



# COLORADO PY20 WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

PROGRAM YEAR 2020 REPORT ON TALENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES  
FUNDED THROUGH THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT



Colorado Workforce  
Development Council

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## A Letter from the Colorado Workforce Development Council

When developing Colorado's second Combined State Plan, state partners set out to establish a bold direction for our talent development network, set aspirations that catalyze collaboration, and create avenues for a host of partners to engage where their needs best align in order to achieve collective ambitions. Throughout the first year of implementation of the 2020-2023 State Plan, we have executed on that vision and leaned into our values of equity and integration to strengthen our system and enhance outcomes for all Coloradans.

Our work is grounded by federal support, and augmented through state and local initiatives to best meet the needs of all of our customers and stakeholders. Therefore this annual report on activities funded through WIOA is one component of the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*, which offers an in-depth look at the current demand for and supply of talent in the state. Through these pages you will discover the depths of partnerships throughout Colorado and the details of how public dollars are being put to use in communities across the state.

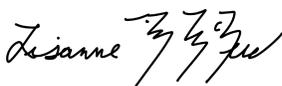
While the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic were not yet imagined when we began writing Colorado's second Combined State Plan, the infrastructure, partnerships, and programs put in place have prepared our system to rise up to the challenges of our current moment. With agility, the public workforce system has responded quickly to meet the dramatic increase in demand, innovated to continuously support Colorado workers and employers, and has continued to guide our state towards economic recovery.

The vision of our network is that **every Colorado employer has access to a skilled workforce and every Coloradan has the opportunity for meaningful employment, resulting in individual and statewide economic prosperity**. We must continue to lean into that vision, together, in order to achieve the success that Coloradans deserve and demand.

In order to be grounded on where we are today, this report contains:

- An update on the strategic section of Colorado's state plan with a summary of results from all core programs;
- Highlights from Colorado's 10 local workforce areas, emphasizing the innovative practices that have been developed (Exhibit A); and
- A synopsis of results driven at the state level by Workforce Development Programs within the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (Exhibit B).

We are excited to share the successes of the first year of our second Combined State Plan under WIOA, and look forward to continued partnership in the years ahead.



Lisanne McNew  
Chair



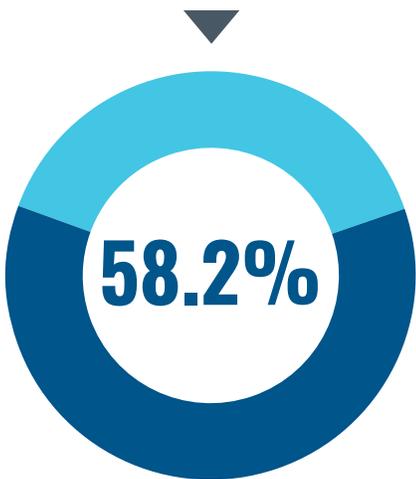
Lee Wheeler-Berliner  
Managing Director

# IN COLORADO



**376,593**

JOB SEEKERS  
UTILIZED THE PUBLIC  
WORKFORCE SYSTEM  
IN PY2020



OF JOB SEEKERS WERE  
SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED

with **61.7%** successfully  
retaining employment  
one year later

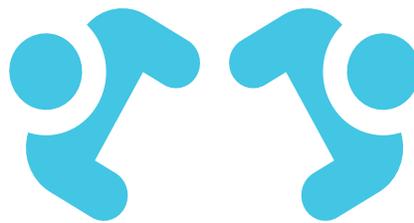
**9,385**  
**BUSINESSES**  
WERE SERVED BY THE PUBLIC  
WORKFORCE SYSTEM IN PY2020

788,973 JOBS POSTED



**\$228,835,710**

IN WAGES RETURNED  
TO THE ECONOMY



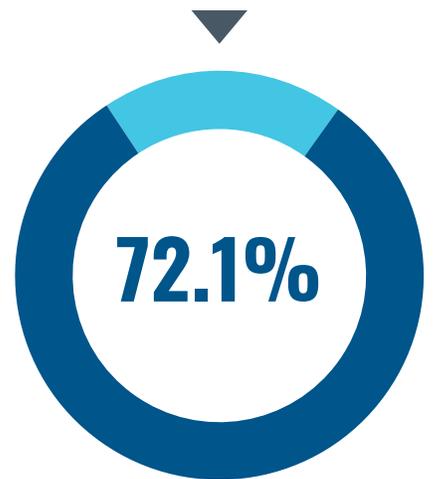
**93,563**

job seekers received  
in-person services through  
our statewide network of  
workforce centers, such  
as resume assistance and  
interview skills in PY2020



**5,032**

INDIVIDUALS WERE  
ENROLLED IN MORE  
EXTENSIVE TRAINING  
**PROGRAMS**



OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WERE  
SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED

with **75.4%** successfully  
retaining employment  
one year later

## Overview

Colorado's 2020-2023 State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) went into effect on July 1, 2020. This report provides an update on the strategic work outlined within each of Colorado's four state plan goals during PY20, as well as updates on additional items requested via TEG 5-18. The report includes information from each of the core WIOA programs: Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Adult Education, Wagner Peysner, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. [View the WIOA State Plan.](#)

### **Strategic Goals for the Talent Development Network**

Colorado is focused on four goals through the 2020-2023 WIOA Combined State Plan.

**Goal A:** Align state policies and flexible resources to ensure all Coloradans have equitable access to opportunities for quality, life-long education connected to the future of work.

**Goal B:** Increase the awareness of the TalentFOUND network so more individuals and businesses utilize the available resources.

**Goal C:** Promote career nimbleness and agility for all Coloradans.

**Goal D:** Strengthen partnerships to address job quality as well as individual and community level issues impacting economic mobility.

Goal A: Align state policies and flexible resources to ensure all Coloradans have equitable access to opportunities for quality, life-long education connected to the future of work.

### **Strategy 1: Formulate, test, and scale the braiding and blending of funding across programs.**

#### **Braiding & Blending: An Overview of Innovative Practices and Approaches to Funding**

The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and partners collaborated to produce a new resource, [Braiding and Blending: An Overview of Innovative Practices and Approaches to Funding](#), which provides an introduction to braiding and blending funding to support workforce development efforts in Colorado. With an eye on stabilizing and accelerating Colorado's economy, and as stimulus funding becomes available, the resource spotlights how leveraging multiple funding streams can maximize resources, increase impact, and help with long term sustainability of work taking place in a community.

#### **Implementing opportunities for braided funding with local workforce areas and DVR teams.**

The Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (CDLE) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Employment & Training have partnered to develop a pilot in which DVR and local workforce areas will enter into a contract to fund a Disability Program Navigator that will

support individuals with disabilities to access appropriate programming and supports from both programs. Additionally, cross training was provided this year to facilitate partnership at the local level, supporting co-enrollment and braiding of funding where appropriate.

**Strategy 2: Enhance the execution of SNAP 50/50 so that all communities are maximizing available resources.**

**Update and Data Review by Colorado Department of Human Services**

In the past year the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) allocated funding, employed program engagement strategies, developed messaging to engage organizations in rural counties, and developed data collection mechanisms to track the progress of the execution of SNAP 50/50 in Colorado's SNAP Employment and Training program (known as Employment First) for the 2022 federal fiscal year (October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022).

Allocated funding:

- The entire SNAP 50/50 \$3M appropriation and \$3M federal contribution is allocated to 11 existing Third-Party Partners, new Third-Party Partners, and 18 county human services departments. A breakdown of the allocation for each group is below:
  - County human services departments: \$2.1M
  - Existing Third-Party Partners: \$2.7 M
  - New Third-Party Partners (to be procured): \$1.2M
- SNAP 50/50 spending began October 1, 2021, and was allocated for employment and training services (such as subsidized employment, one-on-one job-seeking, coaching and case management), and employment readiness workshops that provide direct benefits to clients. A majority of the funding is for supportive services (such as tuition and fees, dependent care, equipment and supplies related to training, rental assistance, books, uniforms, tools, licensing fees, and other supportive services that may help a client overcome barriers to finding and retaining employment).

Program engagement:

- CDHS concluded a two-year program engagement project with SNAP to Skills which had a primary focus to increase participation and engagement in Colorado's SNAP E&T program.
- The goal is to increase program engagement in Employment First in FY2022, and serve roughly 29,000 individuals.
- In July 2021, CDHS began a rapid cycle evaluation with Mathematica and four county human services Employment First teams to identify effective program engagement methods (social media, cold-calling, referrals during eligibility interviews, etc).

Data collection:

- CDHS is finalizing program dashboards and data collection methods to report out program success indicators, such as number of individuals served, expenditure levels, and types of services provided. Monthly data reporting will begin in late Nov. 2021.

Third-Party Partner Procurement

- CDHS is partnering with the Colorado Center on Law and Policy to develop messaging that targets organizations in rural counties that are strong candidates for Third-Party Partnerships.
- An ongoing request for applications will remain open through April 2022 for any organization that is interested in applying to become a Third-Party Partner.

**Strategy 3: Promote collaboration models between Colorado Works and workforce programs.**

This strategy was not a focus during PY20 and is being prioritized in PY21.

**Strategy 4: Develop and strengthen programming to support targeted populations.**

**Diversifying apprentices within occupations where they are currently underrepresented.**

In July 2021 CDLE was awarded \$10 million of State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation (SAEEI) grants to strengthen registered apprenticeship efforts. SAEEI, also known as the Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Apprenticeship (IDEA) Grant, intends to increase apprenticeship programs and increase apprenticeship participation by under-served groups, including youth and adults impacted by COVID-19, women, people of color, justice-involved individuals, and individuals with disabilities. CDLE collaborated with state and local partners and industry representatives in the crafting of the proposal.

Distinguishing factors of the award include a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in apprenticeship plan, sector-based strategies to expand apprenticeships to innovative industries, and leveraging the Apprenticeship Hub to ensure an equity-driven recruitment strategy. This grant includes an apprenticeship scholarship that will provide awards up to \$3,000/apprentice to provide supportive services, and support on-the-job learning and related instruction. This grant also includes grants to businesses and local workforce service providers to support adoption of registered apprenticeship.

CDLE has also been recognized as an innovator in equity-driven apprenticeship policy and implementation for its development of the Apprenticeship Hub model. CDLE Workforce Development Programs staff spoke at two separate [National Association of State Workforce Agencies](#) events to demonstrate how registered apprenticeship expansion policy and practice can be aligned with local workforce centers and WIOA partners. Though launched during COVID-19 and early in its implementation, the Hub has had promising results in employer service by significantly reducing the time to registration, increasing the number of programs in new industries, and connecting employers to diverse workforce talent.

**Expanding access to apprenticeships to more individuals with disabilities.**

DVR's Business Relations Unit continues to lead DVR's efforts to improve access to apprenticeships for individuals with disabilities, including providing training to DVR counselors to better understand these opportunities. The unit is also actively engaged with the Colorado Office of Apprenticeships toward increasing exposure to, development of, and participation in apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the state.

The CDLE Apprenticeship Team has created opportunities for partners to connect to DVR during open discussions at their monthly *That's A RAP!* training sessions. These collaborations have led to continued relationship building that will be integrated into future planning for registered apprenticeship program sponsors. The apprenticeship team and DVR have further coordinated and aligned business and career services statewide through the Apprenticeship Hub effort. Through the Hub, apprenticeship staff have been able to train DVR staff on the benefits of the apprenticeship model, program development opportunities and best practices, and current RAP openings for job seekers.

### **Expanding apprenticeships to more individuals who are justice-involved.**

During PY20 Colorado applied for and received two USDOL discretionary grants totalling \$14 million. The Pathway Home grant is a re-entry grant of \$4 million awarded to CDLE in July 2020. The grant provides training, job-readiness, and supportive services to justice-involved men and women. The work begins pre-release up to 180 days. Pathway Home goals include serving 350 participants and reducing recidivism by 10%. Through Pathway Home, CDLE and the Department of Corrections (DOC) coordinated pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship as a core activity for individuals as they were being released.

With the Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Apprenticeship (IDEA) Grant, CDLE secured a \$10 million grant from the US Department of Labor to further invest in a high-quality registered apprenticeship system, prioritizing an equitable recovery. Through the IDEA and Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grants, CDLE partnered with DOC to make existing DOC apprenticeship programs more industry-relevant and aligned with industry needs to help incarcerated individuals gain employment post-release. Additionally, CDLE and DOC have been undergoing strategic planning for future alignment under the IDEA grant to add additional staff to enhance capacity and strengthen programs.

### **Expanding apprenticeships within state government.**

Colorado apprenticeship partners applied and were accepted to a cohort of states participating in an initiative led by the Council of State Governments and Urban Institute on scaling public sector apprenticeships. CDLE became a registered apprenticeship for workforce development professionals, and DOC became a registered apprenticeship for correction officers.

### **Incorporate New American focus into local area plans.**

In spring of 2021, Colorado's workforce development planning regions and local workforce areas updated their regional and local plans to include information regarding New Americans. The modifications to the four-year plans were approved in summer/fall 2021 and posted to the CWDC website. [View the modified regional and local plans.](#)

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit incentive for employers who hire individuals belonging to targeted groups. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit has continued to utilize the Lean Process to streamline multiple verification methods and reduce the amount of time taken to process applications. Outcomes:

- The WOTC Unit processed 90,004 new requests from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021
- Of those new requests, 30,826 were certified
- That equals to \$91,141,200 in potential tax credits for employers hiring individuals in the nine WOTC targeted groups
- In September 2020, the Colorado WOTC unit was asked by the WOTC national office to present our outreach best practices to a national audience of over 75 individuals
- The WOTC unit collaborated with the CDLE public relations team to create two WOTC informational videos for our external customers and partners

Goal B: Increase the awareness of the TalentFOUND network so more individuals and businesses utilize the available resources.

**Strategy 1: Educate Coloradans on targeted in demand career pathways through the enhancement of My Colorado Journey.**

**Prepare Partners to Promote My Colorado Journey**

The CWDC hosted a My Colorado Journey Virtual Service and Support technical assistance module in summer 2021. Throughout four virtual sessions and a community of practice, CWDC staff trained more than 100 workforce professionals in using My Colorado Journey to enhance existing skills in navigating career conversations with job seekers. In addition to practicing using My Colorado Journey, participants were able to inform changes and improvements to the platform and engage in idea sharing with other workforce professionals in a supportive community of practice and learning.

**Strategy 2: Increase the flow of individuals into the network through educator training on existing resources and career advisor training.**

**Engage K-12 counselors for overview and feedback on MCJ.**

In spring of 2021, two sessions were held with K-12 partners to share more information about the key updates to and enhanced functionality of MCJ as well as to hear feedback from partners.

**Deploy Moodle trainings on resources and dynamics of the system.**

In summer 2021, Colorado workforce system partners developed updated training for network partners on the WIOA system (see Goal D, Strategy 1 below). Staff members are now working towards adding these new trainings and resources into Moodle.

**Strategy 3: Map and promote in-demand industries in a future-ready way with embedded opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships.**

**Public Health Career Pathways**

The CWDC added career pathways in the public health industry to My Colorado Journey in February 2021. The public health pathways include opportunities and more than 100 occupations in public health, environmental health, and administration, and were developed in

partnership with the Trailhead Institute, the Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative, and other state agency partners including CDPHE, CCCS, CDHE, and HCPF. [View public health career pathways.](#)

### **Perkins Plans Goals**

Colorado Career and Technical Education (CTE) works to embed opportunities for work-based learning in their programs. CTE programs, as part of the approval process in Colorado, are required to demonstrate alignment with labor market demand. As a part of Colorado CTE's implementation of Perkins, we're measuring CTE program quality at the secondary level in part based on how many CTE students who participated in a CTE program for 2+ years had the opportunity to participate in work-based learning or apprenticeships. For Perkins, work-based learning includes activities under the "learning through work" and "learning at work" buckets on [Colorado's work-based learning continuum](#). For the 2019-2020 academic year, the baseline goal was that at least 5% of CTE students across the state would have had the opportunity to participate in work-based learning or apprenticeships. This goal was exceeded, even with the added challenges of the pandemic since spring of 2020. CTE is currently reviewing academic year 2020-2021 data in preparation for reporting to the U.S. Dept. of Education at the end of the year, and expects to continue to meet its targets for work-based learning participation.

### **State WORK Act Initiative**

The purpose of the WORK Act grant is to increase awareness of, enrollment in, and completion of skilled worker training programs to expand Colorado's skilled workforce, and expand the talent pipeline in key sectors. Partnering with business and industry to determine critical workforce needs, the program (ending June 30, 2021) awarded matching grants in excess of \$13 million to 24 grantees across the state to engage in outreach and recruitment efforts, provide skilled worker training, or both. WORK Act training programs often paired training with supportive services and provided wraparound services, a proven method for individuals with barriers to employment to keep their jobs and thrive. In addition, funding allowed grantees to expand their targeted groups to include populations underrepresented in their industries, and underserved in the community, resulting in increased opportunities for people of color, women, and those previously incarcerated.

WORK Act grantees developed partnerships and collaborations that resulted in new facilities, promotional efforts, and strategies that exceeded all expectations. Training providers proved themselves to be agile in adapting to hybrid learning and virtual and hybrid job fairs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Newly registered apprenticeships received state and national recognition. Grantees improved methods of recruitment and outreach, streamlined and updated websites with relevant videos, and broadened target audiences. The growth the grantees have incorporated in programs helped to not only to serve more trainees, but also to improve industry connections.

- Outcomes: Due to WORK Act funding, 4,788 Coloradans are now employed and engaged in career pathways that benefit them, their families, and their communities, in addition to the in-demand industries struggling to find skilled, trained workers. Grantees:
  - Actively recruited 62,983 participants
  - Enrolled 13,212 individuals into training programs

- Saw 8,462 individuals complete their training programs (64% completion rate)
- Assisted 4,788 in obtaining employment

#### **Strategy 4: Tell the story of the system.**

##### **Develop key messages and communications toolkit.**

A strategic communications plan was developed in the spring of 2021 that is now ready to be utilized and implemented by local workforce areas.

#### **Goal C: Promote career nimbleness and agility for all Coloradans.**

##### **Strategy 1: Focus on career attachment strategies with a path to prosperity.**

##### **Increase the number of individual plans for employment with career goals in opportunity occupations.**

DVR set a goal of developing 600 individual plans for employment that identified career goals in opportunity occupations, and exceeded this goal by achieving 619 plans by March 31, 2021. Individuals achieving their employment outcomes within these occupations had higher earnings than individuals achieving employment outcomes in other occupations, resulting in an average hourly wage of \$16.48.

##### **Disability Employment Initiative**

The Disability Employment Initiative, which concluded March of 2021, focused on assisting participating workforce areas to increase enrollments of adults with disabilities (18-64) into WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers Programs. This initiative provided the avenue for intensive case management, training, and/or education in order to assist the job seeker to reach successful employment outcomes. The DEI grant also focused on helping the state to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility of workforce areas/centers through sustainable practices, ensuring job seekers with chronic or severe disabilities (who are receiving Social Security Disability Benefits) have benefits planning and effective employment network services, and that career pathways were accessible. Outcomes:

- 553 enrollments of adults 18-64 with disabilities into WIOA AD and DW programs surpassing the 3-year grant goal of 216
- 259 adults with disabilities who entered training under WIOA AD and DW programs surpassing the 3-year grant goal of 84.
- 173 adults with disabilities who completed training under WIOA AD and DW programs surpassing the 3-year grant goal of 63.

## **Strategy 2: Create lifelong upskilling opportunities with earn and learn approaches so that individuals do not have to sacrifice income to increase their skills.**

### **Apprenticeship Expansion**

Registered Apprenticeships continue to be the premier model for earn and learn approaches in Colorado, and the successes with apprenticeships has been highlighted in the information about Goal 1, Strategy 4.

### **Remote Work Initiative**

Colorado launched the [Remote Work Initiative](#), a statewide collaborative effort that includes the CWDC, OEDIT, CDLE Office of the Future of Work, EDCC, Energize Colorado, the Department of Personnel & Administration, Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium, Colorado State University - Global, CSU Extension, DOLA, and the State Libraries. This multi-tiered initiative will ensure Coloradans are equipped to compete in remote work environments by strengthening Colorado's ability to attract jobs, secure talent and retain a location-neutral workforce. As part of the initiative, state partners collaborated in the launch of new [remote work certificate courses](#) in April 2021. Two online certificate programs were designed -- one for supervisors and leaders and one for employees -- to help workers and employers alike succeed in a remote work environment.

### **Bridging the Talent Gap Survey**

In spring 2021, the CWDC and partners in the TalentFOUND network led efforts to administer the [Bridging the Talent Gap](#) employer survey, which is designed to to understand the skills gaps Colorado businesses face and identify how education and training programs can help close those gaps. More than 500 Colorado employers completed the survey to provide their insights about the hiring environment, skills gaps, and current resources available for retraining and upskilling in Colorado. The [Colorado Bridging the Talent Gap dashboard](#) reflects the full results of the employer survey. TalentFOUND network partners will use the data and insights gathered through the survey to develop effective, targeted talent development solutions and work with employers to implement practices and programs to strengthen their business.

### **HB21-1264 Stimulus Funding**

During PY20 the CWDC and local areas worked with the state legislature to craft HB21-1264 Funds Workforce Development Increase Worker Skills, which was signed by Governor Polis on June 23. The bill will provide \$75 million for reskilling, upskilling, and next-skilling opportunities for Coloradans that lead to industry-recognized credentials and get people working in growing industries. HB21-1264 invests a total of \$75,000,000 for talent development, including \$60M through the CWDC in two specific areas: \$25M for Investments in Reskilling, Upskilling, and Next-skilling Workers, and \$35M for Work Force Innovation Act. Within both of these areas, a portion of funds is being allocated to Local Workforce Boards. [Learn more](#).

Goal D: Strengthen partnerships to address job quality as well as individual and community level issues impacting economic mobility.

**Strategy 1: Better serve all individuals in need of support by strengthening the alignment and information sharing across programs.**

**Implement WDQI use case for the Data Trust**

The CDLE Employment and Training Division and RIPL - Innovative Policy Lab d/b/a Research Improving People's Lives, through the WDQI grant is developing a state workforce longitudinal database, data lake, to connect workforce data with education data. In the future this will include data from the CDLE Unemployment Insurance Division. This is to securely collect, store, analyze, and produce actionable outcomes through data from different and disparate Colorado agencies and divisions.

**Develop updated training for network partners on the system.**

Colorado workforce system partners hosted WIOA cross-agency trainings throughout May and June 2021 to teach state employees about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including its legislative history, core partner requirements, and more. This series offers participants opportunities to learn more about the administrative and programmatic aspects of the core WIOA programs (WIOA Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Title II - Adult Basic Education, Title III - Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation) as well as the work of the CWDC. The webinar trainings were recorded and are available to all state employees.

**Determine training and support needs for the case management system.**

The CDLE Employment and Training Division is gathering information from local area staff and developing training for the case management system. The division is working with their Policy and Regional Services Unit to provide system training on Connecting Colorado changes, job seeker and business functions, and reports training throughout the year.

**Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (RecoverCO)**

The Employment Recovery grant, also known as RecoverCO, supplements WIOA Dislocated Worker dollars towards career preparation, occupational training, work-based learning, and support services. \$5,665,000 was awarded to CDLE Workforce Development Programs to serve 800 dislocated workers. The grant is administered through three local area hubs with a lead hub managing and sharing the funding, performance goals, best practices, and resources for optimal service delivery to dislocated workers. Building on solutions-driven results, through these additional dollars Colorado's 10 local workforce areas provide services in ways that are responsive to the impacts and realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Outcomes:

- Served 539 dislocated workers
- 529 received an individualized career service
- 295 participated in occupational skills training
- 16 participated in on-the-job training
- 137 entered employment at program exit
- 68.28% received a measurable skills gain

## **Strategy 2: Support local boards in engaging businesses and key employers to address community issues including childcare, transportation and affordable housing.**

### **Colorado Job Quality Framework**

Partners in the TalentFOUNDED network collaborated to produce the [Colorado Job Quality Framework](#) to outline features of a quality job and lay out practical steps local communities, employers, and leaders can take to improve job quality in Colorado. The CWDC's [job quality webpage](#) provides a hub for job quality efforts in the state and will highlight innovative approaches, best practices, and share resources for communities, employers, and leaders to adopt job quality strategies.

### **Waivers**

During PY16-19, Colorado did not have any WIOA waivers in place. In the 2020 State Plan submission, Colorado requested the following waiver and it was approved:

- Waive the obligation of eligible training providers (ETPs) to collect performance data on all students in a training program

As a result of this waiver, Colorado submitted performance data on all students in a training program in PY20 if the provider submitted the data, but it was not required. We anticipated that waiving the obligation of ETPs to collect performance data on all students would result in improved consumer choice, i.e. additional training providers on the ETPL and increased variety in type of providers. Results:

- New training providers added to ETPL: 31 in PY20 (compared to 29 in PY19)
- There are no notable changes in the type of providers from PY19 to PY20

Later in PY19, Colorado engaged in the development of 10 waiver requests that the state submitted to USDOL for COVID-19 pandemic policy relief. The following time limited waivers were approved by USDOL for implementation during PY20:

- Allow local areas to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent of the wage rate
- Allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training (IWT)
- Allow local areas to adjust the six-month employment requirement for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

No local areas utilized these approved waivers in PY20.

The following waiver was conditionally approved in PY20:

- Ability to change youth expenditures from 75% out-of-school/25% in-school to 50% out-of-school/50% in-school for PY20 funds at the state and local levels

In July 2021, the waiver was approved for implementation in the Tri-County local area. Tri-County will utilize the waiver in PY21 to target in-school youth (ISY) with drop-out prevention services, projected to increase ISY in the local area by remaining enrolled or graduating from high school. The local area also projects an increase in the credential attainment rate for all

youth (OSY and ISY) to 69 percent, an increase over the PY 2020 projected target of 67 percent. We will report on the outcomes of this waiver in PY21.

Through its active participation on workforce committees within the National Governors Association and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, Colorado has taken a leadership role to shape and align waiver initiatives across multiple states and effect workforce policies at the national level.

## State Evaluation Activities

### **Evaluation Initiative with Northern Illinois University (NIU)**

During PY20, CDLE contracted with Northern Illinois University (NIU), Center for Government Studies (CGS), to evaluate the impact of WIOA Title I training and supportive services investments on training completions and training-related employment. NIU used a two-phase sequential mixed method design approach, as follows:

- In phase 1, the quantitative analysis, NIU used PY17 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth data from Connecting Colorado (CDLE's case management system) in alignment with a recent state audit regarding return on training and supportive services investments.
- In phase II, the qualitative analysis, NIU gathered and synthesized data from focus group interviews in the 10 local areas. The local teams interviewed primarily consisted of program and case management staff who had collected and entered the relevant data.

NIU produced a final evaluation report, [Training Placement, Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas](#), which identifies best practices in each local area and incorporates recommendations to improve training-related placement outcomes for the WIOA Title I programs. Along with the Report, NIU created [The Evaluation Tool](#) for state and local areas to independently evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs, with an increased emphasis on serving barriered populations and service delivery to improve programs.

For PY21, CDLE has contracted with NIU to build upon the report's findings to provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of workforce programs and build the evaluation capacity of state and local personnel. NIU will work with state level staff and local workforce areas to implement the evaluation approach laid out in The Evaluation Tool with the objectives of:

- Identifying promising practices that result in a better outcome for program participants
- Improving the capacity of state and local workforce area personnel to conduct independent evaluations

NIU will train local evaluator staff in the ten local areas on using the quantitative methodology of the Evaluation Tool. The local evaluators will work with NIU to analyze more recent data and identify outcomes leading to promising practices. The data will provide demographics of WIOA participants and identify groups of people who underperform compared to the highest performing group, showing a disproportionate impact. In addition, NIU will train local evaluator staff on the application of the disproportionate impact analysis.

NIU will conduct the qualitative analysis phase using the focus group approach and request local areas to identify staff to identify promising practices. In June 2022, NIU will release a final report and present the findings and recommendations to CDLE leadership and the local workforce directors.

### **Colorado Workforce Development Council - Continuous Improvement Process**

The State Council has developed a policy that includes a set of standards for awarding Performance Incentive Funds. This Policy Guidance Letter (PGL) can be accessed at the following link:

- [GRT-2020-05: PY19 Performance Incentive Funds](#) - includes the following:
  - Rating Scale
  - Reporting Template
  - Application Guidelines
  - Best Practices Form

PY20 Performance Incentive Funds will be issued once the state and local performance outcomes are adjusted per USDOL guidelines.

### **Workforce Intelligence Data Expert Workgroup (WIDE)**

During the implementation of WIOA, local workforce directors designated their local staff to participate in a statewide data expert group to ensure consistency of workforce-related data. As a result of the partnership, which is a collaboration of Colorado's Workforce System and the Colorado Workforce Development Council, the WIDE group has created systematic changes in how all federally funded workforce programs utilize data as a decision-making tool for program evaluation and design.

WIDE worked closely with directors, State MIS, and other stakeholders to create a data system that provides actual wage data for WIOA Title I and Title III workforce programs to evaluate the effectiveness of programming through earnings outcomes for any program year back to 2010. In this report, the WIDE group is able to evaluate outcomes utilizing actual median earnings data for any exit cohort based on the following data points: 2 Quarters Prior to Program Registration; Entry Quarter Registration; 2 Quarters Post Exit; 4 Quarters Post Exit; Year 2 Post Exit; Year 3 Post Exit; Year 4 Post Exit.

Based on the methodology, the following measures were found for the Colorado Workforce System after WIOA implementation:

- Colorado statewide cost per participant for individuals receiving career services through any Title I or III programs.
- Colorado statewide cost per participant for individuals receiving training services through any Title I or III programs.
- In addition, WIDE has compiled the Return on Investment (ROI) for all programs in the previous two bullet points that are outlined in the charts below.

Please note that PY20 data is available in June 2022.

**Wagner-Peyser**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Cost per Participant</b>	<b>Total ROI</b>
PY15	258,037	\$10,234,726	\$10,725,897	\$41.57	\$393,565,214
PY16	228,183	\$10,381,438	\$10,067,200	\$44.12	\$418,193,053
PY17	203,908	\$10,092,245	\$9,859,865	\$48.35	\$393,208,875
PY18	191,777	\$10,021,124	\$9,638,516	\$50.26	\$362,447,085.68
PY19	313,338	\$9,822,955	\$10,577,286	\$33.76	\$280,542,153.87
5-year ROI Total					<b>\$1,847,956,381.55</b>

**WIOA Adult**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Cost per Participant</b>	<b>Total ROI</b>
PY15	4,158	\$9,878,461	\$11,605,611	\$2,791.15	\$34,889,622
PY16	3,806	\$8,814,684	\$13,085,716	\$3,438.18	\$31,637,846
PY17	3,189	\$7,893,417	\$11,476,864	\$3,598.89	\$23,554,985
PY18	3,099	\$7,397,094	\$10,649,881	\$3,436.55	\$19,562,326.88
PY19	2,327	\$6,664,946	\$9,321,861	\$4,005.96	\$8,587,206.32
5-year ROI Total					<b>\$118,231,986.20</b>

**WIOA Dislocated Worker**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Cost per Participant</b>	<b>Total ROI</b>
PY15	2,481	\$8,854,518	\$6,847,696	\$2,760.05	\$24,890,243
PY16	2,140	\$7,394,029	\$4,714,704	\$2,203.13	\$28,742,053

PY17	1,468	\$6,621,207	\$4,202,883	\$2,863.00	\$13,671,165
PY18	1,241	\$6,102,421	\$4,455,415	\$3,590.18	\$16,655,302.88
PY19	1,095	\$6,026,154	\$4,764,265	\$4,350.93	\$10,848,278.87
5-year ROI Total					<b>\$94,807,042.75</b>

### WIOA Youth

Year	Number of Participants	Allocation	Expense	Cost per Participant	Total ROI
PY15	3409	\$10,651,527	\$11,728,940	\$3,440.58	\$702,779.00
PY16	3087	\$9,505,470	\$9,899,446	\$3,206.82	\$5,624,615.00
PY17	2604	\$8,511,996	\$8,431,623	\$3,237.95	\$3,484,776.00
PY18	2624	\$7,952,674	\$8,828,866	\$3,364.66	\$2,608,266.78
PY19	1910	\$7,167,065	\$7,907,015	\$4,139.80	-\$646,127.35*
5-year ROI Total					<b>\$11,774,309.43</b>

*\*In PY19, more money was spent in the youth area and this population was one of the first to be impacted by COVID-19 layoffs and furloughs when data began to be collected (6 to 12 months after program exit). Therefore, we are beginning to see the effects, but will not see the full impact until June 2022 when all data is reported. Additionally, there were a number of PY19 youth program exiters in March through June of 2020 that either didn't find employment or return to education during the timeframe.*

### Statewide Performance Measures

#### Title I PY20 - Adult

Performance Measure	Statewide	Standard
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	74.5%	76%
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	70.6%	75%
Q2 Median Earnings	\$7,181	\$7,061

Credential Rate	78.5%	70%
Measurable Skills Gains	67.6%	62.5%

**Title I PY20 - Dislocated Worker**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standard</b>
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	73.1%	76.4%
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	76.7%	76.9%
Q2 Median Earnings	\$10,947	\$9,000
Credential Rate	73.3%	67%
Measurable Skills Gains	70.6%	58.6%

**Title I PY20 - Youth**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standard</b>
Q2 Entered Employment/Education/Training Rate	67.3%	67%
Q4 Entered Employment/Education/Training Rate	65.9%	71%
Q2 Median Earnings	\$3,964	\$3,954
Credential Rate	62.2%	63%
Measurable Skills Gains	58.3%	58.8%

**Title II PY20 - Adult Basic Education**

*PY20 data was submitted to the National Reporting System in October 2021*

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>Standard</b>
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	21.47%	23.70%
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	11.58%	25.00%
Median Earnings	\$5,942.50	\$5,123.00
Credential Rate	17.50%	11.00%

Measurable Skills Gains	44.16%	37.00%
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### Title III PY20 - Wagner-Peyser

Performance Measure	Statewide	Standard
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	58.4%	57%
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	60.6%	65%
Q2 Median Earnings	\$6,500	\$5,600

### Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation

*PY20 data based on the final submitted RSA-911 and ETA-9169 reports*

Performance Measure	Statewide	Standard
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	51.7%	Baseline
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	48.9%	Baseline
Median Earnings	\$4,360.35	Baseline
Credential Rate	25.4%	Baseline
Measurable Skills Gains	31.7%	21.3%

### Effectiveness in Serving Employers

*PY20 data from July 2020 - June 2021*

Performance Measure	Statewide	Standard
Employee Retention Rate	59.66%	Baseline
Repeat Business Customer Rate	29.61%	Baseline
Employer Penetration Rate	3.21%	Baseline

Colorado has elected to track all three proposed employer measures. However, we have concerns and caveats regarding each measure that are detailed below. In addition, we have implemented an employer satisfaction measure that is described in the Customer Satisfaction section below.

**Employee Retention Rate:** Local business services staff have very little control over the employment choices of participants and the retention decisions of employers. Additionally, future labor shortages predicted by LMI will create a labor market that encourages employees to switch employers for better wages, benefits, etc.

**Repeat Business Customer Rate:** The listing of a job order is the most frequent service that occurs, but happens without staff assistance in most cases. Employers who list orders most frequently are those with high turnover and low paying jobs, which does not align with the purposes and intents of WIOA and this performance measure. Staff assisted and customized services should be the only ones that trigger outcomes for this measure.

This measure does not speak to effective service for small employers and for states where small employers represent the vast majority of businesses served. Even if excellent service has been provided, a small employer's need for additional services may not occur a second time during the period of performance. This measure discourages services to small businesses that may have the greatest need for assistance.

**Employer Penetration Rate:** In many cases there are multiple sites with the same FEIN, the key employer identifier, which can skew results. In addition, there is a seasonal pattern of additions of new businesses and losses of failed businesses in many states. As a result, using the final month or quarter of the reporting period does not work; this should be an average of some kind over the entire period of performance.

In general this measure makes the most sense because it encourages expansion of services. But it may work better to measure the increase in additional businesses served rather than the actual penetration rate, given the differences between rural and urban communities. For example, an increase of three employers in an area with only 300 employers would be more significant than an increase of three employers in an area with 30,000 employers.

The tie to percentage of employers using core program services versus all employers in the local area is much less useful than penetration by 3-digit NAICS sector. This would tie to WIOA's mandate to focus on sector strategies rather than simply increase the number of businesses served.

## Customer Satisfaction

### Employer Satisfaction Data

**Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser -- Workforce Development Programs, CDLE**  
Through the Statewide Business Services Alignment initiative, local business services staff identified 11 staff-assisted business services available to all business customers. Businesses receiving any of the core services are automatically emailed a customer satisfaction survey. The standardized questions asked on each survey result in metrics that provide staff with valuable information that can be utilized to address issues with their service provision, and create an

open feedback loop that supports continuous improvement. A report of outcomes is available on demand, and works in conjunction with a business services report that shows the volume of business activities and highlights the placement rate achieved by businesses in workforce center supported efforts.

See below for the percent of employers who agree with the statement: “My engagement with the workforce center helped me find the right number of employees with the skills and experience I need.”

Total PY20 Outcome:

- 93.7% of employers were satisfied or very satisfied

### **The Office of Adult Education Initiatives, CDE**

Title II Adult Education programs did not collect employer satisfaction data in PY20 or prior years. The majority of allowable activities under Title II funds are customer-facing services rather than employer-facing services. With WIOA's additional emphasis on employment outcomes and as the role of adult education programs within Colorado's talent development system grows, direct contact with employers is increasing. The Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) is working with adult education programs to collect feedback on a statewide standardized process for collecting employer satisfaction data in the future.

### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, CDLE**

As a means of measuring customer satisfaction among business customers, DVR's Business Relations Unit (BRU) has an established customer satisfaction process designed to gather feedback across five key satisfaction measures. The satisfaction ratings per key measure for PY20 include: 1) Timely and courteous service (96.31%); 2) Information or service met my needs (94.73%); 3) BRU staff member was knowledgeable on the topic (94.73%); 4) Overall satisfied (95%); and 5) How likely are you to seek services from the BRU again (92.1%). When combined, these measures resulted in an overall customer satisfaction rating of 94.57% for PY20.

These numbers are of considerable note as much of the service delivery provided by the Business Relations Unit during PY20 was virtual, which marked a considerable change in the method of delivering services for the Business Relations Unit and was directly caused by the COVID pandemic's impact on in-person service delivery. Despite that considerable change, the Business Relations Unit was able to maintain a high customer satisfaction rating among our business customers.

### **Job Seeker/Customer Satisfaction Data**

**Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser -- Workforce Development Programs, CDLE**  
During PY20 local areas in Colorado conducted independent job seeker customer satisfaction surveys through the use of locally determined survey questions and methodologies. Because of the closure of offices during the pandemic, the transition to virtual services, and the diversion of staff resources to assist customers with unemployment insurance claim issues out of the control of workforce centers, use of surveys was limited. Those that were used primarily

focused on customer satisfaction with virtual workshops rather than overall program services or workforce center experiences. In addition, due to variations in methodologies, survey results were not comparable across local areas. During PY21, CDLE plans to identify state-level resources and work with local service providers to establish a consistent methodology for job seeker satisfaction surveys going forward.

#### **The Office of Adult Education Initiatives, CDE**

Title II Adult Education programs did not collect learner satisfaction data in a standardized way in PY20 nor in prior years. Some programs reported delivering periodic paper surveys with learners to better understand how programming could better meet their needs while others reported conducting exit interviews with learners to identify strengths and weaknesses in the support provided to learners to reach their goals. The Office of Adult Education Initiatives is working with Adult Education programs to collect feedback on a statewide standardized process for collecting learner satisfaction data in the future.

#### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, CDLE**

DVR makes a customer satisfaction survey available to all customers as well as employers, vendors, and other stakeholders interacting with DVR staff. DVR received 240 survey responses between July 2020 and June 2021. DVR leadership monitors survey responses and uses the information gathered to identify opportunities to improve the experience of all customers. Results over this period of time demonstrate that 82% of DVR customers are satisfied with the level of service they receive from DVR. This reflects a 10% drop in the level of satisfaction from the prior year. DVR continues to monitor survey results and seek opportunities to improve the customer experience through staff training and process improvement efforts.

Additionally, DVR's State Rehabilitation Council completed a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey in the fall of 2020. 77% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their overall experience with DVR. The SRC intends to repeat the survey annually to further support DVR's ability to focus on improving the customer experience.

## **Performance Accountability System**

### **Monitoring System**

CDLE's comprehensive monitoring system, recognized as a model by the US Department of Labor (USDOL), is the result of an on-going monitoring and technical assistance process that has built a strong working relationship between the State and the Local Workforce Areas. Quarterly, State Monitors from CDLE review the local areas they oversee to analyze client service levels, program expenditure rates, and performance outcome results. Through these reviews, staff identify areas that may require additional technical assistance and training to rectify any deficiencies prior to the start of the annual state compliance monitoring.

For the PY20 annual monitoring cycle, CDLE has implemented a Unified Monitoring Process with a team consisting of the CDLE Regional Services Unit (RSU), Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU), and Equal Opportunity Officer (EO). Together they will:

- Notify local areas of upcoming annual monitoring reviews
- Conduct a combined annual monitoring entrance and exit
- Conduct a combined annual mitigation process
- Issue a combined annual monitoring report

For more detailed information regarding the Unified Monitoring Process, please see the following Policy Guidance Letter:

- [ADM-2021-02: Unified Monitoring Process](#)

### **At-A-Glance Reports**

A key support to these reviews are the quarterly At-A-Glance reports that capture critical performance indicators for each local area. This report contains data from the WIOA reporting system and the state financial system; it paints a picture of the current progress toward program and fiscal performance goals.

### **Common Exit Policy and Data Validation**

The state has updated and reissued two Policy Guidance Letters after review by the US Department of Labor. These PGLs and attachments can be viewed at the following links:

- [MIS-2020-03: Data Integrity and the Participation Cycle for WIOA and TAA Programs](#)
  - Includes common exit policy
- [MIS-2020-02: Data Validation for WIOA and TAA Programs](#)
  - Includes written procedures, regular training, monitoring protocols, review of program data, documentation, and regular assessment

### **Rapid Response/Layoff Assistance Services**

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit and a state of emergency was declared in Colorado in March of 2020, many businesses were mandated to close. This resulted in a significant number of temporary layoffs and furloughs as well as some permanent layoffs. During PY20 companies in total reported 102 Worker Adjustment Retraining Notifications (WARNs) affecting 13,840 workers. Of those workers affected 6,207 were temporary or job attached layoffs, 2793 were furloughs and 4,840 were permanent layoffs.

All companies reporting separations were offered Rapid Response layoff transition services, but many companies refused services because the layoffs were temporary in nature. Companies with temporary and permanent layoffs were encouraged to provide access to the Rapid Response Google site that provides a wide range of information to assist employees with filing for unemployment insurance benefits, utilizing workforce center career services, and much more. A total of 2,402 permanently dislocated workers received Rapid Response services during 2020. Customer satisfaction continued to rank high among job seekers and employers achieving a 99% satisfaction rating in all categories. See Exhibit B for additional accomplishments regarding Rapid Response.

## Exhibit A - Local Workforce Area Highlights

### Adams County Local Area

#### Mission & Vision:

Mission: Create opportunities for success by connecting businesses to a quality workforce.

Vision: To effectively connect a world-class workforce that meets the needs and exceeds the expectations of our partners in the Adams County business community.

#### Standout Accomplishments PY20:

To reduce the number of disengaged youth in Adams County from 8,000 to 7,750, the Adams County Workforce and Business Center (ACWBC) collaborated with the collective impact organization Rocky Mountain Partnership (RMP). Data collected from the community directly influenced the decision to move forward with a pre-apprenticeship program.

In Collaborative Action Networks (CANs) comprising Youth Employment, Postsecondary Enrollment, and Postsecondary Credential Attainment, multiple WDB members participated in “data walks,” observing qualitative and quantitative data directly from the Adams County community from youth, parents, and educators. This data helped ACWBC uncover the gaps in postsecondary credential enrollment, attainment, and eventual employment for youth, particularly young men of color.

The data gleaned from the data walks helped the CANs examine promising programs addressing career and educational barriers; pre-apprenticeship programs were identified as a critical tool to help young adults enter the workforce and self-sufficient wage careers.

RMP uses data as a starting point to determine quantifiable targets for the collective impact work to support the community. RMP helps keep track of data as the work progresses and uses its process improvement expertise to help partner organizations advance their goals. It will support the ACWBC by providing data on how strategies for implementing work-based learning such as pre-apprenticeships are making a difference. This data also drives the ACWBC strategic plan forward, as the expansion of work-based learning is a significant goal for our WIOA programs.

In many different talks and meetings with IECRM, this issue was discussed and solutions were proposed. Youth and young adults graduating high school or earning a high school equivalency diploma needed a bridge to enter IECRM’s registered apprenticeship. The ACWBC recommended developing a pre-apprenticeship program to ease the transition between high school and an RA program. The Youth Business Development Representative at the time gave IECRM a wide variety of technical assistance materials related to developing high-quality pre-apprenticeships, provided by the federal Department of Labor and CDLE. Their Education

and Workforce Development Coordinator and training team used these materials as well as their registered apprenticeship curriculum to develop a pre-apprenticeship program that launched in June 2021.

The ACWBC was selected to receive the 2021 IECRM Executive Strategic Initiatives Award from the Independent Electrical Contractors Rocky Mountain (IECRM) for partnership and collaborative work on behalf of IECRM's Electrical Apprenticeship Training Program. The Executive Strategic Initiatives Award is given to an organization or individual who has made a significant impact on the advancement or growth of the industry through alignment with IECRM's vision to educate, promote, recognize, and advocate for the industry. Only one organization receives this award per year.

This year, IECRM recognized the ACWBC for the workforce development resources it provided to IECRM and their contractor members through services and support, as well as tuition assistance for eligible recipients. The ACWBC presented content for their Member Forums over the last year -- both prior to and during the pandemic -- and is currently working with IECRM to explore options for assisting apprentices not connected to an employer with tuition. The ACWBC Business Services partnered with IECRM to implement a Virtual Career Fair that engaged 274 job seekers and 11 contractor members who provided 34 essential jobs in the industry. Individual ACWBC staff were recognized for their contributions to the success of IECRM's registered apprenticeship. There were no electrician pre-apprenticeship programs in our community before the program was developed.

#### **Innovation in PY20:**

The Brighton Economic Development Corporation (EDC) approached the WBC because they were working on redesigning their website and wanted updated information. The site had basic information on employment and labor market information, but we quickly realized there was an opportunity to add our sortable Open Jobs List, which can be filtered to display Brighton-specific jobs. They wanted to leverage this tool to support Brighton Employers and boost the local economy.

The goal was to update the Brighton EDC's website with not only current information but to also market the WBC's services for businesses and residents of Brighton, all while bringing real-time information to the site. If the Brighton EDC website could include access to the filtered Open Jobs List, their site could drive jobs seekers to Brighton employers, which in turn would make the Open job List tool more valuable and practical. ACWBC and the Brighton EDC would need to build a new system to share this information quickly and seamlessly. There were some other data pieces that would also need to be shared on an ongoing basis. This kind of collaboration had never been done before.

ACWBC met with the CEO of Brighton EDC (who would later go on to join the Adams County Workforce Development Board) and their web developer. The ACWBC reviewed information that was available to them and inquired about possible collaboration opportunities.

Brighton EDC understood that the ACWBC Open Jobs List could be a great tool to advertise on their website. This list was created in Excel and was only distributed via an email listserv. By altering the report to only highlight Brighton jobs, a new vehicle for online job searching could be created. The Brighton EDC web developer, in partnership with the ACWBC data analyst and the Open Jobs List administrator, created a way to regularly pull the open jobs in Brighton and send them to the Brighton EDC where they were able to load it into a searchable table on their website.

The website was developed, and a process was created to share the jobs on the website. Once the tool was working, a new roadblock was identified. The Open Jobs List pulls information from Connecting Colorado and has a limit on how many jobs can be exported: 3,000. This limit was never an issue since job postings were almost always below the threshold. What was not expected was the COVID-19 pandemic, which eventually led to a massive new demand for workers. The issue was brought up with the statewide data expert group to find an alternate system. Thanks to the collaboration, the website was ready to launch but without the Open Jobs List. Concurrently, Brighton EDC lost its web developer and had to work with the staff they had to make the site work. The team figured out that by pulling only the most recent three weeks of job postings, the list could be appropriately created. And it had the added benefit of increasing focus on newly created jobs.

Though the new shared tool is not exhaustive, it does meet the needs of job seekers while still working within the established system. The website was launched with effective marketing messaging and ample resources for the residents and businesses of Brighton. This marketing campaign came with a new page devoted to workforce development that included the newly created Open Jobs List. A regular update schedule was created so the data would always be relevant. The new tool is a regular feature on the Brighton website and sustainability plans are in place to monitor its use and effectiveness.

The initial innovation was the partnership between Brighton EDC and the ACWBC. Finding a way to work together allowed for better service delivery for the clients of both organizations. It was essential to have the key stakeholders at the table, all with a clear focus on the customer and how technology could be used to serve them better.

The Open Jobs List, which is an Adams County innovation, was further refined and polished during this process. The key commitment was to try every idea and never stop exploring. All available resources from across the state were used to solve the problem. The extraction issue identified during this project has been highlighted by the state and a plan to alleviate it is underway. Ultimately, this partnership benefited everyone: the WBC was able to market its services to a whole new audience and improve its job postings and the Brighton EDC created a sleek and interactive new website with local information no one else had and implemented a regular way to update it.

## **Arapahoe/Douglas Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: To be a best-in-class workforce development organization responsive to the dynamic needs of job seekers and business/industry.

Mission: To strategically invest in human capital to contribute to regional economic vitality.

### **Innovation in PY20:**

The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board staff worked with other Workforce Intelligence Data Expert (WIDE) group members around the state to develop and publish a COVID-19 snapshot, and subsequently a recovery snapshot that highlights data on unemployment, initial and continuing unemployment claims, as well as job postings by occupation, job title, skill, industry, and company. The recovery report uses data comparing the occupational groups of registrants in Connecting Colorado with occupations in highest demand taken from EMSI Job Posting Analytics to help set priorities for targeting workforce investment funds.

The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board has also worked with the Colorado Urban Workforce Alliance, the Colorado Workforce Development Council, and partner workforce development areas to create regional virtual service delivery in business and career services.

## **Boulder County Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: To promote workforce development through service integration and a flexible response to the changing needs of our clients and customers.

Mission: To provide comprehensive and effective employment, training, and supportive services to Boulder County residents.

### **Standout Accomplishments in PY20:**

Workforce Boulder County (WfBC) pivoted rapidly over the past year to offer career workshops virtually, serving an unprecedented number of people newly unemployed due to the pandemic. WfBC continued to increase the number of workshops it offered and also expanded the maximum number of people who could attend each workshop (upwards of 80 people attending an individual workshop). WfBC also offered four unique workshops to meet the current demands:

- Capable & Confident in Your Job Search
- Working Remotely: Will It Work for you?
- Ins & Outs of Job Applications
- Negotiating Your Salary

WfBC wrapped up the year offering a total of 212 career workshops, 7,287 career workshop services, and served 2,218 unique individuals.

Snapshot by quarter | PY 2020

Measure	July - Sept 2020	Oct - Dec 2020	Jan - Mar 2021	Apr - June 2021	PY 2020 Total
Number of Workshops	47	41	56	68	212
Workshop Services	676	1,097	2,333	3,181	7,287
Actual Unique Individuals Served					2,218

**Innovation in PY20:**

WfBC continues to be deeply proud of our swift, collaborative, and thoughtful response to the COVID-19 economic crisis. We swiftly launched an innovative Virtual Call Center (VCC) to meet the immediate and emergent needs of people who lost employment. Staff from within and outside of WfBC coalesced to launch the VCC at the end of March 2020. The VCC remains a useful resource for job seekers and is open Monday through Friday.

From its launch until July 20, 2021, the VCC responded to approximately 28,000 calls (and counting). Data shows that 82% of the calls to the VCC were UI-related and WfBC’s VCC provided a place for people to reach compassionate, kind human assistance focused on helping them address their challenges during a very stressful time.

The UI system is highly complex and ever evolving and WfBC, as well as other county staff, diligently and collaboratively stay abreast of this information in order to provide the best in public service. Staff from other Community Services divisions came to the aid of WfBC and the community, offering their time to serve on the VCC. WfBC developed an onboarding program for staff from Community Justice Services, Head Start, and CS Admin, enabling them to volunteer their time on the VCC, making this a truly inter-departmental project to serve the many community members in crisis.

Because of the knowledge, compassion, and dedication of WfBC and other county staff, our VCC is regarded as a “hub” for anyone impacted by unemployment. WfBC was recently featured on Colorado Public Radio and 9News as a key resource for people trying to navigate the UI system and serving as a potential model for other government organizations. A group of people across the state created a Facebook group for those experiencing unemployment; this Facebook group refers to the VCC as the “Boulder County Angels.”

Community feedback:

"I came to talk to (the VCC) ...(they were) empathetic and kind. (They) pulled out all the stops and was able to get the issue resolved. I am so thankful to...reach someone who cared. At a time when so many people are dealing with job loss and the unemployment system for the first time, it is comforting and reassuring to have people there to help us through the process."

"Our angels at (WfBC) are one of our best resources and you can talk to a human!"

"They are awesome!! I think Boulder County should be recognized as the best help around."

WfBC's plans on keeping the VCC as an ongoing component of our service delivery model. As future challenges arise in our economy, WfBC is equipped with a resilient system to support community needs.

WfBC applied for and received a 2021 National Association of Counties (NACo) Award for our Virtual Call Center.

## **Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: Every Colorado business has access to a skilled workforce and every Coloradan has access to meaningful employment, resulting in statewide economic vitality.

Mission: To foster business-focused workforce partnerships, effectively preparing rural Coloradans for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

The Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium (CRWC) is a consortium of 10 sub-areas comprised of 51 counties. The sub-areas include: Broomfield, Eastern, Pueblo, Rural Resort, Northwest, South Central, Southeast, Southwest, Upper Arkansas, and Western. Broomfield is county-run, while the remaining sub-areas are state-run. Four of the nine state-run sub-areas have contractors that deliver Title I-B services.

### **Standout Accomplishments in PY20:**

The pandemic largely forced the service delivery models within CRWC to shift from in-person to virtual. To ease this transition, and to ensure that the needs of customers with barriers to services were addressed, the CRWC explored and evaluated which services appeared to be effectively delivered remotely, to whom, and under which circumstances.

At the onset of the pandemic, the majority of staff were substantially unprepared to provide virtual services. Throughout PY20, policies, forms, and practices were revisited, adjusted, and improved in an effort to implement virtual approaches effectively. Investments were made to

provide effective technology solutions. Strategic efforts were made to ensure staff received an increased awareness of and were able to use virtual platforms, giving them the tools they needed to use the full range of technical and practical elements of virtual work. CRWC's Workforce Centers were authorized to begin offering in-person, by appointment only, service delivery as the program year came to an end. The CRWC leadership team determined that some elements of service delivery will continue to be offered virtually after the pandemic ends, while continuing to assess critical issues such as access and the digital divide, to ensure high-quality and equitable results. Some of the notable outcomes include:

- 85% of CRWC staff and contract staff attended the 2020 RMWDA Virtual Conference December 1-3, 2020, themed Workforce Wellness - Refresh, Renew and Refocus
- 847 virtual workshops were delivered by CRWC Staff, with nearly 25,000 job seekers in attendance
- Nearly 300 rural employers engaged in virtual job fairs and hiring events
- Several CRWC staff began the state's Remote Worker Certification process
- LinkedIn Learning licenses were made available to all CRWC staff and contract staff to assist with upskilling and reskilling

#### **Innovation in PY20:**

On October 8, 2020, 90 partners from across the state representing rural workforce development and K-12 education came together to explore strengthening partnerships for the TalentFOUND Network Conversation. The framing question was: How might we partner to better support students in their journey to find meaningful career opportunities and strengthen our local communities?

A panel highlighted the perspectives of students and young people in relation to their career preparation opportunities. The morning closed with breakout sessions for each local area to come together to identify the steps they hoped to implement moving forward to best meet the needs of their communities. More than 90 percent of those who provided feedback said they planned to build on the conversation with their local partners.

### **Denver Local Area**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

**Vision:** Our economic strategy must be boldly ambitious, with innovative, forward-thinking policies that are intent upon delivering a world-class city where everyone matters. The Denver Workforce Development Board will be the sought-after partnership model of business, workforce, community, educational, and civic leaders that empowers all job seekers to learn and grow so they can contribute to and fulfill the needs of a vibrant business community.

**Mission:** Denver Economic Development and Opportunity will be a driving force that advances economic prosperity for the City of Denver, its businesses, neighborhoods, and residents

through purposeful and intentional economic development that (1) broadens the tax base; (2) stimulates balanced economic growth through business assistance, neighborhood revitalization, and the development of a skilled workforce; and (3) focuses on innovation, sustainability, and education. The Denver WDB convenes key workforce partners including business leaders, education partners, and the Mayor's economic and workforce development team who plan and oversee the use of federal, state, and local funds to deliver talent development solutions to Denver area businesses so they can generate employment opportunities for all job seekers and provide Denver citizens with a thriving economy.

### **Standout Accomplishments in PY20:**

Early in PY20, Denver Workforce Services (DWS) established a call center system to connect job seekers and employers effectively and efficiently with front line Workforce Center and employment services staff. The call center allows customers to call one number -- 720-337-WORK -- and use an automated phone menu to specify the purpose of their call, which included:

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims
- Connecting Colorado passwords and other technical assistance
- Job seeker Services available through the Workforce Centers
- State Veterans staff services
- Employer services
- Denver Construction Career Program and
- Other programs

Since opening the call center in August 2020, Denver has answered more than 11,700 calls.

Prior to the call center's launch, DWS staff could only answer a fraction of incoming calls to our main workforce center numbers. Despite establishing a virtual communications procedure, connecting with customers in a timely manner proved to be a challenge; DWS staff often responded to customer voicemails or emails well into each evening and through the weekends.

The call center allows multiple staff to login to the system and answer queued calls in the order they are received. The call center also allows customers to connect directly with specific program staff including state Veterans staff, the Employer Services Team, Back to Work 50 Plus, Trade Adjustment Act, and DCCP, allowing DWS to immediately engage with customers. This process has reduced the number of voicemails and emails to which staff must respond, as well as the number of lost calls.

### **Innovation in PY20:**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued into PY20, Denver embraced and expanded our virtual service offerings to continue to meet our customers – both job seekers and employers – where they are.

Since the COVID-19-related closures prevented job seekers from visiting our Workforce Centers, the Denver Workforce Call Center allowed us to meet them where they were and provided more than 7,000 individuals with assistance related to UI and almost 9,000 with phone and email support navigating Connecting Colorado.

Questions regarding UI claims have and continue to dominate job seekers' needs. The DWS team realized quickly that, while UI was not necessarily our program's area of expertise, we needed to skill-up and provide any and all UI information and services that we could within reason and ability. For over 16 months our call center team, as well as the majority of DWS staff, has been available to listen directly to our customers' issues and situations and have responded with world-class customer service in a time characterized by very difficult circumstances. The team has adapted and innovated countless times to continue to improve the systems, programs, and services that we offer to both job seekers and employers.

Throughout PY20, Denver provided services to job seekers and employers almost exclusively through virtual means, allowing us to serve over twice as many job seekers (12,808) with staff-assisted Employment Services in PY20 as in PY19, as well as more employers (1,696).

To ensure our workforce customers had access to our services – as well as other agencies and training partners – DWS entered into a partnership with the Denver Public Library to create the Tech Loaner Program. Through this partnership, CARES Act funding was used to purchase Chromebooks and WiFi Hotspots, which DPL loaned to workforce customers who had little or no access to a computer or internet. These steps connected customers to tools at no cost with a library card through their branch locations. By the end of the program year, 1,031 individuals gained access to virtual services by checking out equipment through the Tech Loaner Program.

DWS also applied our virtual service strategies to ensure the success of many of our other targeted programs, including our Back to Work 50+ (BTW50+) partnership with the AARP Foundation. Despite a significant reduction in program participants in the early months of the closures, through determined outreach efforts, participation increased throughout PY20 to end the year with almost 90 participants. A cumulative 37 BTW50+ participants have connected with employment, with an average wage of \$29.88.

The Denver Construction Career Pilot (DCCP) also transitioned to virtual services in order to meet partners where they are. Examples of such services include working with city agencies to establish workforce goals for each pilot project, convening contractors for virtual monthly community of practice meetings, and providing contractors and sub-contractors with one-on-one support to maximize apprentice participation and hiring from targeted populations. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, DCCP has proven to be a success and city leadership is taking steps to continue the program and expand access to the program.

Additionally, DWS was able to lead regional efforts in the successful TEC-P 2.0 proposal for USDOL H-1B funding, which will bring \$7.3 million to Colorado to train and upskill 750 job seekers across the partner workforce regions in key industries such as information technology, advanced manufacturing, and transportation and logistics.

DWS looks forward to implementing the innovations necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to expand and augment our service delivery strategies to continue to meet even more of our customers in PY21.

## **Larimer County Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: We are a vital, energetic, recognized leader employing a deep understanding of economic and workforce trends to positively influence the Northern Colorado economy and to create better lives for all who live and work here.

Mission: Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development connects people to meaningful work and businesses to talent and resources, improving our community's economic well-being. We care and our customers matter.

Values: Customer Focuses, Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Culture of Innovation, Inclusivity

### **Standout Accomplishment in PY20:**

In 2019 and early 2020, a group of economic developers across northern Colorado embarked on an innovative approach to collaborative, data-driven economic development led by LCEWD and the City of Fort Collins. When Larimer County created its Economic Development Department, one goal was to build a hub of economic-development-related data expertise. The Northern Colorado Regional Economic Development Initiative (NoCoREDI) represents a network of EDOs and Chambers of Commerce across 35 communities in northern Colorado. LCEWD developed the tools to support regional collaboration that resulted in the Cluster Strategy Playbook, which primarily focuses on how the region and its individual communities can work both individually and together to strengthen local businesses and the cluster ecosystem. From this collaborative research, they were able to produce the first network map of industry interactions in northern Colorado and develop a plan to support key industry sector job growth in Northern Colorado. Access the NoCoREDI cluster study [here](#).

### **Innovation in PY20:**

he LCEWD is particularly proud of the focus on building a more inclusive economy during the past year. Seeing the systemic inequities within the economy provided the LCEWD an opportunity to be intentional about work related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Starting from within, the LCEWD modified its job descriptions, recruiting efforts, and hiring processes to attract a more diverse set of candidates and eliminate systemic bias that existed in the department's practices. The department is also on the front end of implementing the CWDC's quality job framework and will translate learnings from these processes to support its private sector customers in taking similar steps to create a more inclusive workplace. LCEWD is

also in the process of creating a community navigator position to reach underserved and underrepresented populations, creating a digital inclusion program, and providing DEI resources to employers in the region, and providing services in Spanish. DEI work is not being thought of as something extra to do, but rather being integrated into all of our work. There is more to come, but we are proud to have moved boldly in this direction.

## **Mesa County Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Mission: To deliver the right service at the right time using a collaborative and people centered approach within a supportive culture, promoting safety, stability, and meaningful employment

### **Standout Accomplishments in PY20:**

We created a shared position, a Workforce Development Liaison, with Colorado Mesa University (CMU). We heard on the job seeker side that our CMU recent graduates and alumni would love to stay local, but they couldn't find a good job. We heard on the employer side that they would love to hire CMU graduates but could figure out the best way to get in touch with them. The Workforce Development Liaison's goal is to bridge the gap between the recent graduates and alumni and our local employer community in an effort to retain and grow our local workforce. We established an MOU with CMU where we pay for one-third of the position, which resides at the WFC two days a week and at CMU three days a week. This position has met with over 180 employers this past year, and hosts two employer events each month. This position has been a huge success and was recently highlighted by the CWDC as a best practice for braiding funding and leveraging partnerships. Check out this video for a better idea on how this position was created: <https://vimeo.com/lightbulbmediaco/download/582695069/d9b8d17423>

### **Innovation in PY20:**

We are extremely proud that we were able to continue providing a high level of service as we are still in a pandemic. We led the state in Work-Based Learnings and also had some great outcomes through our programs:

- 7,938 job seekers employed after six months
- \$19,110,548 in economic impact
- 23,681,091.70
- 83.5% retention rate
- 41 customized hiring events and Job Fairs
- 6,962 NCRCs earned

## **Pikes Peak Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Vision: We promote the economic vitality of the Pikes Peak Area. We are agile at responding to emerging needs of the diverse and growing workforce. We change the lives of job seekers with proven training and employment opportunities. Our employer partners know and acknowledge the value we add to their bottom line. We are a model for the responsible use of federal funds and a leader in workforce development, organizational effectiveness, and collaborative partnerships. And, we are a great place to work!

Mission: To promote the economic vitality of the Pikes Peak Area by fulfilling its mission to connect vital businesses with work-ready job seekers and employer-driven services.

### **Standout Accomplishments in PY20:**

In order to respond quickly and with agility to the tremendous skills gap that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented layoffs, Pikes Peak Workforce Center (PPWFC) compared job openings in in-demand occupations with the occupations of unemployed workers. We identified the 40 best possible supports for unemployed workers including giving them the opportunity to gain new skills to meet market demand.

In July 2020, the PPWFC began crafting and executing a strategic plan to expend \$4 million of CARES Act funding, with the goal of connecting unemployed workers to retraining and upskilling opportunities and helping them access the supportive services they need to gain new employment as quickly as possible. Employment data revealed which in-demand skills were required to fill the region's in-demand occupations.

PPWFC established a virtual training platform (accessible on-demand, 24/7) with hundreds of no-cost courses to help displaced workers acquire in-demand skills needed by the region's employers.

The virtual platform is located at [ppwfc.org/upskill-pikes-peak](https://ppwfc.org/upskill-pikes-peak) and includes:

- 69 Business Skills courses that teach the most popular office software programs, including all Microsoft, Google, and virtual communication programs
- 23 Career Development courses offering best practices in customer service, problem solving, dealing with conflict, and how to cope in a post-COVID-19 employment environment
- 5 Cybersecurity/IT entry-level courses covering the fundamentals of cybersecurity and information technology
- Skilled Trades curriculum that teaches in-demand trades in HVAC, plumbing, electrical, facility maintenance, and solar array design and installation.
- Retail and Hospitality courses that teach the fundamentals of the retail and customer service industry, as well as COVID-19-related training for retail operations, and customer conflict prevention

- Basic Soft Skills and Workplace Skills required to get and keep a job
- Aptitude testing to discover how a worker's natural talents align with in-demand careers

Since the launch of our online UpSkillPikesPeak website in August 2020, there have been 2,504 views of our 18 different Career Skills videos, with topics ranging from "Reacting to the New Abnormal," to "What is a Growth Mindset?" to "Seeking Win Win Strategies for Conflict Resolution," to "Anticipating the Needs of Your Customer."

In addition, the 69 Business Skills modules have been very popular. Job seekers or incumbent workers have completed more than 931 courses, gaining 23,044 skills over the course of 940 hours. Their average improvement rate is 40%.

### **Innovation in PY20:**

During PY20, PPWFC expanded and enhanced efforts to connect, convene, and collaborate with not only our WIOA partners and businesses, but also with the community at large despite the worldwide health crisis.

We expanded our services in rural Teller County to address their needs during the pandemic. We purchased a satellite cell phone to help our Customer Service Representative assist customers from his rural home. We partnered with Cripple Creek Victor School District in their RISE application and are now assisting with implementation of career pathways, job coaching, and adult education.

PPWFC continued to be an active player in pandemic recovery efforts. We assisted El Paso County Public Health with hiring contact tracers, which allowed us to introduce them to skills-based hiring, creating not only short-term employment opportunities but also developing a talent pipeline for other job openings in their department, which in turn helps them develop their future workforce.

In fact, one of our job coaches, Daniel Garcia, was given the Public Health Champion Award during their May 2021 board meeting. Daniel was also featured by the Markle Foundation on best practices in skills-based hiring!

PPWFC's relationships with the school districts also expanded in PY20 to not just include career pathways and exploration but to also address their teachers' and parents' childcare needs during the winter breaks and when schools were closed due to COVID-19.

PPWFC partnered with the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak Community College, Early Childhood Development, Joint Initiatives Alliance for Kids, and Head Start Programs to explore and develop early child education pathways, apprenticeships, and awareness campaigns to ensure they have the skills the industry needs in the future.

Most importantly, we were there for our clients. We reopened to the public's needs mid-June 2020 in a temporary and central location that was accessible by public transportation. We

opened our doors to job seekers and businesses for all but a few weeks during PY20. We held virtual job fairs, in-person hiring events, and job coaching sessions. We also helped with Unemployment Insurance and ID.me. We executed 27 different funding streams, each with different eligibility, suitability, outcomes, and metrics. We got people jobs, careers, training, supportive services and gave them hope. We changed lives.

### **Tri-County Local Area**

#### **Mission & Vision:**

Our Division underwent a reorganization to align all economic mobility, housing stability and navigation services within the Human Services Department. This entailed creating a new division: Housing, Employment, and Economic Services (HEES). This new division now encompasses TANF, Employment First, Child Care Assistance, Veterans, Workforce, Homeless, Housing, and Navigation services.

Mission: To promote economic vitality by identifying, developing, and matching a talented workforce to business.

Vision: The vision is to ensure that all residents along the continuum of needs in these various areas have a streamlined ability to access the critical program options that best support their individual/family goals.

#### **Standout Accomplishments in PY20:**

We identified a need to increase access to the many programs and that our physical location was a barrier to access. The solution identified was a virtual appointment system that could be available on our website where customers could schedule virtual career development or initial appointments from their home, library, community partner organization, or any other location. The vision was to increase access to opportunity for all residents and ensure that regardless of transportation, child care, health needs, or other situations that residents could easily schedule and access professional career development and navigation services.

The goal of using a virtual appointment system was to provide an alternative way for customers to receive services and increase equity for residents. When the pandemic hit and buildings started to close, this platform and service became critical to our ability to continue services without needing to be in person to do so.

During PY20 the virtual appointment system was expanded and enhanced to other program areas throughout the county, further assisting thousands of residents. The Resource/Career Center reopened in the summer of 2020 in a limited capacity to continue to provide in-person services for those who needed it.

When the pandemic hit and buildings started to close, this platform and service became critical to our ability to continue services without needing to be in person to do so. Since we had implemented these services prior to the pandemic, our transition in the wake of the pandemic

was easier. The platform enabled our staff to reach customers who formerly may have had limited access to services. Through this strategy, over the past program year more than 2,000 customers have received a virtual appointment. Staff have gone above and beyond in providing excellent customer service and access to services for the community. We continue to provide customers with limited technology access to our Resource Center to help with their job search, unemployment requirements, and other needs.

### **Innovation in PY20:**

TRICO has developed three growing and in-demand career pathway initiatives to include information technology (IT), healthcare, and transportation/warehouse/ distribution. Targeted industry employers and customers engage in a series of industry information sessions, focused workshops, hiring events, and individual career planning activities. In addition, training provider outreach provides customers the opportunity to access industry-recognized credentials leading to employment.

Another proud accomplishment is the resiliency, compassion, and agility our workforce teams exemplified during a full year of remote work in responding to the crisis our communities were facing. The TRICO workforce team immediately created new resources in response to almost 40,000 Jeffco residents who filed for unemployment benefits (UI). Our staff listened, learned, and adapted their services to support individuals unable to access their UI benefits. They were the voice for so many navigating the UI system and they helped thousands of our residents access the financial benefits they needed to survive. This team served as advocates for our Jeffco residents who did not have a cell phone, which was required to apply for UI benefits. We were the only resource available for residents with no computer to apply online. Staff waited with customers in order to talk with a UI representative; staff also escalated claims for individuals waiting for benefit payments. This team connected residents with rent and food assistance programs to help while they waited for UI benefits to be released. This team listened with empathy, de-escalated thousands of frustrated customers, and brilliantly adapted their services to support the needs of our community members.

## **Weld County Local Area**

### **Mission & Vision:**

Mission: To keep the workforce system responsive to employers, employees, and job seekers.

Vision: To direct the efforts of Employment Services of Weld County (ESWC) to operate an innovative, adaptive, and customer-driven workforce system which ensures:

- Customer services are based upon individual needs and choices;
- Services provided are competitive and valuable;
- Outcomes are measurable, and results-oriented;
- Responsiveness to changing labor market conditions, customer profiles, and program regulations; and

- Services are fiscally responsible.

### **Standout Accomplishment in PY20:**

During PY20 ESWC partnered with the Weld County Department of Human Services Child Support Services division in a 2Gen approach to engage and support non-custodial parents with employment and training opportunities, increasing child support payments. The program is designed to assist non-custodial parents gain the employment skills necessary to meet their child support obligations. This program is administered through the Improved Payments and Child Success (IMPACS) Program. In addition to providing services addressing barriers to employment, the Child Support Services division provides services addressing parent-child and co-parent relationships. All these services together work to positively contribute to increased child support payments.

Applications for the IMPACS program became available in the fourth quarter. At the end of PY20, ESWC had received 27 application referrals from Child Support Services, 10 of which were referred to and co-enrolled in the adult employment and training programs to receive intensive case management services. One of the participants gained employment after receiving short-term certification training for their CDLA.

### **Innovation in PY20:**

The top in-demand qualification in the local area is a commercial drivers' license. The need for this qualification vastly outweighs the second top qualification (Certified Nursing Assistant) by over 977% with Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck drivers the top posted occupation in the area. As such, CDLA training is the most sought-after training by program participants. In PY20 the largest percentage (41.22%) of ESWC participants receiving occupational skills training for one specific qualification were sent to CDLA training. Participants enrolled in the training experienced a 95.74% success rate, with 87.23% of participants gaining employment following the completion of their training.

## Exhibit B - Workforce Development Programs Strategic Initiatives

Exhibit B provides additional information on the outcomes and impact of Workforce Development Programs strategic initiatives through PY20.

### Background

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's Workforce Development Programs (WDP) is the grant recipient for USDOL's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs. In this capacity, WDP has responsibility for:

- Participating in national workforce policy development organizations and initiatives
- Disseminating funds to local workforce areas and other sub-recipients
- Overseeing the statewide one-stop delivery system
- Developing policies and providing training and technical assistance
- Monitoring local areas and sub-recipients for program and fiscal integrity
- Maintaining systems to allow reporting of activities and performance outcomes
- Developing virtual technologies and other innovative service delivery strategies
- Pursuing supplemental funding sources and administering discretionary grants
- Administering and operating statewide programs and initiatives, including those described in many sections of the annual report.

### National Policy Development

With the overarching mission of our department and the goals of WIOA as the framework, we have driven policy change over the last four years at the national level through the following leadership positions:

The Director of the Division of Employment and Training served on

- The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) WIOA Information Technology Steering Committee
- The National Labor Exchange Steering Committee
- The National Association of Workforce Development Professional (NAWDP) Board of Directors and is currently the Vice-Chair of the NAWDP Executive Committee. He also serves on NAWDP's Marketing and Advocacy Committees.

The Director of Workforce Development Programs served on

- The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Employment and Training Committee and Apprenticeship Committee
- The National Governors Association (NGA) State Workforce Liaisons Executive Committee
- The National Association of State Liaisons for Workforce Development Partnerships
- Governor's Behavioral Mental Health Commission
- NGA Academies: Workforce Innovation Network and the On-Demand Future of Work Policy Academy

The Workforce Development Programs Operations Director served on

- The NASWA Veterans Committee

Through its active participation on workforce committees within NGA and NASWA, Colorado has taken a leadership role to shape and align waiver initiatives across multiple states and effect workforce policies at the national level.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

### **NGA On-Demand Workforce Policy Academy**

Colorado concluded our work in the NGA Academy in December 2020. CDLE's Workforce Development Programs contracted with Colorado State University to conduct a series of targeted focus groups of employers and workers involved in varying aspects of the on-demand or "gig" economy in Colorado. The [final report](#) was published in collaboration with NGA. Colorado Senate Bill 20-207, which requires CDLE to conduct a study of independent contractors and the unemployment insurance system, will provide a menu of policy options to legislators in 2021 to expand access to worker protections for all workers in Colorado.

### **Design Thinking**

Within Colorado's workforce system, WDP has integrated 'design thinking' with appreciative inquiry and other planning methods to build on our successes and intentionally put our customers at the center of our work. As part of this approach, we have identified strategies to:

- Integrate appreciative inquiry methodology into our monitoring processes to provide better technical assistance and move local areas from vision to action
- Develop workforce programs training modules for state and local staff
- Create short videos to tell the story of WDP and the public workforce system in Colorado
- Align business services and career services efforts across state partners
- Develop comprehensive online training for veterans who have significant barriers to employment
- WDP will initiate a new round of design thinking interviews with stakeholders during PY21.

Impacts: As a result of the design thinking process, WDP piloted the use of portable technology with Jobs for Veterans Training Grant (JVSG) staff to better meet the needs of clients with transportation issues. The pilot has been incredibly successful during the COVID-19 pandemic, when case management quickly shifted to a virtual setting with limited time to prepare. It has resulted in a comprehensive virtual case management system, the VETS Vortex, which provides online scheduling, video case management, and an on-demand job portal all in one place.

### **Performance Excellence – The Talent Found System**

Colorado has excelled as one of three workforce demonstration states, fully embracing the key principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, achieving total integration of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, and Trade Act employment and training programs, and enhancing state and local partnerships with TANF,

SNAP, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other workforce partners. Successful outcomes from PY20 included:

- Provided employment services to over 342,000 job seekers (including 23,556 veterans) and over 20,000 businesses
- Over 154,000 job seekers obtained unsubsidized jobs
- Provided training services to over 3,400 job seekers
- Served over 76,000 youth through the Governor's Summer Job Hunt Program
- The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program certified over \$91,000,000 in potential tax credits for Colorado businesses
- Colorado met or exceeded all WIOA Title I and Title III performance standards

### **Apprenticeship Accomplishments**

Additional apprenticeship accomplishments are included on pages 6-7 of the main body of the Annual Report.

#### **Apprenticeship Grant Recognition**

Colorado's work under the CDLE-led State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant was profiled as a "Promising Practice in State Leadership and Policy" on the US Department of Labor's Workforce GPS, a resource hub for workforce practitioners. Governor Polis, the BEL Commission, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado Workforce Development Council, the collegiate apprenticeship model, and CareerWise were all recognized. [See SAE Leadership Policy 2020.](#)

#### **State Apprenticeship Agency**

After two years of policy and technical support, HB21-1007 passed to officially authorize Colorado as a State Apprenticeship Agency. The bill will enable Colorado to be agile in addressing its economic priorities while working in the high-quality National Registered Apprenticeship System.

#### **ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grants**

Since October 2016, Colorado has received \$2.89 million of State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant funding, \$1.36 million of Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE), \$450,000 of Building State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeships through Innovation (SAE2020), and \$10 million of State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation (SAEEI) grants to strengthen Registered Apprenticeship (RA) efforts. CDLE has led the way in expanding RA to new industries and increasing equity in apprenticeship.

SAE Outcomes: From 2016 through 2021, the SAE grant supported 10 workforce areas and three intermediary grantees. Through this funding, more than 2,615 individuals were placed in registered apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship and quality pre-apprenticeship programs and 29 new programs were developed. The grant concluded in March 2021.

ASE Outcomes: In year two of the ASE grant

- CDLE continued its implementation of the statewide Apprenticeship Hub model and process improvement to streamline registered apprenticeship sponsor experiences. The Apprenticeship Hub developed a statewide scholarship fund for new apprentices. The scholarship is widely marketed to apprenticeship partners across local and state governments, partner agencies, sector partnerships, and apprenticeship sponsors/employers. As of October 2021, 158 participants were served through ASE, and 30 RAPs were registered with USDOL.
- Partnerships with the Colorado Community College System, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Department of Corrections offered employers more robust program options and career seekers more access to braided funding.
- Through ASE, the CDLE Apprenticeship Specialist provided more than 300 instances of technical assistance to 125 organizations including the Apprenticeship Consultants, community college staff members, Colorado Department of Higher Education representatives, workforce center staff, employers, sponsors, and intermediary organizations.

SAE2020 Outcomes: Through the first year of SAE2020 activities, CDLE created a central repository of work processes and working groups to align systems; addressed technical, procedural, and communications issues with the ETPL and GI Bill benefit process; aligned RAPIDS and the State Directory; and strategically planned with state-level data.

Success Story: An Arapahoe County client was formerly incarcerated and living out of his truck, struggling to find employment. He attended the Master's Apprentice pre-apprenticeship program and developed the skills necessary to obtain immediate employment upon his graduation as a 1st Year Apprentice Electrician. Arapahoe County staff helped the client with supportive services, including appropriate work clothing, boots, and gas vouchers to assist with expensive transportation costs. The customer was also provided referrals to crisis shelters and temporary housing, as well as various community resources events. The client is now working as an electrician and supporting himself independently to obtain housing. He loves his job and is thankful for the opportunity that the Master's Apprentice gave him to increase his skillset and put him on a high wage trajectory through his Registered Apprenticeship.

### **Employment Support and Job Retention Services Program (Support Services Program)**

The Support Services Program has been in operation since January 2020. Administered by Goodwill of Colorado, the program provides up to \$400 in support services to Coloradans who are unemployed or underemployed and pursuing employment opportunities. Service providers, who are reimbursed by Goodwill, include non-profit and community organizations, workforce centers, and departments of human services. During the height of the pandemic, Goodwill and the service providers adopted virtual methods for obtaining required documentation, e-signatures, and verbal self-attestations of eligibility without disrupting services Coloradans needed immediately. The first state program of its kind, the Support Services Program holistically embraces a second-chance model in providing immediate assistance to individuals and families pursuing employment and self-sufficiency.

Outcomes (18 months operation period):

- 1,027 participants received Support Services
- Over \$300,000 in funds issued in support of job seekers
- Top three eligible expenses:
  - Other (including laptops, training, clothing, scrubs and shoes, drug tests, background checks, and work supplies): 420 (40% of requests)
  - Emergency Housing: 207 (20% of requests)
  - Transportation/Vehicle Repairs: 152 (14% of requests)

Success Story: Client G was laid off due to the COVID-19 shutdown. During this time he was unable to manage all of his expenses, found himself dramatically behind on his water bill, and his water was disconnected. Thanks to assistance from the Support Services program, Client G's water was reconnected, and he has established a payment plan for the remaining balance based on the income he will soon be receiving from his job.

### **Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (COResponds)**

This program year, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's (CDLE) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (COResponds) continued to expand the number of available disaster recovery and humanitarian assistance positions available for temporary employment. Positions in public health, food security, janitorial, and providing COVID-19 resources remain the most critical jobs required to aid Colorado's recovery. Our three administrative hubs are continuing creative outreach campaigns to bring in new eligible job seekers. Operation of this grant continues to be complicated in this job seekers' market; however, enrollments and expenditures continue to improve.

Outcomes:

- 98 Job Seekers impacted by COVID-19 enrolled in the grant.
- Served 42 Job Seekers over the age of 50

Success Story: T loved her job in the restaurant industry; however, when the pandemic hit she lost her job. After finding that new employment at Amazon was only exacerbating her health issues, T sought support from a career specialist. In January 2021, T was hired through the DRG to a position at a local food pantry as a warehouse worker and delivery driver. She greatly enjoyed her job and the impact she was making for her community. At the end of her temporary employment in April 2021, T interviewed and was hired as a resource navigator at the food pantry. This was the type of employment she was looking for, a job with regular hours and benefits, and she appreciated the opportunity the Disaster Recovery Grant provided.

### **State Hospitality Grant**

The Colorado Restaurant Foundation (CRF) administers the hospitality grant through the Colorado ProStart® pre-apprenticeship program in hospitality/foodservice and business entrepreneurship. The restaurant, food service, and hospitality industry is a significant economic driver throughout Colorado. Despite the considerable disruptions to the sector due

to the continued challenges and impacts of the pandemic, CRF continues to forge ahead and engage students, families, and school administrators to supply trained and skilled students into youth apprenticeships and industry jobs and careers. On July 1, 2021, the Restaurant Youth Registered Apprenticeship launched with CRF as the sub-grant recipient, creating additional pathway opportunities for students moving into a Youth Registered Apprenticeship program.

Outcomes:

- 68 participants served in RYRA (All ProStart and Restaurant Ready pre-apprentices and registered youth apprentices receiving grant-funded services).
- Six participants entered into a registered apprenticeship program.
- 1,205 students were ServSafe Food Handler trained and gained their certificate
- 617 Colorado ProStart students went on to earn their second industry certification, i.e., ServSafe Food Safety Manager
- 963 ProStart students (74% of all students) received their Youth Apprenticeship Workforce Ready Certificates.

Impacts:

- 218 Colorado ProStart students are working in industry jobs.
- 151 students dual-enrolled at the Metropolitan State University of Denver.
- The collaboration and braiding of funds from creating apprenticeship opportunities and collaborating with community-based organizations has been a significant shift in how new talent is upskilled and new partnerships are fostered.

### **Governor's Summer Job Hunt**

The Governor's Summer Job Hunt (GSJH), running for 42 years, is Colorado's oldest program of its kind. The program serves youth 14-24, connecting them with summer and year-round work opportunities. The program invests \$703,000 in Governor's 10% Wagner-Peyser Discretionary Funds into local workforce areas, utilized to provide staff in each of the local workforce areas across Colorado to deliver program services. Partnerships are critical, to include the State Youth Council, connections to middle schools, high schools, and higher education, and programs Chafee Foster Care, School to Work Alliance Program (a partnership between the Department of Education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for disabled youth), and local industry sector strategies.

Outcomes:

- Served 76,095 youth in 2020
  - This is more than twice the average due to the surge in unemployment insurance claimant registrations during the pandemic
- Achieved a 59.7% entered employment rate

Impacts:

- Young Adult and Employer Appreciation: COVID-19 disrupted the annual news station call-in events and the annual end of season celebration at the Governor's Residence, but the program took this opportunity to create framed certificates of appreciation, signed

by the Governor, for a combined 45 young adults and employers statewide. They were mailed to each location and presented locally.

- Events: Over 100 virtual career fairs, workshops, and hiring events were created, many available to youth statewide. These events served more than 5,600 attendees, and over 400 businesses and industries participated.

### **Jobs for Veterans State Grant**

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program is a staffing grant from the US Department of Labor to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment. The goal is to provide quality employment and to assist employers trying to fulfill their workforce needs with qualified veterans.

PY20 Outcomes:

- Served over 1,080 veterans, with an entered employment rate of 52% and an employment retention rate of 72%.
- Trevor Wilson, a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist at the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development (LCEWD) Center, received recognition as the DVOP of the Year for Colorado and then won the national award for DVOP of the Year from the American Legion.
- Colorado's JVSG program was one of six selected by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies to present at their national veterans conference session on creative virtual service delivery. The presentation highlighted Colorado's innovative Veterans Vortex portal, a Google suite program for JVSG staff that houses multiple staff tools, training videos, resources, current job opportunities, and virtual career guidance capabilities.
- Colorado was a national leader with the creation of and transition to a virtual career management program to provide full time virtual case management services, and transitioned to hosting remote networking and hiring events using virtual platforms to continue serving veterans and employers after the impact of COVID-19.

Success Story: Jonathan was a low-income disabled veteran relocating from Washington state and was interested in working in the electrical field. The Veterans Employment Specialist and Jonathan discussed strategies to explore work prior to arriving in Colorado to include attending virtual hiring events. The Veterans Employment Specialist recommended Jonathan directly to the military recruiter with Xcel Energy. Jonathan was hired at \$24.48 per hour and has already received a promotion. Jonathan said the staff made his transition and finding a new career very easy, and could not thank them enough for all they did for his family.

### **State Veterans Service to Career Program**

The Veterans Service to Career Program's (VSCP) goal is to assist veterans, spouses, and other eligible participants in seeking, obtaining, and retaining employment. Since January 2019, CDLE has awarded \$1.68 million to five participating workforce centers. Program funds are intended to augment federal funds available through workforce centers. Services offered through the

grant may include assistance to participants in securing federal benefits, counseling services, employment support, education, work-based learning, life skills, and wellness support.

Outcomes (since 2019 program inception):

- 483 veterans, 10 spouses, 2 children and 7 Eligible National Guard / Reservists served.
- 216 veterans with a disability served
- 47 homeless veterans served

Success Story: Rick R. is an Air Force veteran who returned to Grand Junction in 2004. He used the GI Bill to go to college and graduated with a degree in geology. He dabbled in a variety of careers after he left the military which ultimately led him into the energy industry. Rick worked on and off in the oil fields for nine years and when he was laid off in 2015, he began to consider a career in law enforcement. He determined that earning an EMT certificate was the first step and enlisted the Mesa County Workforce Center for assistance in his new career track. Once Rick obtained his credential, he decided he wanted to join the Colorado State Patrol and he began applying with 2,500 other hopefuls. Rick was accepted to the academy in Golden. However, due to COVID-19 impacts, it took nine months instead of the normal six months to complete. Rick states that the workforce center and the VSCP was instrumental in helping him get on with the Colorado State Patrol by providing him with the financial support that he needed.

### **Business Services Initiatives**

The Colorado Business Services team focuses on a statewide approach to provide seamless business services in a manner that maximizes the opportunities for businesses that utilize services to employ qualified workers while having a positive experience to support the state's economic competitiveness. 2020 presented unique challenges to the Business Services team. Even before the pandemic, Business Services restructured operations to better serve Colorado businesses. Over the past year, the team worked to adapt to the changing marketplace and a transition to a virtual service delivery mechanism while businesses and job seekers were affected by a near total shutdown and great uncertainty as our day-to-day lives and economy faced a challenge not seen in over 100 years.

Task forces were mobilized to address an evolving landscape:

- Partnership with the registered apprenticeship program to support employers interested in apprenticeships statewide
- Focusing on the continuous improvement to the functionality of Connecting Colorado
- Refinement of processes and change implementation through the Business Services Program Guidance Letter
- Shifting to skills-based job orders in partnership with Skillful
- Enhancing products from the Workforce Data Group (WIDE) for business education
- Virtual best practices (Virtual Rapid Response workshops, Virtual Job Shadow)

## **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program**

RESEA is a partnership between the Division of Unemployment Insurance (UI), WDP, and local workforce centers. It targets unemployment insurance claimants who are statistically determined as most likely to exhaust their benefits, and invites them to an in-person appointment at a local workforce center. During this appointment, claimants meet individually with a workforce center coach to discuss a variety of strategies for work-search intended to help them return to work more quickly. In addition to these discussions, staff assess claimants' continued eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits and refer questionable cases for investigation by UI program staff.

### **PY20 Outcomes:**

- 3,334 unemployment insurance claimants completed their RESEA appointments
- 7,395 claimants were introduced to the workforce center through RESEA invitations, regardless of whether they completed

### **Impacts:**

- **Self-Scheduling Model:** Colorado recently re-launched RESEA with a self-scheduling model, so claimants can request their appointment date up front. This increases claimant buy-in, and is expected to influence completion rates. The new scheduling model should increase the number of claimants invited to participate, and create a steady stream of enrollments into other programs at one-stop centers, in anticipation of increased RESEA funding.

**Success Story:** Desiree was receiving unemployment insurance benefits when she attended a RESEA appointment. She had recently gained a part time position with the USPS as a delivery helper; however, the job was Sundays only, which meant she would remain on unemployment. Her main employment goal was to gain full time employment in the clerk/clerical field. Some of her challenges included feeling a bit insecure about her interviewing and job searching abilities and skills. Desiree gained a great job within a month of our meeting, and utilized the workshops and appointments that the workforce center offers. She emailed me (case manager) and stated "This is Desiree. You helped me with this plan for employment towards the end of August. I was chosen for an interview for a position at the 19th Judicial District last Wednesday and got the job! I'm starting on October 1st. Thank you so much for taking the time to help me! I feel very confident with my work going forward. Once again, thanks to you and everyone at RESEA for all the help I was given in this process! I'm truly excited for my new path forward in life."

## **State Displaced Homemaker Grant**

The State Displaced Homemaker Grant, known as the Keep Envisioning Your Success (KEYS) scholarship program, provides support and services to help displaced homemakers enter or re-enter the workforce. KEYS is committed to empowering displaced homemakers, through education and employment, to become economically self-sufficient. The program is operated through a contract with the Community College of Denver (CCD).

Outcomes:

- Since 2003, Community College of Denver has openly welcomed the Displaced Homemakers Program that has served many eligible students. During the timeframe of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 the grant provided case management services and support to 90 displaced homemakers.
- The Displaced Homemaker Coordinator has chaired the Annual Winter Wonderland Event for the last four years. The event provides some relief to our students who are experiencing financial hardships and other challenges during the holiday season. Many of the CCD students are low-income single parents, displaced homemakers, and/or homeless. Despite the obstacles they face, these students are highly motivated and determined to be successful, and we are committed to supporting them as they work to achieve their goals. The Winter Wonderland committee was comprised of staff from multiple departments that provided students with holistic support. The Winter Wonderland event is just one of many projects that demonstrates CCD's commitment to helping their students succeed.

Success Story: Cindy overcame homelessness to find transitional housing, which along with support from the KEYS program, allowed her to graduate with a bachelor's degree in accounting. She is currently working for an accounting firm in the Denver area.

### **Trade Adjustment Assistance Program**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program assists workers who have been laid off due to foreign competition to find new and better employment by retraining them in a new occupation or improving their current skills for a better employment outcome. Benefits available to workers include retraining (classroom, registered apprenticeship, or on the job), Trade Readjustment Allowance (extended unemployment benefits), job search allowances, relocation allowances, and assistance with their health insurance in the form of a tax credit from the IRS. Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) is the program's wage subsidy for workers who are 50 years of age or older who find new employment that pays less than their trade certified employment.

Outcomes:

- 101 participants received training during PY20
- 61.82% of participants exiting the program found employment
- 79.59% of exited participants retained employment after four quarters

Success Story: Joshua P was laid off from Media News Group on Jan. 31, 2019. At the time of his layoff he was earning \$15.50 an hour working as a cash application specialist. Joshua had an associate degree in accounting, but knew that his occupational opportunities would be limited to cashiering and clerical positions. Joshua enrolled in the TAA program with the goal of getting his bachelor's degree in accounting. He graduated from Colorado State University-Global in February 2021 with his bachelor's degree in accounting. Joshua is now working as a payroll accountant for the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind earning \$45,000 a year. He is also a

self-employed certified tax preparer and plans to take the CPA exam once he has enough years of experience to qualify for it.

### **Federal Bonding Program**

The Federal Bonding Program offers a six-month no-cost fidelity bond for job seekers who are denied coverage by commercial carriers due to their at-risk background. The Federal Bonding Program is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and CHUBB Limited and is administered by Workforce Development Programs.

Outcomes:

- The Colorado Federal Bonding team issued 45 fidelity bonds between the Federal Bonding Program and the Fidelity Bonding Demonstration Grant from 7/1/2020-6/30/2021
- The Federal Bonding team presented 28 webinars to employers, consultants, workforce center staff, and other partnering agencies across the state

Testimonial: "Hello, I am emailing you to inquire about the steps to get an individual bond. I have been unemployed and receiving PUA for over a year now, and have been offered a job today. I am required to undergo a background check and want to provide my potential employer with additional security by having my bond ready if possible." \$25,000 in fidelity bonds were issued on behalf of this job seeker, helping her to get hired for this job.

### **Foreign Labor Certification**

The Foreign Labor Certification unit assists the U.S. Department of Labor in determining whether an employer's request to bring in foreign workers on temporary non-immigrant visas is warranted due to a lack of labor in the U.S. This entails the use of the H-2A (agriculture) and H-2B (non-agriculture) visas. The unit works in partnership with local workforce areas, which create and maintain the necessary job orders, as well as inspect the employer-provided housing required by the H-2A program to ensure that it meets federal standards. This unit also reviews all employers' H-2B job orders for Colorado to ensure the content requirements of H-2B regulations are met.

Outcomes:

- Received and reviewed 399 new H-2A job orders from 7/1/2020-6/30/2021, which resulted in 544 completed housing inspections statewide
- Received and reviewed 356 new H-2B job orders from 7/1/2020-6/30/2021
- The Colorado Foreign Labor Certification team created and implemented a virtual housing inspection process along with forms for the local workforce center staff across the state to conduct H-2A housing inspections during COVID-19

Testimonial: "Hello, we are quickly approaching that time of year again when we prepare our Colorado clients H-2B advertising and I wanted to see if we could continue to provide you with a spreadsheet that lists all our Colorado clients, their job order and information like we did last

year to you so once we have filled out all the information, the job order will be placed on hold until DOL notifies Connecting Colorado. Thank you for all your assistance. Working with you and your team makes my life easy each year.”

### **Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (MSFW)**

Colorado is designated as a significant MSFW state, and administers a bilingual (English/Spanish) outreach program through workforce centers to ensure that equitable services are provided to all MSFW clientele. Services include job referrals, staff assisted services, referral to supportive services, career guidance, job development, job placement, and placement in non-agricultural jobs for over 150 days.

Outcomes: During PY20, Colorado met all of its compliance indicators. Of the 1,637 MSFWs registered for services in PY20:

- 66% received a staff assisted service
- 30% were referred to a job; 59% obtained employment
- 5% were referred to career guidance
- 12% were referred to supportive services

Impacts: During PY20, the Colorado workforce centers have increased their efforts in making sure MSFWs understand the opportunities available through the WIOA program. In PY20, training referrals were provided to 104 MSFWs.

- Colorado is also active in the MSFW coalitions around the state. Colorado’s State Monitor Advocate is the chair of the state-level coalition and is an active member in the Delta, La Junta, Monte Vista, and Greeley coalitions. CDLE is also very active in the Human Trafficking Coalition.
- MSFW staff collaborate with several agencies that serve farm workers. Agencies that partner services with CDLE are: Migrant Education, Migrant Health, USDA Rural Development, Rocky Mountain SER (NFJP Grantee), Equal Employment Opportunity, Mexican Consulate, Harvest America, Chamber of the Americas, and other agencies.

Success Story: *Reimagining Outreach Services*. This program year, customers saw difficulty in many aspects of their daily lives. CDLE and other service providers ensured that outreach workers could be safe while providing services whenever possible. CDLE provided opportunities for outreach workers to continue to reach out to farmworkers via virtual avenues and still provide much needed services. These activities included drive-through MSFW events, vaccination clinics, and information regarding service providers. These events provided MSFWs with hand sanitizer, masks and COVID safety information, food boxes, coat drives, and Christmas present registrations for farmworker children. Outreach workers also reported a higher number of MSFWs that are interested in retiring and applying for their Social Security benefits and old age pensions. Collaboration with other organizations helped outreach workers provide good quality referrals to our farmworker customers.

## **Virtual Technology Solutions**

The COVID-19 pandemic served as an incentive to develop or enhance technology solutions allowing virtual options for many workforce services. Following are the key developments supported by Workforce Development Programs.

### **Statewide Virtual Job Fair**

On February 24, 2021, Colorado workforce centers in partnership with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment conducted a statewide Virtual Job Fair. The partners reported that 7,453 job seekers registered for the job fair throughout the day. 1,248 resumes were submitted to employers, and more than 1,904 online chats were conducted between employers and job seekers. More than 400 employers took part.

### **Connecting Colorado Virtual Workshop System**

To enhance online virtual services, the Management Information Systems Team worked with frontline workforce center staff and the Connecting Colorado vendor to enhance the virtual workshop system used to deliver job search and job preparation workshops. The system was designed to require registration in Connecting Colorado labor exchange and case management system for all individuals seeking to attend a workshop, thus allowing CDLE to track performance and other outcomes. In addition, the system allows each local area to target their workshops to a specific audience or to allow open enrollment to job seekers statewide. Since implementing the enhanced workshop feature on September 11, 2020, the local workforce areas have provided more than 1000 virtual workshops to more than 20,000 job seekers.

### **New Virtual Rapid Response Workshop**

The initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic increase in layoffs from Colorado employers. This sharp increase also created an exponential increase in demand for Rapid Response services. In order to meet this need the CDLE Rapid Response team mobilized quickly to create a turnkey virtual solution. Our virtual Rapid Response workshop package includes pre-recorded video sessions covering a wide range of topics, including accessing our workforce centers for re-employment, filing for unemployment insurance, healthcare options, making retirement planning decisions, and managing finances while unemployed.

### **Electronic (e-WARN) Filing**

The State Rapid Response team worked with programmers to develop an Electronic Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice (e-WARN), an online WARN filing system for employers that launched in March 2021. During the month we also launched a survey for local Rapid Response coordinators to better understand their needs and have begun to take steps to provide enhanced training and technical assistance services.

### **New Self-service Access to WARNs**

To improve transparency and to more efficiently handle the large volume of inquiries occurring during the pandemic, the Rapid Response team began including links to copies of the WARN letters on the public facing website so reporters and other interested parties could retrieve the

information without staff intervention. This has resulted in improved transparency and a significant reduction in WARN inquiries.

### **Virtual Housing Inspection Toolkit**

In order to continue serving Colorado farmers and farmworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foreign Labor Certification Coordinator and the State Monitor Advocate implemented a virtual housing inspection process in compliance with social distancing requirements to keep the housing inspection process as seamless as possible. This temporary process involves live video inspection, along with pictures, and a signed employer attestation to ensure housing meets applicable standards.

### **VETS Vortex**

To further expand the value of Virtual Career Guidance (VCG), the Veteran Vortex Portal (VETS Vortex) was developed by and for Colorado Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) staff. It provides a one-stop shop connecting JVSG teams with best practice training, resources, and in-house and external tools. The VETS Vortex provides a single entry point to all the resources that JVSG staff need to effectively serve their customers, regardless of geographical area. The VETS Vortex enhances VCG by serving as a place for collaboration and sharing resources, as well as streamlining the distribution of JVSG generated job leads.

### **Additional Impacts and Success Stories**

More details about the below programs can be found in the main body of the Annual Report.

#### **Disability Employment Initiative**

The Disability Employment Initiative, which concluded March of 2021, focused on assisting participating Workforce Areas to increase enrollments of Adults with Disabilities (18-64) into WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers Programs.

Impacts:

- Four of the five workforce centers are continuing the Ticket to Work program either by becoming their own employment network, contracting with a 3rd party employment network, or entering into an MOU with other local workforce centers.
- Because of this success, WDP will continue the momentum of DEI to serve individuals with disabilities across the state. In collaboration with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), WDP is building a new pilot program that incorporates DEI practices by promoting Disability Program Navigator (DPN) positions in four local workforce areas. Upon the successful completion of the pilot, CDLE will expand the DPN initiative statewide.

**Success Story:** A customer began working with the DEI Workforce Specialist, pursuing additional training in the project management field. The DEI Workforce Specialist enrolled him in the WIOA Adult program and utilized DEI funds to complete the Certified Associate in Project Management/Project Management Professional training and certification at LeaderQuest. The customer is an Air Force veteran with several physical disabilities, creating a barrier to finding

employment independently. The customer completed the program, and the Workforce Specialist assisted him with his job search, resulting in his accepting a senior project manager position with a beginning wage of \$120,000.

### **Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (RecoverCO)**

The Employment Recovery grant, also known as RecoverCO, supplements WIOA Dislocated Worker dollars towards career preparation, occupational training, work-based learning, and support services

*Success Story:* A mature worker, co-enrolled in the Employment Recovery grant and the WIOA Dislocated Worker program, was laid off from his job as a drill operator in August 2020 due to COVID-19 and lack of work. During this time, he gained full custody of his two small grandchildren; thus he knew he needed to make significant changes in his career to provide for himself and his family. With the assistance of his case manager, who provided interest and aptitude assessments, plus an individual employment plan, the participant determined that he wanted to obtain a CDL Class A license. He completed a three-week 170-hour CDL A Tractor-Trailer Training course with Careers World Wide in May 2021. After meeting with his case manager to do an extensive job search, he successfully gained employment in July 2021 as a truck driver/operator with a starting wage of \$31.05 per hour with full benefits.

### **State WORK Act Initiative**

The purpose of the WORK Act grant is to increase awareness of, enrollment in and completion of skilled worker training programs to expand Colorado's skilled workforce, and expand the talent pipeline in key sectors.

*Success Story: Housing and Building Association of Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region Employer - Kenny Electric.* Angelique M. enjoys the ever-changing work environment at Kenny Electric. Angelique shared about entering her new job, "I knew going into this career that women are the minority. From the first day, I made it clear to my coworkers that when I'm on site I am here to work and learn." Angelique is an employee who is driven and competitive about her career. She feels respected and valued as a woman on her work crew. She advocates for her goals and will be a great mentor one day. Angelique was asked if she could give high school seniors advice. She said, "Don't be intimidated by construction. If you feel passionate about something you must follow your gut." Angelique said she finally got to turn the lights on a 4th floor installation she has been working on. "It was such a gratifying feeling to see our hard work pay off."

### **Rapid Response/Layoff Assistance Services**

PY20 Accomplishments:

- Developed and launched an e-learning education series for Rapid Response Coordinators and TAA counselors containing how to videos and interactive scenarios in addition to assessments combined with ongoing mentoring

- Developed and launched a dislocated worker Google site with all of the information a person being laid off would need, including how to file for unemployment insurance, how to access career services from the workforce center, and more.
- Hosted webinar trainings and a layoff aversion conference for local workforce centers, incorporating exercises to learn layoff aversion strategies
- Incorporated a layoff aversion plan and strategies in the local area annual plans
- Built a Digital Storefront for Rapid Response publication fulfillment and inventory management. During the reporting period we evolved through three phases from paper based publications with manual fulfillment and inventory management, to outsourced fulfillment and automated inventory management, to electronic e-packet and site information and electronic fulfillment, saving time and money.
- Created public availability of WARN information to improve access of WARN information to reporters and other stakeholders through a self-service website
- Developed an Electronic Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice (e-WARN), an online WARN filing system for employers
- Development of virtual Rapid Response workshops and virtual job fairs with videos, publications, and sites as well as self-serve Rapid Response services in addition to facilitator-driven virtual events and in-person events
- Development of a Rapid Response information system to better capture and report Rapid Response performance
- Collaboration with unemployment insurance and the development of LEAN streamlined processes as part of a LEAN event
- Collaboration with TAA to deliver desk side Rapid Response services so that 100% of TAA customers receive Rapid Response services

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit incentive for employers who hire individuals belonging to targeted groups.

Testimonial: "Thank you very much for the tremendous job you and the Colorado WOTC team do to help provide quality service to our clients. You run a great program and continuously deliver results. We appreciate all you do!"

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Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

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