



## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

*As Colorado emerges from the worst of the global pandemic, we are poised to build back a stronger, more resilient economy than the one we had before. In partnership with Colorado legislators, the Polis administration has made significant investments to help Colorado's workforce recover more quickly and sustainably, and is now in the process of implementing this historic legislation and getting funds out into the community to power the Colorado comeback.*

### **How the Polis Administration is Supporting Colorado's Workforce**

- Encouraged local communities to evaluate their needs and invest in upskilling and reskilling to ensure they have a workforce capable of meeting their needs. Invested \$280,000 to increase staff capacity in local workforce centers and cover the costs of training opportunities for displaced workers.
- Recover CO: \$5,665,000 National Dislocated Worker Grant from the Employment and Training Administration to help Coloradans who are unemployed or underemployed as a result of the pandemic by providing comprehensive career and training services for a rapid return to work and supportive services to ease financial burdens during job search and training.
- CO Responds: a Disaster Recovery Grant that provides \$4,995,000 in funding to help advance Colorado's economic recovery via grants to Hub Administrators (who manage Colorado's Workforce Centers) as grant sub-recipients. Local workforce centers work collaboratively with other public agencies and with community-based organizations to identify temporary job opportunities for workers temporarily or permanently laid off as a result of the pandemic.
- Supportive services: Employment Support and Job Retention Services program provided up to \$400 in support services for eligible expenses (e.g. transportation, housing, childcare, etc.) to Coloradans who are unemployed or underemployed to get jobs.

### **2021 State Stimulus**

- \$25 million in grants to local workforce boards
- \$15 million to help provide scholarships for people with some college but no degree
- \$5 million in funding for the creation of a career pathway for the energy sector
- \$3 million for an increased investment in Colorado's SNAP Employment and Training program
- \$3.5 million for professional training for re-entry

### **Federal Stimulus**

- Workforce Development/ Education - \$200m
- Roughly \$100 million this session to help students reconnect with their postsecondary options including vocational education, support innovation in workforce development,

and increase funding for existing effective programs that help to connect K-12, higher education, and industry.

- Roughly \$100 million set aside for an interim process to make recommendations to the General Assembly for the 2022 session that invests in our people to gain the skills needed for higher wage jobs in the new economy and helps our higher education system adapt to better meet the needs of students wherever and however they are learning and upskilling.

### **The Governor's FY 2022-23 Budget includes the following investments:**

- **Navigational Services and Outreach (CDLE/CDE).** This \$5M investment is anticipated to help 30,000 Coloradans who lack the digital skills necessary to find a job. These funds will help job-seekers with low levels of digital literacy gain the skills needed to navigate their career search while also supporting direct community engagement with difficult to reach populations. Focused on getting people jobs, this effort works to address the digital skills gap where many people do not have the computer literacy necessary to find a job online. The vast majority of jobs from job applications to job searches are completely over the internet.
- **Improved data collection for business expansion (CDLE).** Over the past year, more than 790,000 Colorado jobs have been circulated through the Connecting Colorado system, our state's primary tool to support Coloradans in getting jobs, 89,000 of those in healthcare. An investment of \$7M will revamp this outdated system, helping us better understand our regional and statewide talent needs and improve the ROI on future investments.
- **Non-degree credentials at Area Technical Colleges, Community Colleges, and other institutions (CDHE).** Expanding access to, and providing direct support for those seeking short term credentials will address worker shortages in fields ranging from automotive to medical, while providing pathways to high paying careers for Coloradans. Healthcare jobs require training and licensure, and this \$7M investment will help support paying for training expenses to help programs make direct investments in expanding programs capacity in our highest need areas, such as healthcare to serve 1,000+ Coloradans.
- **Stand up Early Childhood Education Centers.** This investment of \$30M, along with the establishment of the Department of Early Childhood Education, will help provide affordable child care to Colorado workers, eliminating a barrier that keeps countless individuals from entering the workforce.

In addition to these direct investments in workforce development, the Budget includes **\$600M in Unemployment Insurance Relief.** The unprecedented, rapid increase in unemployment claims during the pandemic resulted in the insolvency of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UITF) and borrowing from the federal government to continue to pay claims. Employers now face additional fees that threaten Colorado's recovery. This investment will provide both immediate relief for employers through fee relief, while also lessening future fees, allowing them to continue to invest, expand, and hire in Colorado.

## 2021 Legislative Accomplishments

- HB21-1264 invests \$35 million to provide Coloradans with reskilling, upskilling, and next-skilling opportunities that lead to industry-recognized credentials and get people working in growing industries. These funds will allow workforce centers and nonprofit, community-based organizations to support up to 6,000 Coloradans impacted by COVID through the completion of training programs, distributed as follows.
- HB21-1290 invests in community development in just transition communities
- HB21-1330 convenes a task force to review the role and mission and service area of each state institution of higher education, local district college, and area technical college; the interaction between the institutions, the local district colleges, the area technical colleges, and the state workforce development council in supporting and improving workforce development; and review and make recommendations concerning uses of ARPA money for assistance for populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency that addresses or mitigates the impacts of the public health emergency on educational disparities.
- HB21-1270, Snap Employment Training provides funding to enable SNAP E & T programs to successfully prepare and support more Coloradans as they seek and maintain employment