



D 2022 015

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Concerning Skills-based Hiring for the State Workforce

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, issue this Executive Order on skills-based hiring goals and requirements for the State workforce.

I. Background and Purpose

We are in the midst of a transition to a skills-based economy and an unprecedented demand for skilled talent throughout the State. This demand requires flexibility to ensure that the State workforce continues to hire the talent needed to serve the people of Colorado. There are more than 70 million adults in the United States with skills from community colleges, workforce training, bootcamps, certificate programs, military service, foreign educational institutions and work experience, running a household, or on-the-job learning, rather than through a bachelor's degree. Relying solely on degrees as a measure of skills stunts our ability as an employer to hire the workforce we need to meet today's challenges.

Instead of using post-secondary degrees and credentials as the only or even primary measure of ability, skills-based hiring practices focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to the job and aligns the hiring process accordingly. This reduces potential barriers for applicants and allows for reduced bias in the hiring process by providing a direct description of skills that are unique to the duties assigned to the position with a recognition that the applicant may have developed these skills through education, training, or past experiences. Skills-based hiring uses assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure that the person hired for the job can hit the ground running with the necessary experience or training to take on the new job and expands the possible pool of candidates for positions throughout the State, while also ensuring that we've made the right hiring choice, at the right time, for the right job. With an understanding of skills needed for a particular job, the State can more easily adopt work-based learning models, such as apprenticeships, which create new pathways to employment for untapped talent, while also building a culture of upskilling for current employees. Skills-based hiring also supports State efforts to build a more diverse workforce by promoting the hiring of individuals from varied backgrounds and work experiences; such diversity of thought and knowledge can promote innovation and ensure the State's workforce reflects those we serve.

The State of Colorado employs more than 99,000 people and should lead this critical transformation toward skills-based hiring while benefiting from less attrition, a broader

recruitment pool, and a sustainable, high quality talent pipeline. The State can demonstrate for all Colorado employers the benefits of skills-based hiring.

The Governor's budget included a total of \$700,000 for staffing and related costs that will aid in this transition. Using these funds in FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24, term-limited staff will train hiring managers, identify and update rules and regulations that must be changed to facilitate skills based hiring, and develop and implement a toolkit for departments to use in enacting skills based hiring. This will allow the State to quickly and effectively change hiring practices across State Government, ensuring that department staff have the knowledge and tools needed to implement skills based hiring. Costs needed for skills-based hiring beyond FY 2023-24, will be identified and requested through the annual budget process.

This Executive Order instructs the State government to make the transition to skills-based hiring to ensure that the State continues to have a talented workforce to meet the needs of all Coloradans. To accomplish these new goals and directives, each agency and department managed by governor-appointed executives (Agency and/or Department) will implement the training and policies identified in this Executive Order.

II. Declarations

- A. Skills-based hiring reduces potential barriers for applicants by providing a clear and specific description of skills required for each position which can be acquired through education, training, or past experience.
- B. Skills-based hiring helps the state attract and retain qualified employees to provide state services.
- C. Skills based hiring works against bias in recruiting processes by disrupting pre-conceived notions and leads to a workforce with more diverse perspectives and with skills applicable to the job, rather than a degree that may have a tenuous connection to the required competencies. With Skills based hiring, the State can be more responsive to emerging technology and recognize non-traditional pathways toward skills attainment, such as apprenticeships, military service, certifications, boot camps, and internships.
- D. While the State has done much work to evaluate, identify and adjust minimum qualifications required for entry into State jobs, a default of skills-based hiring practices will encourage the cultural shift needed for full adoption and maximization of this opportunity.
- E. Adopting skills-based hiring supports the State's efforts to be an Employer of Choice and an efficient, effective, and productive government, while creating and expanding internal mobility within the existing State workforce.

III. Skills-based Hiring Goals and Directives

- A. I direct all Agencies and Departments to ensure that all existing, required equivalent degree substitutions are fully incorporated into the selection process and advertised in a manner consistent with skills-based hiring best practices, not including those positions that by their specialized and professional nature otherwise mandate specific degree requirements, by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024.
- B. In order to meet the goal of ensuring a skills-based alternative for degree requirements for the majority of the workforce by FY 2023-2024, I direct the Division of Human Resources within the Department of Personnel & Administration (DPA) to develop statewide guidance and strategies for skills-based hiring, in alignment with statute, state personnel rule, partnership agreement, and federal law. To support the implementation of the statewide guidance and strategies, the Division of Human Resources will:
1. Provide training and resources for human resources teams to incorporate skills-based hiring practices into their selection process by December 2022;
 2. Provide a skills-based selection plan template for agencies and use such a plan in twenty five percent (25%) of posted state vacancies by December 2022. All selection and hiring activity must continue to comply with existing laws, rules, and Partnership Agreement and Side Agreements.
 3. Partner with the Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) during FY 2022-23 to integrate work-based learning models, such as apprenticeship, into skills-based hiring templates and training.
 4. Establish a data-driven, evidence-based approach to monitor, measure, and evaluate program efficacy.
- C. In order to meet the goal of ensuring a skills-based alternative for degree requirements for the majority of the workforce by FY 2023-2024, I direct all Agencies and Departments, with support and direction from DPA, to take the following actions:
1. Department Heads shall champion skill-based hiring in their agencies and direct all division leaders to work with agency human resources teams to identify all positions at any level in their organization eligible for a skills-based approach. Division leaders will be held accountable if a skills-based approach is not incorporated and practiced in their talent strategy wherever possible.
 2. Work with Division of Human Resources within DPA to identify processes to actively monitor job postings for compliance with existing requirements for educational equivalency, and develop a process for positive outreach and intervention by December 2022.
 3. Begin skills-based hiring awareness discussions with senior leadership within each Agency and Department by July 2022;

4. Initiate discussions with agency hiring managers and human resource teams on skills-based hiring by December 2022;
 5. Initiate training for hiring managers for all early adoption agencies by December 2022; and
 6. By June 2023, initiate hiring manager training for all other state agencies to implement skills-based hiring.
- D. The Agencies and Departments shall implement current fiscal year actions within existing budgets and authorities. If necessary, and in addition to the request put forth by the Governor for FY 2022-23, Agencies and Departments shall engage with the Office of State Planning and Budgeting to identify resource requirements and incorporate those requirements into the annual budget development process for any actions to be implemented in future fiscal years.

IV. Duration

This Executive Order shall remain in effect unless modified or rescinded by future Executive Order of the Governor.



GIVEN under my hand and
the Executive Seal of the
State of Colorado, this
fourteenth day of April 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Polis
Governor