

COLORADO SUCCEEDS

Colorado County Commissioners Meeting

Photos provided by Colorado Community College System, Colorado Succeeds, and Allison Shelley/Complete College Photo Library



About Colorado Succeeds

We are a coalition of business leaders working to improve education and training outcomes for all learners.

- We believe that building a strong workforce starts in our schools.
- We envision a Colorado where all students are educated to their greatest potential, and all companies have the homegrown talent they need to thrive.
- We apply business expertise, influence, and capital to improve education and training institutions statewide.

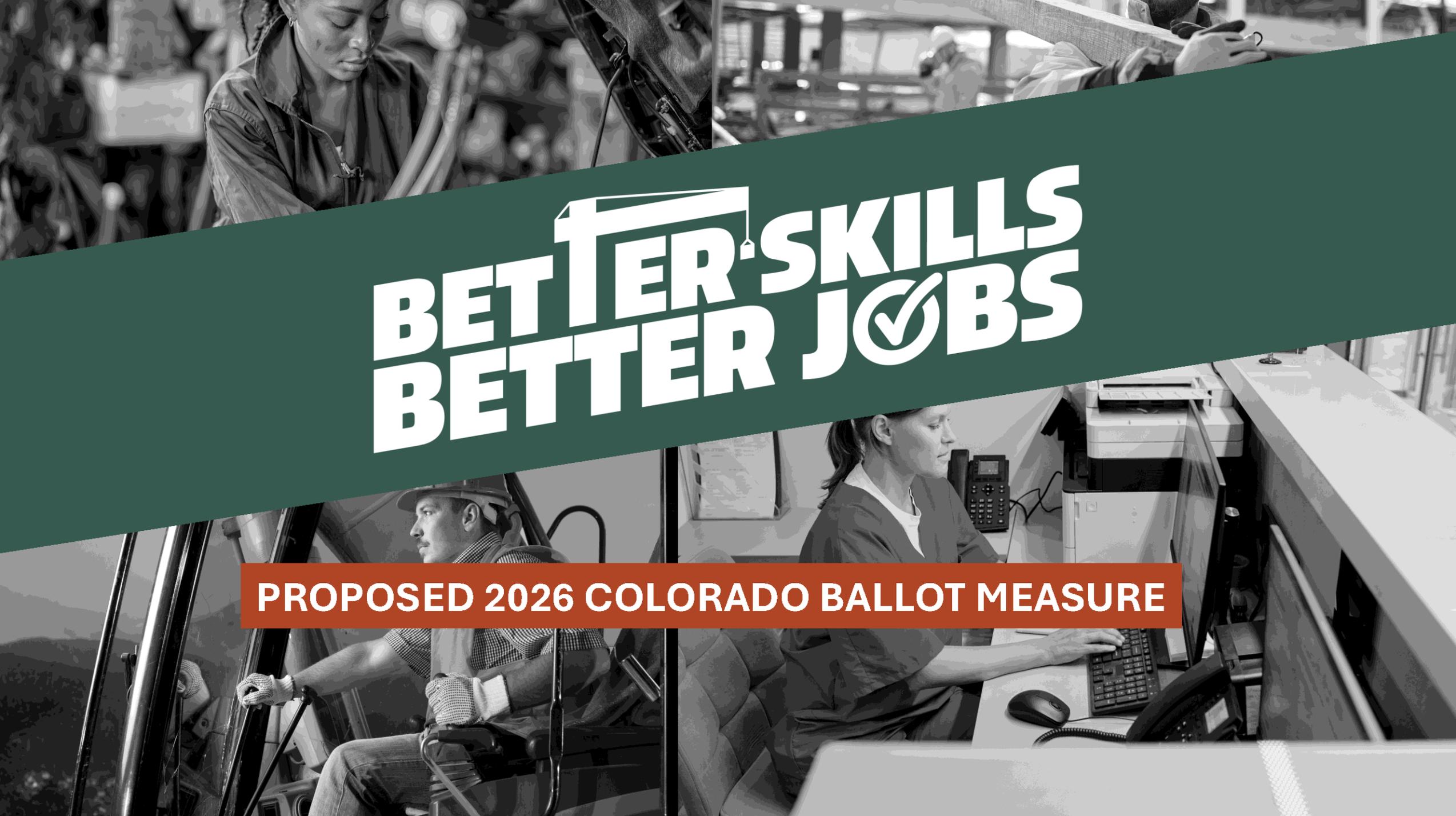


Colorado's Business Voice

At Colorado Succeeds, we elevate the voice of business in three main ways:

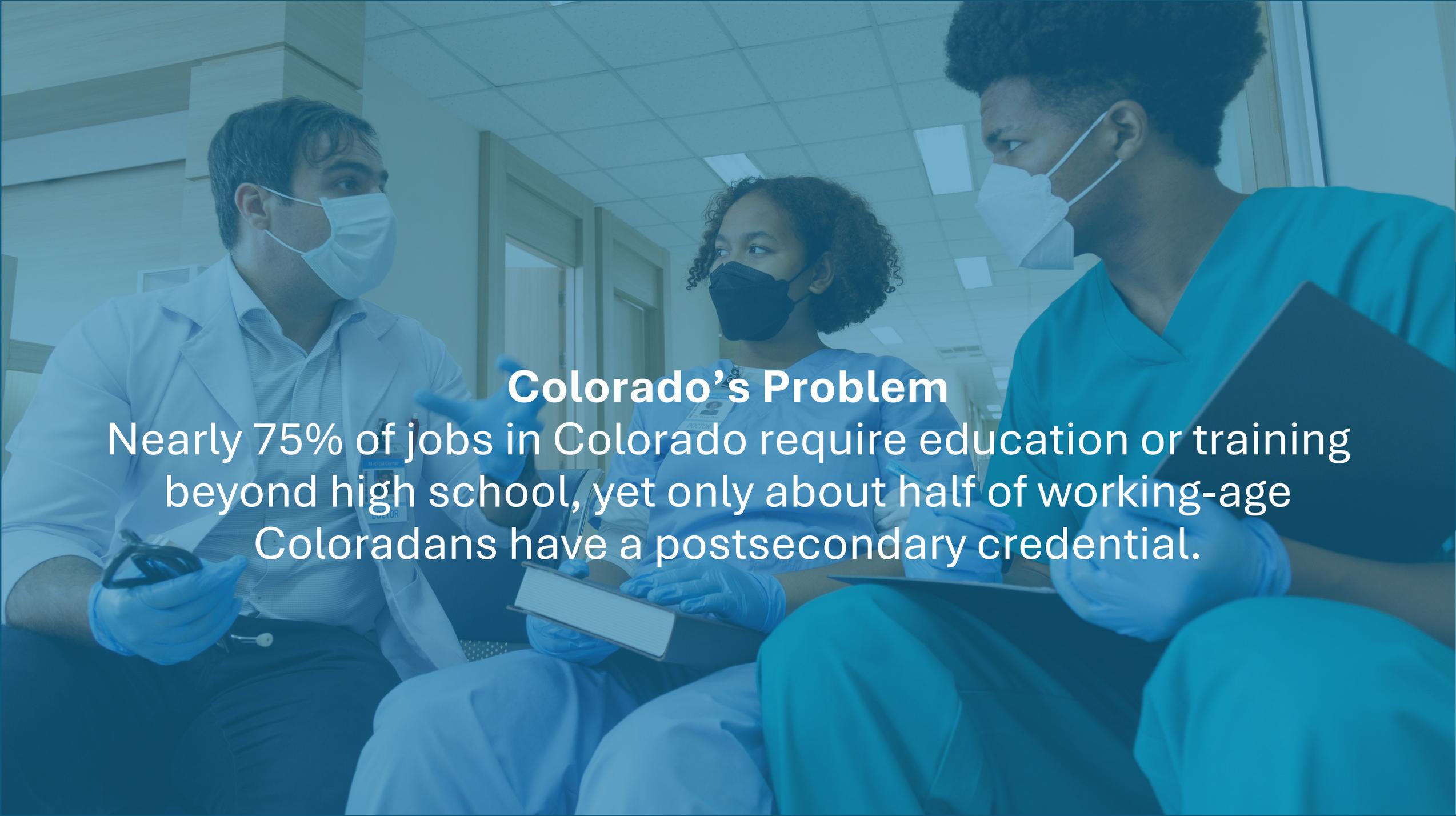
1. To quantify the labor market's demand for talent across industries and sectors.
2. To shape the local, state, and federal policies and budgets that impact education and training systems.
3. To structure public-private partnerships that are responsive to the needs of business.





BETTER SKILLS BETTER JOBS

PROPOSED 2026 COLORADO BALLOT MEASURE

A photograph of three healthcare professionals in a hospital hallway. On the left, a man in a white lab coat and mask is gesturing with his hands. In the center, a woman in blue scrubs and a black mask is looking towards him. On the right, a man in teal scrubs and a white mask is holding a clipboard. The scene is overlaid with a blue tint.

Colorado's Problem

Nearly 75% of jobs in Colorado require education or training beyond high school, yet only about half of working-age Coloradans have a postsecondary credential.

ENSURING EVERY COLORADO STUDENT HAS A PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

77 out of 100 of our state's ninth graders aren't on a pathway that leads to lasting opportunity. We're working to change that.

OF 100 COLORADO 9TH GRADERS

86 graduate from high school in five years

14 do not graduate

45 enroll in a postsecondary degree program

41 do not enroll in a postsecondary degree program

23 graduate with a degree

22 have some college, no degree

77 NEED A DIFFERENT PATHWAY



Colorado's Problem

- Colorado is suffering a **significant shortage of critical workers in every category**: trades and blue-collar jobs, essential professions, such as nurses and teachers, and emerging cutting-edge technology positions.
- These shortages and skill gaps are projected to worsen over the next decade as the cost of living continues to skyrocket and the population ages, **creating an exodus of more than 400,000 workers in the state.**



Why This Matters Now

- **Affordable, accessible pathways** into the trades, care professions and high-tech careers are essential if Colorado wants to remain economically competitive.
- Coloradans face **real financial barriers** – tuition, tools, exams, licensing fees, loan limits – blocking their entry into the workforce.
- Colorado's workforce shortages **threaten small businesses, slow economic growth, and leave community needs unmet.**



What Does This **Proposed Initiative** Do?



Debt-Free Skills Training

- Unlocks opportunity for over 5,000 Coloradans every year.
- Focuses on short-term, job-aligned credentials that get workers into stable, good-paying careers quickly
- Strengthens our economy and helps workers succeed without the burden of student debt



Need-Based Scholarships

- Middle- and lower-income Colorado families will be eligible for 5,000 scholarships per year
- Awards up to \$3,000 per year
- Distributed through the dedicated statewide Skilled Workers & Trades Fund



Powering our Communities

- Will pay for skills training for: firefighters, construction workers, welders, plumbers, electricians, teachers, nurses, emerging technology jobs and other trades or crafts persons.



Eligibility Is Defined by Outcomes, Not Institutions

Any public or nonprofit provider is eligible, as long as the training meets clear outcome-based standards.

Who Can Provide Training

- ▶ Public and nonprofit education and training providers statewide
- ▶ Eligible providers include:
 - High schools
 - Technical colleges
 - Community colleges
 - Four-year colleges
 - Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs
 - Nonprofit training organizations

What Makes Training Eligible

- ▶ Open to learners of any age
- ▶ Non-degree, short-term training programs
- ▶ Evidence-based programs with proven outcomes
- ▶ Aligned to documented labor-market demand



An Independent Pinnacol Assurance

Separation from the state ends tax subsidies and redirects value to workforce training

\$150+ Million in Dedicated Funding

- ▶ Generated through Pinnacol's separation from the state
- ▶ Dedicated exclusively to workforce scholarships and training
- ▶ Focused on industries facing the most severe workforce shortages
- ▶ Designed to expand opportunity without creating new student debt

\$10 Million in New, Recurring Annual Funding

- ▶ Created by ending Pinnacol's tax subsidy
- ▶ Provides ongoing, reliable funding each year
- ▶ Supports program stability
- ▶ Ensures continued investment beyond initial implementation



Built to Invest **Only** in **What Works**

- Funds are restricted to workforce scholarships and job-aligned training only
- Education and training providers must demonstrate strong completion and employment outcomes
- Providers are reimbursed only after learners complete their training
- Programs must meet benchmarks for completion, job placement, and return on investment
- Revenue cannot be diverted to unrelated state budget needs



Business-Led, Accountable Governance

A governing board oversees the Skilled Workers & Trades Fund, with representation from Colorado's most in-demand industries.

Who Oversees the Fund

- ▶ Board representation includes Colorado employers and workers
- ▶ Members reflect industries with the most in-demand jobs statewide
- ▶ Governance is business-led and student-centered

How Decisions Are Made

- ▶ Priority occupations are based on real labor-market demand
- ▶ Investments are tied to credentials that lead to living-wage jobs
- ▶ The board can adjust priorities as workforce needs change over time



What This Means for **Counties Across Colorado**



Workforce Stability

- Helps local employers fill persistent workforce gaps
- Supports essential roles counties rely on every day
- Reduces long-term vacancy and turnover challenges



Economic Development

- Strengthens local talent pipelines
- Supports business growth and retention
- Increases earning potential for county residents



Community Services

- Expands access to trained teachers, nurses, firefighters, and skilled trades
- Supports public safety, healthcare, and infrastructure capacity
- Benefits both rural and urban communities



Designed for **Statewide & Rural Access**

- Funding is available statewide, not concentrated in a single region
- Supports community colleges and local training providers
- Builds on existing statewide workforce programs already operating in rural areas



Dedicated Assets, Dedicated Purposes

A Colorado-tested model: Tying a specific public asset to a clearly defined public benefit

The Policy Framework

- ▶ Dedicated revenue tied to a specific public asset
- ▶ Clear statutory restrictions on how funds are used
- ▶ Long-term alignment with statewide priorities
- ▶ Built-in accountability and transparency

Established Colorado Precedents

- ▶ Lottery proceeds protect parks and open space
- ▶ Gaming revenue supports community colleges
- ▶ Tobacco settlement funds expand access to healthcare
- ▶ Commercial land-use royalties help build schools in rural areas



How Counties Can Engage

- Participate in implementation planning
- Share local workforce needs and shortage data
- Engage with local employers and training providers
- Express your public support of the initiative





Questions?

Let's keep in touch.

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