: \$1,154,219.00

<https://myadvanceedu.org>

The Innovative Pathways Alliance is a group of 30+ forward-thinking Colorado organizations—employers, nonprofits, education organizations, and foundations—joining forces to strengthen and diversify Colorado's talent pipeline by scaling our unique "Career Pathway Accelerator" approach, which combines: Online and competency-based degrees from partner universities, aligned and delivered in a stackable pathway format that leads to Colorado Top Jobs; Opportunities to earn-and-learn from partner employers; In-person success coaching, career navigation, and wrap-around support from AdvanceEDU. Together, we aim to close Colorado's equity gaps related to income and race for degree and early career attainment.

Denver Hybrid College dba AdvanceEDU

Award Amount: \$999,414.45

<https://myadvanceedu.org>

AdvanceEDU, founded in 2020, is a Colorado nonprofit that helps underrepresented and income-qualifying students access affordable, flexible college and career pathways. In partnership with the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and employer partners, AdvanceEDU is launching Thrive in Mind: Behavioral Health Education and Career Pathway to help meet the state's growing need for behavioral health workers. Students enroll in CCCS certificate or degree programs while getting personalized coaching, financial support, career connections, and wraparound services from AdvanceEDU. They can earn industry-recognized credentials in a year or less, gain paid work experience, and continue toward associate or bachelor's degrees. AdvanceEDU's support model has helped many first-generation and working students stay on track and reach their goals. The partnership will also place a Career Navigator at the Community College of Aurora to help even more students statewide explore careers, plan their education, and connect with employers.

African-American Trade Association (AATA)

Award Amount: \$1,525,287

<https://aatrade.org>

The African-American Trade Association (AATA) has members in multiple industries and a mission to build the economic capacity and social wellbeing of the Black community. AATA has lengthy experience providing on-the-job learning for DPS students and employment for people returning from incarceration and military service. Our program helps youth 15-24, veterans and formerly

incarcerated participants overcome barriers of poverty, discrimination, adjustment to a different environment, behavioral health challenges, and lack of access to career opportunities, and places them in paid apprenticeships/training with a pathway to well-paying skilled employment. Our proven approach utilizes long-term intensive professional mentorship (with an emphasis on Black role models) and two unique digital platforms for career navigation and real-time case management. With industry partners, DEN, UCHealth, AGC & AATA contractors, and educational partners Emily Griffiths Technical College, Denver Public Schools, and VetBridge, we are addressing the urgent need for skilled workers in health care and construction.

African-American Trade Association (AATA)

Award Amount: \$499,650

<https://aatrade.org>

AATA is strategically expanding our programs by sustaining targeted investments that enhance infrastructure, deepen industry partnerships, and cultivate a robust participant pipeline. These efforts are designed to establish clear pathways for individuals to complete their postsecondary program of choice—be it in healthcare, behavioral health, construction, or renewable energy—culminating in industry-recognized certifications, licenses, and registered apprenticeships. AATA's ultimate goal is to connect Coloradans with livable wage careers in the state's most critical and growing industry sectors.

Apex Energy USA

Award Amount: \$1,445,000

<https://apexenergyusa.com>

Blume Construction, Inc. (BCI) and Hands to the Future (H2TF) propose an Integrated Education and Training program, CONSTRUCTIONCONNECT, to provide underemployed New Americans and First Generation students with access to culturally competent training and Apprentice opportunities in skilled Tradecraft employment. Integrated services will include extensive career orientation, supportive wrap-around services including wellness services, digital literacy skills, and Job Placement. H2TF currently provides HS Students and young adults with intensive career navigation, assistance with applications, financial aid, mentoring, and other wrap-around services to address family needs during the navigation period. In partnership with BCI, CONSTRUCTIONCONNECT, will provide culturally competent job readiness skills that support career pathways in skilled trades including construction and carpentry, and electrical and plumbing. Upon completion of a paid orientation and assessment period, participants will be placed in an apprenticeship program leading to high-wage positions with opportunities for career growth.

Aurora Public Schools - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$39,980.00

<https://www.aurorak12.org>

Our partnership is developing integrated healthcare career pathways that empower learners to healthcare careers while offering upskilling opportunities for entry-level positions. Through implementation of a P-TECH program and integrated healthcare career pathways at Aurora Public Schools, we aim to expand opportunities to earn an associate's degree in nursing while in high

school. We will integrate work-based learning and career exploration into K-12 curricula, creating more opportunities for career exposure, internships, and apprenticeships. Our two-generation program will support APS families in gaining employment and upskilling. Additionally, we will explore the development of a behavioral health pathway that promotes early engagement in high school.

BuildStrong Academy of Colorado - Denver Metro/Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$748,497.00

<https://buildstrongacademy.org/colorado>

Since its inception, BuildStrong Academy of Colorado (BSAC) has been working to provide real-world, hands-on training to address the shortage of skilled workers in the Colorado construction industry. Since 2017, we have provided affordable and accessible construction training to individuals in underserved communities, with the goal of helping them achieve financial security and a livable wage. Overall, our program aims to address the skilled labor gap in the Colorado construction industry by providing low-cost training, mentorship, and job placement opportunities to underserved students who may not have access to such resources otherwise. With the Opportunity Now grant funding, we will be able to serve even more people across the front range with training, support, and employment in the construction industry.

Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) - Denver Metro/Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$49,898.50

<https://ceoworks.org>

With this planning grant we will form a collective made up of four Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs): Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), Mile High Workshop (MHW), Women's Bean Project (WBP), and Prodigy Ventures (Prodigy). ESEs provide skills development, paid on-the-job training, and job matching services to populations who face significant barriers to employment. They not only empower individuals chronically left out of the workforce, but their unique model stimulates the local economy, works to reduce individual and systemic barriers to employment, and empowers individuals to access more opportunities that support economic growth. This collective will increase the capacity of each ESE to serve underrepresented talent by addressing the needs and challenges of those we serve and local employers, expanding access to advanced opportunities and industry-recognized credential training programs, and streamlining interorganizational referrals and collaborative programming.

Clayton Early Learning - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$48,701.00

<https://www.claytonearlylearning.org>

The Place-based BA Pathway is an innovative solution to address the workforce shortages in the field of early childhood education (ECE). The pathway allows student-educators to receive a BA in ECE while working full-time. Student-educators are employed by community sites while taking coursework embedded within their work. Student-educators also receive onsite coaching and support.

Colorado Autism Consultants - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$1,000,000

<https://www.coautism.com>

Colorado Autism Consultants provide clinical training programs that can meet aspiring clinicians where they are at in their educational and professional journeys, and help them to overcome the barriers to becoming credentialed providers to serve their unique community. The organization offers experience in meaningful paid work, mentorship from multidisciplinary industry leaders, a wage progressing training program, and financial tuition assistance that ensures that future clinicians and leaders in rural and under-resourced communities across the state have the resources they need to pursue these in-demand and highly impactful careers.

Colorado Community College System (CCCS) - Front Range and Mountains

Award Amount: \$1,219,365

<https://cccs.edu>

Colorado Aerospace Career Pathways & Talent Pipelines, led by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), is proposing to resolve the workforce shortages and skills gaps faced by Colorado's aerospace industry, which ranks second in the nation. Through an Advisory Board, CCCS has gathered a robust network of employers, educational institutions, work-based learning providers, and other stakeholders to confront these challenges and revamp aerospace manufacturing workforce training. The network will pinpoint aerospace employer training needs and align them with tailored educational programs including engineering technology, mechatronics, composite materials, and precision machining credentials and degrees. A particular focus will be on underrepresented groups in aerospace including: people of color, women, low-income populations, and military veterans. This approach is designed to cultivate a diverse and highly skilled aerospace workforce, simultaneously enhancing the region's community colleges' capacity to meet the industry's current and future demands, thus bolstering the aerospace manufacturing's attraction, growth, and retention.

Colorado Institute of Family Medicine - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$49,643.00

<https://www.cofmr.org>

This project aims to build a community of practice among five communities implementing Project Quest with CIFM serving as the facilitator, convener and clearinghouse. This activity will serve to expand education/training and reduce barriers to pathways for low income and/or entry level roles by working alongside community educators/trainers and employers. By working together in coalition, we are able to support communities with the resources necessary to accommodate education/training, including providing critical incentives to healthcare educators and preceptors, with the ultimate goal of expanding the workforce in these communities. Rather than five independent projects solving similar challenges, a coalition, coordinated by CIFM, can work to overcome the issues that all communities share. Project Quest will support low wealth workers as they obtain sustainable wage jobs with additional opportunities for advancement to roles healthcare

providers are struggling to fill, beginning with nursing pathway jobs to develop scalable solutions for other healthcare occupations.

Colorado Safety-Net Collaborative - Denver Metro/Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,600.00

<https://www.cosafetynet.org>

Safety Net Clinics serve people who are uninsured or have Medicaid in a culturally appropriate and welcoming way in their community. Due to COVID fatigue in healthcare providers, clinics are being poached for staff. Safety net clinic margins are not significant enough to provide large signing bonuses like some providers do, but they have upped their game to pay competitive wages. However, they are still struggling to hire skilled staff. Staff shortages cause exhaustion and anxiety for the staff and fewer appointment slots for the community, affecting sustainable healthcare in the community. Clinics recognize the need to shift from finding staff in the traditional fashion to growing their own staff and would like to do that from their own communities for purposes of culturally appropriate care and better staff retention. These communities are historically underserved groups and areas, including members of rural communities, lower-wealth communities, and communities of color, and Colorado Safety-Net Collaborative aims to fill these gaps.

Coorstek

Award Amount: \$4,580,000

<https://www.coorstek.com>

CoorsTek and Colorado's advanced manufacturing industry is facing severe talent and skill shortages. This project closes the skills gap by partnering with educational institutions and investing in youth and mid-career advanced manufacturing apprenticeship programs. CoorsTek launched the CoorsTek Training Academy in 2021, which is focused on providing technical and soft skill introduction to entry level manufacturing new hires. We will expand this program and the CoorsTek Academy footprint by partnering with CareerWise and other educational partners. Our strategy is multi-pronged; focusing on youth apprenticeships that inspire the next generation of manufacturing workers, technical skill development that includes CNC, Kiln and Maintenance Tech training, and Advanced Manufacturing skills. We are committed to a future where our efforts translate into a more enriched landscape of career paths within the manufacturing sector, fostering substantial wage progression for individuals across the broader community.

CrossPurpose - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$49,536.00

<https://www.crosspurpose.org>

CrossPurpose's Leader Program is a tuition-free six-month career training, certification, job placement, and workforce development program. Through funding from the Opportunity Now Planning grant, our proposal will combine CrossPurpose's free, award-winning educational curriculum with solid industry partnerships. This collaboration provides three successful outcomes: 1) CrossPurpose graduates will have access to high-quality jobs that pay a sustainable wage, 2) employers gain access to a reliable workforce pipeline, and 3) the economy of the state overall will

grow. Funding from this grant will specifically support further development of these partnership MOUs between CrossPurpose - a workforce development nonprofit, and educational and employment partners.

CrossPurpose - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$1,000,000

<https://www.crosspurpose.org>

CrossPurpose's Leader Program is a tuition-free, six-month workforce development program that prepares individuals experiencing poverty for living-wage careers. Participants receive in-person job readiness training, earn industry-recognized credentials, and access wraparound supports such as coaching, stipends, mental health services, and barrier reduction funds.

With Phase 3 Opportunity Now funding, CrossPurpose will enroll 160 Coloradans in the infrastructure sector, focusing on high-demand skilled trades such as solar installation, HVAC, plumbing, welding, and electrical work. Participants will graduate into full-time employment with industry partners.

Additionally, CrossPurpose will advance 100 alumni through a high-fidelity replication of the nationally validated Project QUEST model. This long-term upskilling initiative provides career navigation and supports continued education and apprenticeships, helping participants move into higher-paying roles.

Comfort Home Healthcare, LLC

Award Amount: \$49,900

<http://www.comforthomehealthcareco.com>

Our program is designed to create pathways for immigrants and refugees, facilitating their progress toward a living wage as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). Utilizing a multifaceted approach, our program is rooted in inclusivity and a dedicated commitment to the success of our participants. The overarching goal extends beyond mere job placement; rather, it aspires to empower individuals for continuous growth and advancement, not only within the realm of CNA careers but also within the broader medical field. Through this comprehensive strategy, our goal is to contribute to the long-term success and professional development of those we serve.

Community College of Denver (CCD)

Award Amount: \$1,365,812

<https://www.ccd.edu>

Colorado and the nation are facing an imminent shortage of skilled nurses driven by health care reforms, baby boomer nurse retirements, and projected increases in the size and age of its population. According to a study by Mercer, nursing is expected to remain one of the fastest-growing careers and continues to have a greater demand than any other occupation. The study indicates the state of Colorado will face a deficit of more than 10,000 registered nurses (RNs)

by 2026. The nursing shortage across the country was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. To address the unmet demand for RNs, the proposed bridge program from Licensed Practical Nursing to Bachelor of Science in nursing (LPN-to-BSN) provides an innovative and quick solution to increase the talent pipeline into the nursing profession. Given the diverse practical nursing workforce, this bridge would also facilitate the state's objective to increase diversity in its nursing pool.

CrossPurpose

Award Amount: \$1,862,072

<https://www.crosspurpose.org>

CrossPurpose will enroll Coloradans in its evidence-based Launch, Leader, and Legacy programs, helping COVID-impacted individuals move from generational poverty to generational wealth. Serving both statewide participants through an online platform (Launch) and Denver-metro residents in-person (Leader), the nonprofit provides coaching, case management, wraparound services, and learning opportunities to prepare unemployed and underemployed Coloradans for the workforce. Leader participants train at several educational partners, attaining an industry-recognized credential in a skill track they select, qualifying them for employment in several industries, including medical, skilled trades, and transportation. CrossPurpose partners with industry to identify in-demand jobs that pay a living wage in the state of Colorado, placing graduates into these jobs. In partnership with employers, the organization upskills and case-manages Alumni in the first three years of their careers as they obtain further education or credentials, moving towards a family-sustaining wage, and pursuing wealth-building through financial planning, debt consolidation, and home ownership.

Defined, LLC - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$49,900.00

<https://definedlearning.com>

This innovative partnership is a powerhouse collaboration between national education experts, industry leaders, and community stakeholders that is reimagining the intersection of workforce development and K-12 Education. Born out of a shared goal to ensure all Denver Public School (DPS) students have the opportunity to thrive as globally competitive citizens and college, career and life-ready graduates, this partnership is thoughtfully constructed to magnify the momentum, ingenuity and innovation already taking place within DPS, while focusing on two specific challenges: 1) The growing shortage of qualified workforce to fill high-demand and high-wage jobs across the Denver community, and within DPS and 2) The devastating educational impacts from COVID-19, significantly worse for DPS' most vulnerable students. Together we will build an equitable and sustainable pipeline of globally competitive DPS graduates, qualified to compete for the dynamic jobs in the broader Denver region, with a direct pipeline to the over 10,000 jobs within DPS.

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity

Award Amount: \$1,538,593

<https://denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Economic-Development-Opportunity>

Electric vehicle (EV) adoption is rapidly increasing in Colorado, ranking in the top five in the nation both for EV market and charging infrastructure density per capita. Yet the boom presents workforce challenges—there are still too few workforce programs focused on both clean energy and EV careers. Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO)—through its Denver Workforce Board—and Denver’s Office of Climate Action Sustainability and Resilience (CASR), along with several other public and private industry partners, will create a multi-pronged, employer-led solution from high school to postsecondary to meet the regional EV ecosystem’s growing workforce needs. This includes bolstering infrastructure and training for education partners to launch full-scale EV credentialing; building pathways from K-12 and postsecondary to employers to place workers into EV careers; and helping employers upskill, set hiring targets, and track placement of new jobs. Additionally, it will offer wraparound services via DEDO and education partners to support underserved communities.

Education Strategy Group - Denver Metro/Pikes Peak

Award Amount: \$49,633.00

<https://edstrategy.org>

ESG plans to design, launch, and support a place-based initiative to build and scale high-quality, demand-driven career pathways that will build a purposeful two-generation model that engages both high school students and their parents. These pathways start in high school, continue into and through higher education, and lead all students—but especially learners in poverty and learners of color—to in-demand jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage. Simultaneously engaging two generations will expand opportunities for both students in the K-12 system and parenting adults seeking to complete their first credential or upskill. This, in turn, improves learner success and positively impacts the community economy. Colorado’s regions offer the basis for a demand-driven model around which to organize Colorado Regional Pathways Network (CRPN). CRPN will focus on collaboration across school districts, community colleges, and the workforce to build and scale career pathways that respond to their region’s industry needs.

Energy Resource Colorado - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$49,369.00

<https://erc-co.org>

Our Green Buildings Talent Accelerator helps create new pathways to attract talent into industry and help transition workers with transferable skills into building energy efficiency roles. This includes: creating career navigation solutions to help participants understand opportunities across the sector; developing innovative foundational training programs; and helping participants take the next step such as direct to workforce pathways or into locally curated educational pathways.

Goodwill of Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,892.54

<https://goodwillcolorado.org>

Goodwill's IT Training program is housed under the LIFT (Learn.Improve.Focus.Thrive) Training Center and takes place in Denver and Colorado Springs. The program provides upskilling for economically disadvantaged individuals. Program pillars include wraparound support, access to program partners, and implementation of both participant and partner voices. Program graduates are provided access to living wages to sustain themselves and their families. These qualified candidates will fill the hiring needs of employers in the state.

McLain Community High School

Award Amount: \$1,319,384

<https://mclain.jeffcopublicschools.org>

The McLain Community High School Adult Program connects graduates to in-demand jobs with living wages. McLain's adult students are motivated to change the trajectory of their lives. By courageously "returning" to earn a diploma/GED, students commit to their long-term economic self-sufficiency and mobility. We partner with many employers, focusing on high-demand industries such as health care/senior care, construction and warehouse manufacturing. The lack of a high school diploma or GED is a significant barrier to high-skill, high-wage occupations. Our program offers key solutions to employment advancement. Creating pathways between secondary education, postsecondary education and employment begins with the essential skills and secondary diploma we provide through our high school programming. Students take classes to support development of key employability skills, including both academic and social-emotional content. Additionally, our Career Development Office provides support with resume building, interview skills, job search skills, and connecting students to internship/apprenticeship opportunities.

Medecipher, Inc. - Front Range and Southern Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,777

<https://medeciphersolutions.com>

Increased patient care demands and complexity, coupled with the necessity of operating more efficiently with fewer staff, have clarified that traditional workforce management, productivity, and care delivery models no longer meet the needs of health systems. To rise to these challenges, our program establishes the de-facto Colorado advancement pipeline for learners entering the field of healthcare operations management and experienced healthcare professionals seeking to upskill. Participating leaders will learn to leverage emerging health technologies to redesign workforce management practices and enable safe, cost-effective healthcare delivery with improved outcomes. Our program will facilitate job placement and advancement for Colorado health system operations leaders by delivering exceptional leading-edge academic and non-academic programming in collaboration with novel stakeholder partnerships. The result will be an amplified talent pool uniquely equipped to meet the future operating needs of Colorado's health systems.

Mile High Early Learning

Award Amount: \$2,436,124

<https://milehighearlylearning.org>

Mile High Early Learning (MHEL) will expand its Child Development Associate (CDA) training program to recruit, train, and place teachers in early childhood programs in Denver and surrounding counties. Colorado is experiencing a shortage of early childhood educators that has grown to crisis levels. The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment predicts a 33-43% increase in the need for early childhood teachers through 2025. Most early childhood programs like MHEL are experiencing a 42% turnover rate that is devastating to maintaining a high-quality program. MHEL's CDA training program provides the content training necessary to earn the foundational CDA credential, which allows a teacher to serve in a lead classroom position and earn higher wages. MHEL will hire a CDA Recruiter and Mentor to build relationships with schools and community organizations and recruit students to become teachers, and offer paid internships for completing the 480 hours of classroom experience necessary to earn a CDA.

Montessori Collective - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$43,652.00

<https://www.montessori-collective.org>

Before the pandemic, PK-12 schools in Colorado were already experiencing a teacher shortage, and the pandemic has exacerbated this challenge. PK-12 education is the foundation and driver of all other industries, so ensuring that there is a highly qualified and passionate teacher in every classroom is critical. While there is a shortage of teachers, there simultaneously is an untapped resource of incredibly talented, but poorly paid, paraprofessional educators. Montessori Collective seeks to address both of these by better understanding the barriers that paraprofessionals face in becoming teachers and seeking to design a sustainable structure to support paraprofessionals in becoming credentialed teachers. This will create a continuous pipeline of highly qualified, passionate teachers and create pathways for career advancement for paraprofessionals.

National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement, Inc. - Denver/Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$49,084.00

<https://www.nimaa.edu>

The National Institute for Medical Assistants (NIMAA) planning grant will address the unmet labor needs of Colorado's healthcare industry facing a critical shortage of skilled health care workers. NIMAA's accredited training model combines full-distance (on-line) education with a concurrent on-the ground externship at clinical partner sites, and content focused on the team-based care model used by high-performing primary care practices. The challenge we seek to address through our planning grant is to identify how to make our current medical assistant (MA) training program more accessible to prospective students and clinical partners (small medical practice training sites) in rural communities. The planning grant will allow NIMAA to: 1) engage with prospective industry partners, and partners who have suspended program participation, to better understand how to modify the program to better meet their capacity and, 2) examine in depth needed program structure and curriculum modifications in order to implement an alternative model.

New America College - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$47,929.00

<https://newamericacollege.edu>

Our program will present new Americans with intensive English classes, digital literacy skills, and workforce placement. New America College (NAC) is the lead partner in this application, partnering with Teach by Tech (TBT) and Denver Workforce Services (DWS). NAC is an accredited, intensive, nonprofit English language school for adults; TBT provides digital literacy training to immigrants and refugees; DWS offers skills training and connects workers with employers. We will work with other community partners to ensure a strong pathway to quality employment for non-native English speakers. The partnership we have created takes a holistic approach to employing the adult refugee and immigrant community in the Denver Metro area.

PBS12

Award Amount: \$49,900

<https://www.pbs12.org>

PBS12 seeks to develop a program for justice-involved individuals in Colorado, in partnership with the Colorado Department of Corrections, local trades groups like IECRM, technical schools, and work placement programs. The program aims to provide education, training, and employment opportunities in construction trades both during their involvement with the justice system and after release. It seeks to address workforce shortages, enhance employment prospects, and foster economic mobility for justice-involved Coloradans.

Relay Graduate School of Education - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$2,407,714.00

<https://www.relay.edu>

Relay is a nonprofit graduate school of education serving 40% teachers of color (“TOC”). Our TEACHER RESIDENCY program in Denver (Region 3) is an intentional industry collaboration with P-12 school employers to place and advance diverse teachers by scaling evidence-based practices. Over 3 years, we will serve at least 5 industry partners and 180 Coloradans. This project will fill critical workforce shortages immediately, while fostering long-term retention of teachers with increased skills and credentials. Participants are concurrent learners and earners. They enroll in stackable 4-term license-only OR 2-year license plus Master’s academic programs (hybrid delivery) while concurrently working full-time at partner schools. They benefit from curriculum, mentoring, wages and benefits while gaining mastery of workplace-driven proficiencies. Notably at the outset, participants choose the path best serving personal goals for upskilling, increasing wages and achieving economic mobility, simultaneously filling industry partners’ workforce needs.

CHALLENGES addressed emanate from OEDIT’s 2 priority areas: 1) Critical workforce shortages of early childhood education, primary, secondary teachers and 2) serving underserved groups disproportionately impacted by Covid (teachers of color and lower-wealth, high-minority communities). Served employers are high need schools with higher teacher turnover and chasmal achievement gaps worsened by COVID (USDOE; CDE). 1/4 of teachers leave annually (USDOE) with highest rates among TOC (EdTrust). Per partners, this is due to siloed preparation disconnected from workplace proficiencies, and financial limitations to pursue education – the burden being

higher for TOC (Brandeis University). Turnover damages achievement (CDE DataLab), costing schools \$32,000+ per exit (Carver-Thomas; LPI CO).

SparkFun Electronics - Front Range and Mountains

Award Amount: \$2,987,573

<https://www.sparkfun.com>

Building AI literacy for Colorado students and educators is imperative for driving future innovation and improvement, strengthening our state's economic position, and directly addressing equity gaps in the workforce. ElevateAI creates a talent pipeline capable of meeting the demands of emerging and advanced industries that will contribute to our state's economic recovery and growth. Further, ElevateAI re-envision the teaching profession by equipping educators with the skills necessary to leverage AI in their practice and better prepare students for an AI future. As the explosion of AI reshapes how we learn and work, learners and leaders are rethinking every aspect of education and looking to trusted voices for guidance. SparkFun Electronics, Colorado Education Initiative, AI Education Project, MagicSchool.ai, IBM, Cisco, University of Colorado-Boulder, and AI National Institute will support a systems-level effort to integrate AI into STEM career pathways with some of Colorado's most innovative and equity-driven rural, suburban, and urban districts.

Second Chance Center, Inc. - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$977,260.00

<https://www.sccccolorado.org>

This project seeks to provide formerly incarcerated adults apprenticeship readiness training (ARP) in the skilled trades. SCC has partnered with the North American Builders Trades Union to deliver the hands-on Multi-Core Craft Curriculum (MC3), industry knowledge through JATC / site tours and employer partner engagement, and guidance to entering a registered union apprenticeship from experienced staff with knowledge of how to navigate the registered apprenticeship application (RAP) process. A Skilled Trades Navigator (STN), will serve as a specialized advisor to participants interested in entering a registered apprenticeship. Entering the trades provides graduates opportunities to immediately earn a thriving living wage that continues to increase throughout their training, all while receiving education and training that costs students nothing. Upon graduation from the apprenticeship, students can expect to earn an average of \$72,000 annually plus benefits, which will undoubtedly alleviate cycles of incarceration and generational poverty for families. A dedicated Care Manager (CM) will work with clients for approximately six months prior to enrollment in the ARP to ensure stability and will continue to support the participants through completion of the RAP. The CM will help identify and remove barriers to successful completion. SCC has established partnerships with 65 union and non-union employer partners, the Denver Construction Careers Program (DCCP) and the Colorado Builders and Trades Council (CBTC) who actively engage with the participants throughout the program. This provides a strong network and foundation for those entering the trades and creates a pipeline of qualified candidates for in demand careers.

Teach by Tech, Inc - Denver Metro/Northern Colorado

Award Amount: \$45,066.00

<https://www.teachbytech.org>

This planning grant will leverage the resources from partners to develop training programs that help lower-wealth individuals and New Americans (immigrant and refugee populations) gain the skills needed for entry-level jobs such as food production associate, food manufacturer, and packaging operator. The salary ranges for these positions are between \$17.50 - \$20.50 per hour. Digital skills gaps occur across all industries but are especially high in the construction, transportation, and storage sectors, where half (50%) of all workers have limited or no digital skills. More than one-third of workers in several other major industries also have digital skill gaps, including retail (37%), and manufacturing (35%). The solution serves the target population by connecting them directly to jobs that can provide economic stability and upward mobility. Manufacturing jobs provide a predictable schedule, health benefits, overtime opportunities /differential pay, and other features that help lower-wealth Coloradans and New Americans build their family wealth.

Treeline Pass (TLP) - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$48,950.00

<https://treelinepass.org>

The Opportunity Now Colorado Planning Grant will fund the staffing required to expand access to our work-based learning to address unmet hiring needs critical to Colorado's economy. We will expand our capacity to train new health care workers who provide vocational training and job placement for adults with I/DD. We will work with our expanding pool of industry partners to learn about their employment needs and provide the training, transportation, and support to empower our clients with I/DD to meet them. Increased staffing will also allow the development of a Microsoft software training program to teach adults with I/DD skills that are in demand across all sectors of the economy.

Tepeyac Community Health Center - Denver Metro

Award Amount: \$1,097,012.93

<https://www.tepeyachealth.org>

As a federally qualified health center (FQHC) with a growing patient population, Tepeyac Community Health Center (Tepeyac) will address the degradation of the healthcare workforce through a workforce development program that will: 1) clarify and institutionalize the organization's learning and development pathways; 2) infuse equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within our policies and practices around hiring, retention, and advancement; and 3) create an expanded internship pipeline with local education partners, including Denver Public Schools (DPS), Emily Griffith Technical College (Emily Griffith), National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA), and Regis University (Regis), in order to launch the healthcare careers of underserved and under-resourced individuals in our community. Tepeyac's program will work to address common barriers to careers in healthcare while investing in an organizational culture and talent development pipeline that supports healthcare worker retention and advancement—and ultimately helps to sustainably meet our statewide workforce development needs.

Turing School of Software & Design - Turing

Award Amount: \$48,956

<https://turing.edu>

Through the partnership program, Turing and its industry partners seek to address the skills-gap in the technology sector while providing an accelerated pathway for individuals into opportunity-rich careers in software. The program also aims to influence a shift among employers of software designers from a focus on hiring individuals with four-year Computer Science (CS) degrees towards more inclusive skills-based hiring. Working with its industry partners, Turing will augment its rigorous certification programs in software design, which center around inclusivity of groups historically marginalized in the technology sector, including women and BIPOC communities. As a result, students will graduate in a matter of months job-ready with the full suite of skills employers seek, and employers will feel more confident hiring bootcamp graduates rather than requiring CS degrees, resulting in a more accessible and inclusive pathway for individuals interested in well-paying careers in technology.

University of Colorado, Denver

Award Amount: \$1,044,446

<https://www.ucdenver.edu>

Colorado's construction industry impacts each Coloradan every day through their use of buildings and infrastructure systems. It is a main engine driving the growth of Colorado's economy, and has contributed 3%-6% of the gross domestic product over the past 15 years. However, the recent COVID-19 pandemics caused unprecedented impacts in the labor workforce and delivery of construction projects, including suspension or cancellation of projects, shortage of skilled workers, and disrupted supply chain. The construction industry continues to struggle to hire talent especially in the face of the growing needs and increased use of technology when delivering construction projects. This proposal seeks to address the recent challenges in the Colorado construction industry using an industry-academia partnership to advance knowledge and skills of participants and graduates and create economic mobility through the development of a new specialization focused on the use of technology in construction at CU Denver.