



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Labor and Employment

JULY 1, 2021 TO JUNE 30, 2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

Division of Employment & Training  
**Workforce Development Programs**

# WE KEEP COLORADO WORKING



**COLORADO**  
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# MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

**The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Workforce Development Programs (WDP) team creates meaningful employment opportunities for Colorado job seekers and employers. We are the stewards of over \$100 million dollars yearly in state and federal funds administered across the ten local areas in the statewide workforce system. These funds support the success of nearly 400,000 jobseekers and more than 20,000 businesses that drive Colorado's economy forward.**

In addition to funding, we provide the framework, guidance, technical support, and oversight to all of the critical services provided by our workforce centers to jobseekers and businesses statewide. These efforts are made possible only with collaboration, a core value here at CDLE. Collaboration with our workforce partners across Colorado, and collaboration within our team.

So why do we do it? To create connections. To increase productivity and sustainability. And to support our state's diverse and talented workforce. We do it to keep Colorado working.



Coloradans have begun a third year of the COVID-19 pandemic that was marked by loss, turmoil and change—yet despite it all, communities endured and carried on. We relied on advice and input from workforce system and state agency partners across Colorado to find out where and how funding could have the most impact for those with the greatest need. And we recognized the on-going dedication and resilience of staff, and collaborative partnerships within CDLE, across the workforce system, and with external partners that make this work possible.

At the same time, we said goodbye to William Dowling, Employment and Training Director, who moved to Washington State in the fall of 2021 after nine years of leadership. In his place, we welcomed Kelly Folks, an experienced and esteemed leader in workforce development.

Thank you for your enduring support as WDP continues, in collaboration with state and local area partners, to respond to dynamic conditions impacting our economy. We at WDP believe that all prosper in a thriving employment environment that elevates both job seekers and businesses across Colorado.

We are very excited to share our successes of the past year. And going forward, we are eager to build on the Appreciative Inquiry process to identify strategic priorities for the workforce system and to expand experiential learning opportunities overwhelmingly supported in Senate Bill 2022-140, one of several bills enhancing the workforce system in the 2022 legislative session.

**In partnership,**

**Kelly Folks**

Director, *Division of Employment & Training (E&T)*

**Elise Lowe-Vaughn**

Director, *Workforce Development Programs (WDP), E&T*

**James Newby**

Operations Director, *WDP, E&T*



WDP believe that all prosper in a thriving employment environment that elevates both job seekers and businesses across Colorado.

# CDLE MISSION, VISION & VALUES



## CDLE MISSION

Working together to promote a thriving employment environment with opportunity for every Coloradan to prosper



## CDLE VISION

A working economy that elevates all of Colorado



## ACCOUNTABILITY

The personal choice to demonstrate ownership for achieving key results



## AGILITY

The ability to renew, adapt, change quickly and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous environment



## COLLABORATION

The action of working together to produce or create something, joint effort, working together



## RESPECT

The intentional consideration of the feelings, wishes, rights or traditions of others

# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

These numbers tell the story of the value that WDP brings with local workforce areas to the economic success of individuals of all ages and backgrounds and businesses across Colorado.



**\$88,631,800**

Certified in potential tax credits for Colorado businesses



**4,555**

Job seekers were provided training services



**21,035**

Businesses served at no cost to businesses



**39,161**

Youth served through Governor's Summer Job Hunt



**4,502**

Veterans with significant barriers to employment served

**960,777**

Job openings, and **111,991** job seekers employed

**OVER \$60 MILLION**

In new funding and an additional **\$30 million plus** in competitive, non-competitive, and discretionary funds each year



**153,214**

Job seekers were provided employment services (including **13,334** veterans)

# PURPOSE

**The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Workforce Development Programs (WDP) team collaborates with a wide variety of workforce system partners, including local workforce areas, businesses, educational institutions, economic development, human services, and community based organizations across the state. This ensures the success of Colorado's job seekers and businesses that keep Colorado's economy strong. To do so, WDP provides not only direct services, but also funding, guidance, technical support, and oversight to all of the critical services provided by our local workforce areas. We do it to create connections, to increase productivity and sustainability, and to support our state's diverse and talented workforce. We do it to keep Colorado working.**

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

WDP supports the smooth fiscal and programmatic operation of the statewide locally delivered workforce service delivery system divided into ten local areas to ensure the best use of public resources to support the success of Colorado job seekers and businesses. By embedding [equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility](#) in our culture and in our work, WDP promotes a similar approach among our partners to create equitable opportunities for all. In partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, WDP developed a Disability Awareness Training. Using the Programmatic Accessibility Course and [Toolkit](#) as a guide, WDP developed a training series on disability-related topics. Participants earn a certificate of completion, continuing education units for credentialing, and the ability to ensure the physical space and programs are accessible for individuals with disabilities. WDP secures and administers a broad range of funding that includes competitive discretionary grants in addition to formula funding at the state and federal levels to deliver a more robust ecosystem for Colorado.



## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Through active participation on workforce committees at the federal, state, and local levels, WDP has taken a [leadership role](#) to shape and align initiatives across multiple states and affect workforce policies at the national level. Key among them is leading the collaborative effort across the workforce system to retain Colorado's Wagner-Peyser demonstration state status to allow the state to continue setting the standard for innovation and excellence in workforce service delivery. As one of three Wagner-Peyser demonstration states, Colorado has fully embraced the key principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to achieve total integration of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, and Trade Act employment and training programs, and enhanced state and local partnerships with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other workforce partners. To implement this integration, WDP leads the development of [state policy](#) guidance.

## PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

WDP expands its reach and leverages additional resources by developing partnerships with other agencies and organizations. Last year, WDP launched a pilot program, soon to be implemented statewide, in partnership with CDLE's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Newly developed [Disability Program Navigators](#) (DPNs) in local workforce areas refer job seekers with disabilities to take advantage of employment and other services that both workforce centers and vocational rehabilitation offices can provide. To make this program cost-neutral for local workforce areas, they contributed state, local, and county dollars to match DVR federal funds, allowing DVR to request its full federal funding allotment, something it could not do without these matching funds. This partnership increased the client services dollars for the disability community to help achieve competitive integrated employment at a liveable wage. Since May, services to the disability community have increased by 650%.

### The National Governors Association ([NGA](#))

- » State Workforce Liaisons Executive Committee
- » State Liaisons for Workforce Development Partnerships

### National Association of State Workforce Agencies ([NASWA](#))

- » WIOA Information Technology Steering Committee
- » Apprenticeship Committee
- » Employment and Training Committee
- » National Labor Exchange Steering Committee
- » Veterans Committee

### National Association of Workforce Development Professionals ([NAWDP](#))

- » Board of Directors
- » Executive Committee
- » Marketing and Advocacy Committee

### Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association Executive Committee

### Colorado [Governor's Behavioral Mental Health Commission](#)

### Colorado [Governor's Education & Workforce Cabinet](#)

### Colorado [Governor's Rural Cabinet Working Group](#)

### Colorado Department of Human Services, [Colorado Juvenile Parole Board](#)

### Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, [Human Trafficking Council](#)



Implementing technology to serve job seekers and businesses during the pandemic and beyond.

## DELIVERING AND MAINTAINING DATA SYSTEMS AND VIRTUAL WORKFORCE SERVICES

With the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic last year, online self-service and mobile compatible services that benefited both job seekers and businesses remained paramount. WDP initiated a number of responses to address these needs that remain valuable even as we transition back to the office.

### Modernization

[Connecting Colorado](#), the state's workforce case management and labor exchange system used to document participation and performance outcomes of workforce development programs, has served Coloradans well since 2002. Last year, the team launched an initiative to secure a vendor to modernize the system. Vendor selection and implementation will occur in 2022-23.

A strategic investment in [Premier Virtual](#), a job fair and online hiring platform, has been critical to WDP's ability to conduct virtual hiring events that are accessible across Colorado. A recent event involving 19 state agencies set registration and attendance records for virtual hiring events to date.

### Virtual Program Delivery

Virtual Layoff Aversion and Assistance Workshop – The initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic increase in layoffs by Colorado employers and a subsequent increase in demand for [Rapid Response](#) services. To meet this need, WDP mobilized quickly to create a turn-key virtual solution including a video workshop package covering workforce center services, how to file for unemployment insurance, healthcare options, retirement planning, and managing finances while unemployed. For employers, WDP developed an online filing system for Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notices (WARN), which are formal notices of major layoffs that trigger Rapid Response services.

Veteran Vortex Portal (VETS Vortex) - WDP enhanced its one-stop place to provide best practice training, resources, and in-house and external tools so that team members can serve veteran customers regardless of where they reside in Colorado. Improvements include online scheduling, video case management, and an on-demand job portal all in one place to not only address challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to better meet the needs of clients with transportation issues.



## BUSINESS SERVICES ALIGNMENT

Supported by WDP, the Colorado [Business Services](#) team focuses on a statewide approach to provide seamless business services in a way that maximizes business opportunity to employ qualified workers to ensure the state's economic success. Over the past year, WDP worked to adapt to the changing marketplace and transition to a virtual service delivery mechanism while businesses and job seekers continued to react to great uncertainty to the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlights included a warm hand off of the Apprenticeship Team to the newly created State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) with a \$10M discretionary grant, policy development, and program monitoring to support those interested in apprenticeships, as well as a shift to skills-based instead of credential-based job requirements. The SAA will oversee apprenticeship programs, including registration, required standards for registration, certification, quality assurance, record-keeping, compliance with federal laws and standards, and provision of administrative and technical assistance to establish programs aimed to train and employ more apprentices in a number of industry sectors across the state.

## PROGRAM MONITORING

WDP's unified [monitoring system](#), designed to honor public use of funds in addition to addressing program performance, financial, and equal opportunity elements for each program, is recognized as a model by the US Department of Labor (USDOL). It is the result of an ongoing monitoring, training, and technical assistance process that has fostered a collaborative relationship between the state and the local workforce areas. Monitors address WIOA, discretionary, and state grants in all ten federally recognized local workforce areas to educate partners on funding eligibility requirements in order to leverage more participation and more resources to ensure the success of job seekers and employers statewide. This has been particularly effective to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

WIOA requires WDP to conduct formal evaluations of WIOA program activities in order to research and test innovative services and strategies and achieve high levels of performance and outcomes. Working with Northern Illinois University, WDP established a model for WIOA program evaluation with a focus on the Office of the State Auditor recommendations. Last year, WDP provided technical assistance and training for a cohort of local area staff to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach, which involved both quantitative and qualitative strategies. [Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas](#) identifies best practices in each local area and incorporates recommendations to improve outcomes for the WIOA participants. [The Evaluation Tool](#) allows local areas to independently evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs with an increased emphasis on serving barriered populations and improving program service delivery. This work has greatly improved the capacity of state and local workforce area staff to improve yearly program planning to produce equitable access to high wage employment and to conduct independent program evaluations to make data driven recommendations that maximize program performance for all customers.

## PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

WDP seeks a continuous cycle of improvement. In 2022, WDP staff conducted Appreciative Inquiry interviews with 120 individuals across state agencies and the ten local workforce areas and local boards to prepare a set of recommendations, based on interviews, for the workforce system targeted to the future of work and further inform strategic priorities going forward. The goal to better serve Colorado's job seekers and businesses is at the center of this work. A number of priorities have surfaced such as statewide marketing and branding of the workforce system, modernizing technology systems, increased alignment among partners, and a stronger focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

# IMPACT

In addition to ensuring that the workforce system has the funding, policy, and technical resources it needs to ensure the success of all Coloradans, Workforce Development Programs administers a number of programs at the state level. Here is a snapshot of who and how these programs serve.



# POPULATIONS SERVED

Programs WDP Administrators	Youth	Veterans	Disability Community	Justice Involved	Low Income	New Americans	Dislocated Workers
<a href="#">Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth (WIOA Title I)</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Colorado Pathway Home</a>				✓			
<a href="#">Disability Program Navigator</a>			✓				
<a href="#">Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant</a>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<a href="#">Displaced Homemaker Grant</a>							✓
<a href="#">Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant</a>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<a href="#">Employment Support and Job Retention Program</a>					✓		
<a href="#">Federal Bonding</a>				✓			
<a href="#">Federal Bonding Demonstration Grant</a>				✓			
<a href="#">Foreign Labor Certification</a>						✓	
<a href="#">Governor's Summer Job Hunt</a>	✓						
<a href="#">Hospitality Grant Program</a>	✓						
<a href="#">Jobs for Veterans State Grant</a>		✓					
<a href="#">Monitor Advocate and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers</a>					✓	✓	
<a href="#">Rapid Response Layoff Assistance and Aversion Services</a>							✓
<a href="#">Trade Adjustment Assistance</a>							✓
<a href="#">Veterans Service to Career Program</a>		✓					
<a href="#">Virtual Job Shadow</a>	✓						
<a href="#">Wagner-Peyser Employment Services</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Work Opportunity Tax Credit</a>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

# SERVICES TO JOB SEEKERS

<b>Programs WDP Administers</b>	<b>Career Guidance</b>	<b>Funding for Training</b>	<b>Work Supports</b>
<a href="#">Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth (WIOA Title I)</a>	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Colorado Pathway Home</a>	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Disability Program Navigator</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant</a>	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Displaced Homemaker Grant</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant</a>	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Employment Support and Job Retention Program</a>			✓
<a href="#">Governor's Summer Job Hunt</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Monitor Advocate and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Rapid Response Layoff Assistance and Aversion Services</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Trade Adjustment Assistance</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">Veterans Service to Career Program</a>	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Virtual Job Shadow</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Wagner-Peyser Employment Services</a>	✓		

# SERVICES TO BUSINESSES

Programs WDP Administers	Work-based Learning Reimbursements for Businesses	Cost Savings for Businesses
<a href="#">Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth (WIOA Title I)</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Colorado Pathway Home</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Federal Bonding</a>		✓
<a href="#">Federal Bonding Demonstration Grant</a>		✓
<a href="#">Governor's Summer Job Hunt</a>		✓
<a href="#">Hospitality Grant Program</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Jobs for Veterans State Grant</a>		✓
<a href="#">Monitor Advocate and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers</a>		✓
<a href="#">Rapid Response Layoff Assistance and Aversion Services</a>		✓
<a href="#">Trade Adjustment Assistance</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Veterans Service to Career Program</a>	✓	✓
<a href="#">Wagner-Peyser Employment Services</a>		✓
<a href="#">Work Opportunity Tax Credit</a>		✓



## FACES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS: **TRISHA**

Trisha's husband had been laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She needed to return to work after a hiatus caring for her daughter with special needs and felt renewing her Registered Nurse (RN) license was the best option. Trisha researched training providers specializing in RN refreshers and found The Health Education and Resource Institute; however, she was unable to pay for training as her husband was not working and the family was receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Trisha met with a Career Support Specialist (CSS) at Workforce Boulder County and was enrolled in the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act program as well as Reskilling, Upskilling, and Next-skilling Workers funds to help pay for the training she needed to regain her RN license.

During her training, the family had difficulty meeting their car payment so her CSS referred the family to a partner agency, Sister Carmen, which was able to assist the family with their financial difficulty. The final step in Tricia's journey was when funds were also available to help fund the required fingerprinting and Department of Regulatory Agencies reinstatement for her RN license renewal. Tricia has now been hired making \$39 per hour as a registered nurse and highlights Governor Polis's key priority on the Healthcare industry.



At the beginning of the pandemic, I was laid off from two jobs on the same day and was forced into a career change. I decided that I wanted to become a real estate agent and since I'm a disabled veteran, I was encouraged to seek assistance from Vetworks. Because most programs for veterans revolve around technical or medical professions, I honestly didn't have a lot of faith that Vetworks could help me, but I met with the Mesa County Workforce Center and they were able to get me approved for the Vetworks program. I started my real estate classes in May of 2020 and by September 2020, I had my license. Vetworks paid for my real estate classes, licensing, and most startup costs. I've been licensed for one year now and have already been incredibly successful. I can't thank Mesa County Workforce Center and the Vetworks program enough for helping me get started in this new career. I've found my calling and I can't believe a veteran program helped me get here.

## FACES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS: **ANDY**



FACES OF  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
SUCCESS:  
**NICK**

Nick lived out of a camper and was close to being homeless. He was receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and had no income when he went into a Colorado workforce center. He had been working at a marijuana farm and decided to change his career during the pandemic by seeking out a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds paid for Nick's CDL training and certification. While in training, Nick received assistance for lot rent for his camper, travel, training, and other services needed to ensure his success. After earning his certification, Nick was hired by a national trucking company, and he received a signing bonus with guaranteed earnings of \$1,000 a week. Going from living in a camper on the margins to earning approximately \$56 thousand a year in under a year is amazing! Nick says, "Thanks so much for the opportunity to get my CDL and move forward with this career. Hope you had a great christmas!"



An individual went to the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) who had involvement with gangs, several convictions and some additional pending legal cases. He was also a new father. While receiving support from CEO, he had to navigate probation, work through pending cases, distance himself from gang life, and develop as a father. At the same time, he received support to develop professional communication, interview, and job search skills. This individual was coached to apply for and interview only for jobs that he would take if they were offered. This focus helped him to land a job with Big O Tires where he learned that he would like to become a mechanic. He was excited because Big O Tires trains and promotes internally. This experience allowed the individual to learn that he is capable of success.

FACES OF  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
SUCCESS:  
**ROLAND**



## **Workforce Development Programs** We do it to keep Colorado Working

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