



## Strategies to Create Jobs Stable Employment and Health

Stable employment, adequate income, and access to affordable health coverage are key aspects of building financial stability and improving overall health and well-being of Coloradans. There is a strong relationship between income and health. Income affects our access to medical care and has much broader impacts on an individual's physical and mental health.<sup>1</sup>

### INCOME AND WEALTH CAN INFLUENCE HEALTH THROUGH MULTIPLE PATHWAYS. THESE INCLUDE:<sup>2</sup>

#### Access to health-promoting goods and services:

Greater economic resources increase people's access to things that help prevent illness, such as nutritious food, exercise friendly environments, safe neighborhoods, and medical care.

**Psychosocial effects linked with economic resources and occupation:** The work environment is an important psychosocial factor shown to affect health, with significant differences across occupations. Lower-paid workers often experience increased chronic stress and related negative health impacts. Research has found a relationship between factors such as work load demands, workers' perceived sense of control over their performance, safety stressors, work organization, and work atmosphere, and increased risk for high blood pressure, diabetes, back problems, and heart disease.<sup>3</sup>

**Increasing effects over time and at critical periods:** Health may also be shaped by increasing economic hardships over the course of a person's life. One study that followed individuals over the course of three decades suggested combined financial hardships affect a range of health-related outcomes including physical and cognitive functioning, mental health. There may also be certain periods in life when facing financial hardships can be particularly difficult, such as during pregnancy, or from ages birth to five.

**Limited educational opportunities:** Children in families facing financial hardships grow up with less educational opportunities, which decreases their opportunities for higher paying jobs and good health as adults.

## Economic Opportunity in Colorado

As of April 2017, Colorado's unemployment rate reached a record low of 2.3 percent, the lowest rate in the country, and well below the 4.4 percent national unemployment rate.<sup>4</sup> In 2017, Colorado also established a state minimum wage of \$9.30 per hour in 2017, or \$6.28 an hour if a person gets tips, which will grow ninety cents an hour every year until it reaches \$12.00 an hour in 2020.<sup>5</sup>

Although Colorado's unemployment rate is very low, it varies by region of the state and by education level, including significant differences in education levels among people of color.<sup>6</sup> In addition, many jobs in Colorado do not provide a living wage to afford essential needs such as food, housing and medical care. The state estimates that over 70 percent of new jobs in the next 10 years will have starting annual salaries of less than \$36,000.<sup>7</sup> Based on the current market rate for a two-bedroom apartment, this salary level requires individuals to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, leaving little left for other essential expenses and savings.

## Strategies to Promote Economic Opportunity at Community and Societal Levels

### Small Business Preservation and Development

Small, locally-owned businesses can play an important role in helping community health. In addition to providing goods and services, these businesses often employ local residents. Small businesses owned by people of color can be an important source of jobs for people of color, providing a key strategy for addressing unemployment differences across racial groups. To support small businesses and local job creation, communities can create policies and programs to businesses in the community and increase opportunities for minority-owned and other small businesses to thrive as part of economic redevelopment efforts.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Income, Wealth, and Health: Exploring the Social Determinants of Health," 2011, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Accessed June 13, 2017, [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70448](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70448)

<sup>2</sup> "Income, Wealth, and Health: Exploring the Social Determinants of Health," Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> "Work Stress and Health and Socioeconomic Status," American Psychology Association, Accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.apa.org/pi/res/resources/publications/factsheet-wsh.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> "Colorado Employment Situation April 2017," Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Accessed June 13, 2017, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdle/news/colorado-employment-situation-april-2017>

<sup>5</sup> "2017 Colorado State Minimum Wage," Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Accessed June 13, 2017, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdle/minimumwage>

<sup>6</sup> "Colorado Talent Pipeline Report," Colorado Workforce Development Council, Accessed June 13, 2017, [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0109\\_2016\\_CO\\_Talent\\_Pipeline\\_Report\\_1.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0109_2016_CO_Talent_Pipeline_Report_1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> "Nobody's Home Free: A Closer Look at Colorado's Housing Crisis," Live Affordably Colorado, 2016, <http://www.liveaffordablycolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/PublicOfficialsGuide.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> "Development Without Displacement, Development with Diversity," 2009, Association of Bay Area Governments, Accessed June 13, 2017, <http://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/paper-cravens-et-al.pdf>



**Sector Partnerships**

Colorado is supporting numerous industry-led sector partnerships that bring together workforce development efforts with high demand, high growth industries that pay a living wage.

**INDIVIDUAL EARNINGS TIER OCCUPATION EXAMPLES<sup>9</sup>**

**Jobs with a living wage for an individual (\$11.33/hour)**

 <p><b>Skilled Trades</b> (e.g. electricians, construction equipment operators, plumbers, carpenters)</p>	 <p><b>Healthcare Support</b> (e.g. nursing assistants, home health aides, medical assistants, licensed practical nurses)</p>	 <p><b>Office &amp; Administrative Support</b> (e.g. customer service representatives, receptions and information clerks, medical secretaries, billing and posting clerks)</p>	 <p><b>Education, Social Services</b> (e.g. teacher assistants, preschool teachers, education, guidance and vocational counselors, mental health counselors)</p>
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A sector partnership is an industry-specific regional partnership formed to address specific job growth priorities and needs. Led by businesses, it is done in collaboration with economic and workforce development and education. There are currently 21 sector partnerships that engage over 450 businesses throughout the state.<sup>10</sup> These partnerships represent five major industries and include the following:

Health & Wellness	Advanced Manufacturing	Agriculture	Information Technology	Tourism & Outdoor Recreation
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**Career Pathways Development**

Colorado is developing career pathway programs that align with high growth, high demand and living wage industries across the state. A career pathway program outlines the requirements, as well as support services, that students and jobseekers need to advance to higher levels of education and find employment in high demand occupations.<sup>11</sup> These pathways can also help target differences in education levels among populations of color to create and improve job opportunities for all Coloradans. Some of these steps are:

- 1. Build a regional, industry-led sector partnership.**
- 2. Build a career pathway support team of non-industry partners.**
- 3. Identify critical occupations based on labor market data and qualitative input from employers.**
- 4. Inventory relevant education, training, and workforce programs.**
- 5. Understand critical competencies required to perform effectively on the job.**
- 6. Build career pathway programs that prepare students and jobseekers with critical competencies.**
- 7. Share career pathway with students and jobseekers.**
- 8. Create a system for continuous improvement.**

<sup>9</sup> "Colorado Talent Pipeline Report." Colorado Workforce Development Council. Accessed June 13, 2017, [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0109\\_2016\\_CO\\_Talent\\_Pipeline\\_Report\\_1.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0109_2016_CO_Talent_Pipeline_Report_1.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> "Colorado Talent Pipeline Report." Colorado Workforce Development Council. Accessed June 13, 2017, [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0321\\_CO\\_WIOA\\_State\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0321_CO_WIOA_State_Plan.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> "Driving Colorado Forward Together: Colorado's Combined Plan for Execution of Workforce Development Activities." 2016. Colorado Workforce Development Council. Accessed June 13, 2017, [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0321\\_CO\\_WIOA\\_State\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/17-0321_CO_WIOA_State_Plan.pdf)