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Workforce and Skills Legislation at the Capitol

The following bills in the 2022 Colorado General Assembly focus on some issues related to skills training for Colorado workers. Copies of the full bills, fiscal notes and scheduled hearings are available at leg.colorado.gov/

SUPPORT- PRIORITY BILLS

[House Bill 22-1230](#)

Continue & Update the Employment Support & Job Retention Services Program

Representatives Monica Duran (D) & Tony Exum (D) & Senator Rhonda Fields (D) and Kevin Priola (R)

Extends the sunset on the program until 2019. Prioritizes community engagement to rural and underserved communities through outreach to nontraditional service organizations including community organizations, faith-based organizations, places of worship and libraries that offer employment, training and educational services.

Fiscal Note: \$250,000/yr

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22-140](#)

Expansion of Experiential Learning Opportunities

Senators James Coleman (D) and Bob Gardner (R) and Representative Barbara McLachlan (D) and Judy Aimable (D)

This bill expands and formalizes work-based learning, including assistance to employers and formalization of expectations for WBL. The bill also identifies that two intermediary organizations will reach out to youth and adults who have been historically excluded from work-based learning opportunities through the future of work office in CDLE. The bill would also address digital inequities, including access to technology, skills training, cybersecurity and affordable internet services. And adding a digital navigation program. The bill also creates an 18-month Global Talent Task Force in the Office of New Americans to study the credential process for certain in-demand occupations, look at international credentials, and take advantage of the global pool of skilled workers. The office would also provide tools for English Language learners to enter work-based learning programs to improve language and skills development for specific occupations. Much of the bill reflects ideas from the Skills2Compete Support Services Committee and the FOW Digital inclusion committee on which Laura serves.

Fiscal Note: \$6.1 million in ARPA funds

Signed into law

SUPPORT

[House Bill 22-1050](#)

International Medical Graduate Integrate Health Care Workforce

Representative Naquetta Ricks and Senator Janet Buckner (D)

Establishes the following two programs in CDLE to assist international medical graduates (IMGs) seeking to integrate into the state's health-care workforce:

- The IMG assistance program, the purpose of which is to provide direct services to IMGs, including a review of an IMG's education, training, and experience to recommend appropriate next steps for integrating IMGs into the state's health-care workforce;
- technical support through the credential evaluation process; and scholarships to assist in defraying the medical licensure process; and
- The clinical readiness program, the purpose of which is to provide curriculum for and assessments of IMGs to help them build the skills necessary to enter a medical residency program.

With regard to requirements for licensure under the "Colorado Medical Practice Act", it reduces the length of postgraduate clinical training that an IMG must complete to qualify for a medical license from up to 3 years to one year; and allows an IMG to obtain a reentry license if the IMG has a current or expired international medical license and meets Colorado medical board-specified qualifications and requirements.

Fiscal Note: \$1.5 million/yr

Signed into law

[House Bill 22-1049](#)

Prohibit Transcript and Diploma Withholding

Representatives Jennifer Bacon (D) and Naquetta Ricks (D) and Senator Brittany Petersen (D) and Jeff Bridges (D)

By Higher Ed institutions

Fiscal Note: No fiscal impact

Signed into law

[House Bill 22-1155](#)

In-State Tuition for Colo High School Graduates

Representatives Perry Will (R) and Julie McCluskie (D) and Senator Julie Gonzales (D)

The bill repeals the requirements that a student has attended a Colorado high school for 3 years and be admitted to college within 12 months of graduating or completing an equivalency examination. The bill requires an institution to classify a student as an in-state student for tuition purposes if the student:

- Graduated from a Colorado high school or successfully completed a high school equivalency examination in Colorado; and
- Has resided in Colorado for at least 12 consecutive months prior to enrolling in an institution.

Fiscal Note: No fiscal impact

Signed into law

[House Bill 22- 1259](#)

Modifications to the Colorado Works Program

Representatives Monica Duran (D) and Iman Jodeh (D) and Senator Dominick Moreno (D)

The bill increases the monthly grant for families in Colorado Works (TANF) 10%- (e.g. from \$508/mon for a family of 3 to \$551/mon), and adds an annual cost of living increase. It directs the State Board of Human Service to design a gradual step down of earned income disregards and adjustments in the "Standard of Need", which is the eligibility limit to allow families to receive help as they transition to work by not counting some of their new work income against their eligibility. This would lessen the "cliff effect"- sudden loss of aid upon employment. It standardizes across the state the criteria for exemption to

mandatory work participation and to the 5-year lifetime limit to the degree allowed by federal law. It reduces sanctions for violating program rules like missing meetings. It adds outreach efforts and recipient voice, including exit interviews, to the program.

Fiscal Note: as amended about \$20 million, growing to \$28 million in out years. First year's increase in the grant is paid for through ARPA Funds, then the cost of the increase is split 3 ways- 1/3 TANF funds; 1/3 General Funds and 1/3 Unclaimed Property Fund.

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22-116](#)

Increase Occupational Credential Portability

Senators Chris Holbert (R) & Brittany Petersen (D) and Representatives Kevin Van Winkle (R) and Shannon Bird (D)

Current law authorizes a regulator of a profession or occupation to approve an application for licensure, certification, registration, or enrollment by endorsement, reciprocity, or transfer through the occupational credential portability program (program). The bill amends the program by:

- Removing the requirement that an applicant seeking a credential through the program must prove the applicant's substantially equivalent experience or credentials.
- Adding a military occupational specialty to the types of occupational credentials that qualify a person for a credential through the program; and
- Requiring an applicant to have held the license, certification, registration, enrollment, or military occupational specialty in another state for at least one year.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation needed

Signed into law

MONITOR

[Senate Bill 22-003](#)

Community College Nursing Bachelor Degree Eligibility

Senators Janet Buckner (D) and Kerry Donovan (D) and Representative Kyle Mullica (D) and Tony Exum (D)

Under existing law, community colleges may offer a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing as a completion degree to students who have or are pursuing an associate degree in nursing. The bill permits community colleges to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing to students who have or are pursuing a certificate in nursing.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation required

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22- 008](#)

Higher Education Support for Foster Youth

Senators Rachel Zenzinger (D) and Kevin Priola (R) and Representatives Barbara McLachlan(D) and Hugh McKean (R)

requires all public higher education institutions (institutions) in Colorado to waive undergraduate tuition and fees for Colorado resident students who have been in foster care or, following an adjudication as neglected or dependent, in noncertified kinship care in Colorado at any time on or after reaching the age of 13 (qualifying students). The institutions are required to designate an employee to serve as a liaison to qualifying or prospective qualifying students.

Fiscal Note: Institutions could lose \$693,000/yr in revenue

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22-050](#)

Work Opportunities for Offenders in Department of Corrections

House Senator James Coleman (D) and Dennis Hisey (R) and Representatives John Soper (R) and Tony Exum (D)

Clarifies (1) opportunities available to offenders; (2) that the purpose of rehabilitation and work opportunities are to promote successful rehabilitation, reentry and reintegration; (3) distinction between external programs administered by DOC industries in partnership with private employers and internal programs within a facility. Authorizes compensation for participation in internal programs. External programs must pay state minimum wage, with wages held in offender's account, payable upon release.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation required

Signed into Law

[Senate Bill 22-172](#)

Colorado Rural Health Care Workforce Initiative

Senators Faith Winter (D) and Bob Rankin (R) and Representatives Dylan Roberts (D) and Janice Rich (R)

The bill establishes the Colorado Rural Health Care Workforce Initiative to expand the number of health-care professionals practicing in rural or frontier counties. The Department of Higher Education (DHE) is required to enter into limited purpose fee-for-service contracts with public institutions of higher education to establish a health-care professional rural track, or expand an existing rural track, within specified health care degree programs at the schools. The bill specifies required components of a rural track program, including outreach campaigns, scholarships, curriculum, and clinical experience. Institutions may use funding for faculty compensation, housing costs for participating students, training preceptors who practice in rural counties, and student scholarships. Students receiving a scholarship must commit to working as a health-care provider in rural areas for two years after completing their credential.

Fiscal Note: \$1.2 million/yr General Fund

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22-192](#)

Opportunities for Credential Attainment

Senators Rachel Zenzinger (D) and Cleve Simpson (R) and Representatives Daneya Esgar (D) and Marc Catlin (R)

The bill requires the development of stackable credential pathways, and provides funding for the adult education and literacy grant program in the Colorado Department of Education and nondegree credential programs at community colleges, technical colleges, and local district colleges.

Fiscal note: \$3,107,692 in 2022-2023; \$488,819 in 2023-24, and \$149,644 in 2024-25, mostly General Fund

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22-219](#)

Regulate Dental Therapists

Senators Dominick Moreno (D) and Jim Smallwood (R) and Representatives Monica Duran (D) and Barbara McLachlan (D)

A dental therapist is allowed to practice only under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist until the dental therapist practices for 1,000 hours. After reaching 1,000 hours, the dental therapist may practice under the indirect supervision of a licensed dentist pursuant to a written articulated plan.

Fiscal Note: \$42,862

Signed into law

[Senate Bill 22-226](#)

Programs to Support Health Care Workforce

Senators Sonya Jaquez Lewis (D) & Bob Rankin (R) and Representative Kyle Mullica (D)

For programs supporting the education, training, recruitment and retention of health-care workers. Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Program.

The Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Program is created in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to use existing initiatives to support the health care workforce and meet the health care needs of Coloradans. The program may provide technical assistance and grants to community partners to develop programs, services, and best practices, and for planning, research, and evaluation related to resilience and retention of health care workers.

The bill creates the Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Cash Fund and requires an appropriation of \$2.0 million to the fund. The fund is continuously appropriated to the CDPHE.

Practice-Based Health Education Grant Program. The Practice-Based Health Education Grant Program is created in the Primary Care Office in the CDPHE to increase clinical, practice-based training opportunities for students enrolled in a health care profession degree or license program. The bill requires an appropriation of \$20.0 million to the CDPHE to implement the grant program.

School Nurse Grant Program. The bill removes current limits on the amount of grants and the length of grant awards made from this existing School Nurse Grant Program, and requires an appropriation of \$3.0 million to the CDPHE for the program.

Reengagement initiative. The bill requires an appropriation of \$10.0 million to the CDPHE for recruitment and re-engagement of health care workers with current or expired licenses and staffing.

In-Demand Short-Term Health Care Credentials Program. The bill requires that the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) administer a program to support the expansion and availability of in-demand health care professionals. The state board must allocate money to community colleges, area technical colleges, district colleges and community nonprofits that deliver programming and student financial supports in partnership with accredited universities. For FY 2022-23, the bill requires an appropriation of \$26.0 million dollars to the CCCS, of which \$25,000 may be used to market the program. The program is repealed September 1, 2027.

The bill requires that CDPHE work with the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Government Data Advisory Board to determine data-sharing agreements that integrate state data in order to analyze demand, allocate resources, and evaluate the performance of state-administered and financed health care workforce initiatives.

The bill also expands the scope of recommendations required to be made by the Nurse-Physician Advisory Task Force for Colorado Healthcare (NPATCH).

Fiscal note: One time ARPA funding of \$61 million- Economic Recovery and Relief Cash Fund

Signed into law

[House Bill 22-1098](#)

DORA Barriers to Practice Regulated Professions

Representative Shannon Byrd (D) and Rep Jennifer Bacon (D) and Senators Larry Liston (R) and James Coleman (D)

The bill requires the director of the division of professions and occupations (director) in the department of regulatory agencies (division) to complete an audit of the regulated professions and occupations and the regulation of various professions and occupations by regulators of a specific profession or occupation (regulator) to determine what barriers exist for licensing, certification, and registration of individuals with criminal history records and report the findings to the general assembly.

The bill limits the authority of a regulator to deny a license, certification, or registration based on an applicant's criminal history record to circumstances when the regulator determines that the applicant's criminal history record jeopardizes the applicant's ability to competently, safely, and honestly practice the regulated profession or occupation as authorized under the applicable practice act or issuance of the credential would not serve public safety or commercial or consumer protection interests.

A regulator is required to specify the reasons for any denial based on a criminal history record. The bill allows a regulator to grant a conditional license, certification, or registration to an applicant if the regulator determines that the applicant will have appropriate oversight provided by the applicant's employer. Upon request of an individual with a criminal history record, the bill requires a regulator to issue a pre-determination letter to the individual advising the individual if the criminal history may prevent the individual from receiving a license, certification, or registration to practice an occupation or profession. A regulator may charge a reasonable fee for the pre-determination letter.

The director is required to compile de-identified information regarding the reasons why a license, certification, or registration was denied and make this information available to the public on the division. website.

The bill requires state and local agencies responsible for issuing occupational or professional credentials (occupational agency), before making a final determination that an applicant's criminal conviction disqualifies the applicant from receiving a license, certification, permit, or registration, to provide a written notice to the applicant specifying the reason for the disqualification and the right of the applicant to submit additional evidence for the occupational agency to consider before making a final determination. A final determination to disqualify an applicant based on a criminal conviction must be issued in writing and include notice of the applicant's right to appeal the determination and the earliest date on which the applicant may reapply

Fiscal Note: \$313,000/yr

Signed into law

[House Bill 22-1255](#)

Improve Higher Ed for Students with a Disability

Representatives David Ortiz (D) and Mary Bradfield (R) and Senators Rachel Zenzinger (D) and Barbara Kirkmeyer (R)

Requires institutions of higher education to collect disaggregated data about the students with a disability that they serve.

Fiscal Note: No fiscal impact

Signed into Law

[House Bill 22-1276](#)

Sunset Second Chance Scholarship Program

Representatives Catherine Kipp (D) and Tony Exum (D)

This bill abolishes the Second Chance Scholarship Program for youth who were previously committed to the Division of Youth Services. The program had existed for one year and was defunded after the pandemic hit. Data about its impact was limited. Six students were awarded scholarships, but only one student ultimately used a scholarship under this program.

Fiscal Note: No fiscal Impact; program lost all funding in 2020

Signed into Law

[House Bill 22-1350](#)

Creation of Grant Program to Meet Workforce Needs Throughout the State

Representatives Julie McCluskie (D) and Janice Rich (R) and Senators Jeff Bridges (D) and Paul Lundeen (R)

The bill establishes the regional talent development initiative grant program (grant program) in the office of economic development (office) to fund talent development initiatives across the state that meet regional labor market needs and specified grant program goals, including initiatives that meet workforce development needs in regions as they recover from the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fiscal Note: \$90 million (\$56,750,000 in ARPA funds; \$34,250,000 I Worker's Fund origination in GF)

Signed into law

[House Bill 22-1349](#)

Improving Decision-Making Processes to Enhance Postsecondary Student Success

Representatives Monica Duran(D) and Perry Will (R) and Senators Jeff Bridges (D) and Kevin Priola (R)

The bill requires that the Department of Higher Education (DHE) develop student success measures and an interactive data system for postsecondary student success information. DHE must collaborate with CCHE, institutions of higher education, the Colorado Workforce Development Council, Office of Economic Development and International Trade, and the departments of education and labor.

Fiscal note: the bill requires an appropriation of \$3.0 million from the Workers, Employers, and Workforce Centers Cash Fund. The appropriation is from the money in the fund that originated from the General Fund.

Signed into law

KILLED

[Senate Bill 22-084](#)

529 Plan Ed Loan Payment Eligible Distribution

Senator Bob Gardner (R) and Representative Mary Bradfield (R)

In 2019, the federal government included paying principal or interest on any qualified education loan, up to a \$10,000 lifetime limit per plan beneficiary or sibling of a plan beneficiary, as an eligible expense. Current law requires the state income tax deduction to be recaptured from the taxpayer if a distribution is not used for listed purposes. The bill specifies that using a 529 plan for paying principal or interest on any qualified education loan, not to exceed \$10,000, is also an eligible distribution for purposes of the state income tax deduction for contributions to such 529 plans.

Fiscal Note: \$804

Killed in Senate Education

[Senate Bill 22-088](#)

Tuition Assistance for Building Trades Certificates

Senator Liston (R)

Under current law, there is a tuition assistance program (program) for students enrolled in career and technical education certificate programs at certain state institutions. The commission on higher education establishes policies and procedures for the program. The bill requires the policies and procedures to give some preference to students enrolled in building and construction trade certificate programs.

Fiscal Note: \$200,000/yr

Killed in Senate Education

AMEND

[House Bill 22-1009](#)

Continue Workforce Diploma Pilot Program

Reps Matt Grey (D) & Tom Sullivan(D) & Sen Rachel Zenzinger (D)

Removes sunset. Continues program indefinitely.

Skills2Compete suggested some amendment language on data reported that was added. Data reporting categories (except for geographic – Zip Code- were added, but not required. We need disaggregated data about who the program is serving. The numbers of people who got their high school diploma and their providers reimbursed under this program was pretty minimal-e.g. 49 people in 2020-2021. Most of the money went to the private for-profit companies for partial credits towards a high school diploma. This does not seem like an effective, or fair use of the funding. Other approved providers — like Libraries — worked with many students, but the money allocated was gone before they could claim reimbursement. Since 320,000 people lack a high school credential, there is a need for resources to help people earn their diploma. We supported amendments to adjust the funding schedule. Those amendments were not added, so we held our Amend.

Fiscal Note: \$1,044,000/yr

Died in House Appropriations

Updated: June 13, 2022

*Skills2Compete Colorado is a multi-sector policy advocacy coalition focused on greater access to education and training opportunities which ultimately lead to middle skilled jobs. For more information, contact **Chaer Robert, Skills2Compete Colorado Coordinator at crobert@cclponline.org***



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