Modernizing Connecting Colorado

Legislative Fact Sheet
March 3, 2022

Background:

Built in 1998, Connecting Colorado is a FORTRAN-based legacy system which acts as both the state labor exchange and the statewide case management system for local workforce boards. The system was built primarily to connect businesses with the talent they need, and connect job seekers with employment, workforce centers, and other resources to help build their career, while also serving as the backbone for data collection in our workforce system. After 24 years, it is time that the state adopts a new, modernized Connecting Colorado system to meet the dynamic needs of Colorado workers and businesses.

Problem:

While this system has been an invaluable resource for Colorado employers and job seekers, it relies on outdated technology that limits its immediate impact in our changing economy. Sustainability is in question given the age of the base software and the general lack of programming resources to support the code. Integration with different agency applications, divisional programs, and third party requests are limited to latent flat file data exchanges instead of current technology offerings of real time interfaces that provide opportunities for data driven decision making that can impact targeted cohorts in Colorado.

Summary of Recommendation:

In alignment with the Joint Technology Committee recommendation, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment is requesting the Joint Budget Committee's approval of the $7 million Capital IT Request to modernize the case management and labor exchange application with a system that integrates a user-centered design and a robust and agile user interface that highlights opportunities focused on skills.

Bringing in a modernized and agile platform to provide these functions will better serve the needs of jobseekers, employers, administrators, and education and training providers, especially at a time where hiring based on credentials, while ignoring skills, is driving the labor shortage impacting all sectors. The addition of an intelligent platform to determine base skills for job seekers, skills for employer job descriptions, and skills from training programs provides a unique ability to programatically match jobseekers to relevant positions based on skills matching and to suggest training programs to provide upskilling or reskilling opportunities for the jobseeker. This modernized system will also be able to provide better access to data that can inform policy makers, local area directors, and state program stakeholders as they work through workforce challenges.

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