



COLORADO CENTER  
on LAW & POLICY

# HB 1005: Blending education and skills classes to help the jobless fill Colorado's workforce needs

CCLP Position: **Support**

## FACT SHEET

**Bill title:** Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)  
**Bill No.:** HB 1005  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Fields  
**Our position:** Support

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**HB 1005 is endorsed and recommended by The Colorado Educational Success Task Force, which has met for the past two years to find ways to improve education at all levels in Colorado.**

Modeled after the national I-BEST program, this bill would create programs to better equip unemployed Coloradans to move into jobs in no more than a year. The programs will target the unemployed and provide them with specific skills that enable them to work in sectors with workforce shortages. As a result, HB 1005 would:

- Reduce unemployment.
- Move people off of public assistance and into sustainable jobs.
- Fill the workforce needs for middle-skill workers.

### What the bill does:

Directs the state to develop 20 certificate programs that would be offered at community colleges, junior colleges, vocational schools and other workforce development programs. The programs would be no more than one year.

### What is I-BEST?

I-BEST, or Integrated Basic Education Skills Training, combines basic education with skills training classes. Adults who learn both sets of skills can earn certificates in specific fields more quickly than if they had to complete a GED before entering training classes.

### Middle-skill job needs

Colorado is facing a shortfall of workers to fill “middle-skill” jobs — jobs that require training beyond high school, but not a four-year degree. The National Skills Coalition estimates that between 2009 and 2019 more than 300,000 middle-skill jobs will need to be filled in Colorado.

### Certificates boost earnings.

A Georgetown University study found certificate holders earn more than high school graduates, especially among minorities. Latinos with a certificate earn 40 percent more than Latinos whose highest level of education is a high school degree.

### What kind of jobs are we talking about?

In Washington state, a model for I-BEST programs, certificates offered include: Basic Welding Skills, Electrical Fundamentals, Electrical Construction, Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomy, and Medical Coding and Billing.