



# 2018 TALENT PIPELINE REPORT OVERVIEW

**Colorado's annual Talent Pipeline Report supports Colorado's journey to become our nation's strongest economy.** Through the analysis of economic demands and current top jobs, Colorado's talent supply, and the success of strategies, the report assesses where Colorado stands in forging a workforce to meet the demands of today and tomorrow.

**Colorado continues to be an attractive place to live, work, and do business.** From 2016-2017, the state had the ninth fastest population growth in the United States. Colorado's population growth, its changing demography, and changes in Colorado's economy will impact the state's talent pipeline.

**The report identifies attainment gaps and lays out steps to address them.** Specifically, by 2020, 74 percent of jobs will require some type of education beyond high school. Colorado's existing labor force has a credential attainment rate of only 55 percent. Focused efforts must continue across all aspects of the talent pipeline in order to reduce this shortfall.

**Even as demand for top jobs grows across diverse industries, the current education and training system does not develop talent equally for all Coloradans.** To continue to be a national leader in workforce development, Colorado must better prepare its workforce for future demands through a multi-pronged approach including all populations within the talent pipeline.

**The state must understand the realities of the working lives of Coloradans.** Continuing to gain insights through strong longitudinal data will help achieve balance across the in-demand industries and different populations in the labor force. Colorado must continue to fuel an industry-led system driven by sector partnerships that continues to separate the state from others.

**Absent action, the continued growth in jobs combined with shifting demographics could yield larger skill gaps.** To prepare the workforce, focus must be placed on the state's educational system, from early childhood to postsecondary institutions. Colorado must also focus on training and upskilling the existing labor force as well as individuals who make up underutilized talent pools and need support to join the labor force.

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# 2018 RECOMMENDATIONS

Innovations implemented in the past four years are showing successful outcomes, and an opportunity exists to build on that success by placing a future focus on the following recommendations:

## 1. Further develop infrastructure that supports all pathways to a meaningful career

### Recommendation 1-A:

**Challenge:** Work-based learning is gaining acceptance as an integral component of our K-12 and higher education landscape. Previous legislation called for the examination of state-level barriers to implementation, and resources have been developed that guide employers through topics regulated through CDLE, including youth labor laws, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation. State-level barriers within other agencies and local policies have not been fully analyzed.

**Solution:** Colorado has been a national leader in creating a policy infrastructure and promoting work-based learning, including apprenticeships, internships, and other training pathways. Colorado should analyze state and local barriers to equitable access to work-based learning and provide capacity for support to communities, higher education institutions, and school districts to promote policies to eliminate barriers.

### Recommendation 1-B:

**Challenge:** Expanding work-based learning and skills-based hiring requires businesses to fully understand and adopt these practices at scale. Despite the positive return on investment and bottom line benefits these practices bring to businesses, many are not willing to take a first step towards implementation.

**Solution:** Implement pilot programs for business incentives to adopt work-based learning, such as reductions or waivers in unemployment insurance and workers' compensation premiums, employer tax credits, preferences in state contracting, or economic development packages. Programs can be piloted with specific populations and evaluated to determine if successful outcomes can be achieved at scale.

### Recommendation 1-C:

**Challenge:** Effective work-based learning programs require partnerships between business, education, and intermediaries that can assist with identifying opportunities and connecting people to companies. Currently, there are no statewide tools that support matching for all types of opportunities. Further, while successful public-private partnerships are addressing these needs, they are not established statewide.

**Solution:** Enhance the ability of public-private partnerships to create and strengthen work-based learning communities by developing statewide tools and investing in ongoing infrastructure, such as the CWDC's Work-Based Learning Lab.



## 2. Eliminate attainment gaps along the education and career pipeline

### Recommendation 2-A:

**Challenge:** Despite being the second-highest educated state in the nation, Colorado has attainment gaps along the entire education and career pipeline. We have ethnic attainment gaps, geographic attainment gaps, and economic attainment gaps. For Colorado to provide the skills that employers need and that our economy demands, significant progress on eliminating equity gaps is necessary.

**Solution:** As stated in the 2018 ELC Report, Colorado should incorporate culturally and socially responsive and inclusive curricula and co-curricular opportunities to address equity in education, and implement a funding mechanism to scale those best practices across the state so that they serve more Coloradans.

### Recommendation 2-B:

**Challenge:** Colorado's attainment gaps are intensified by a lack of access for underserved populations to financial and other resources. Mechanisms do not currently exist to prioritize utilizing and maximizing federal resources prior to using state and local funds. As an example, Colorado leaves more than \$200 million in federal financial aid on the table each year because the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is not completed.

**Solution:** Federal dollars should be utilized to support credential attainment to benefit the long-term stability of Colorado's economy and reduce reliance on public assistance. Mechanisms can be put in place to improve how agencies work with education and training providers to help their participants access the federal and state resources available to help them succeed.

## 3. Strengthen collaboration and alignment at the state and local implementation levels to improve efficiency

### Recommendation 3-A:

**Challenge:** The effectiveness and value of credentials and training programs is not fully understood because data on program outcomes is isolated or nonexistent.

**Solution:** Colorado should invest in expanding current efforts to understand workforce pathways by implementing a cross-agency infrastructure that allows internal and external stakeholders to access the information they need for policy decisions, while ensuring data privacy. Such an investment will improve capacity to use data to inform policy: this year Colorado will be able to communicate the value that higher education brings to students from high school who go on to enroll in college, as shown in the Higher Education ROI Report. This effort will equip families and policy makers with the information they need to make decisions.

### Recommendation 3-B:

**Challenge:** Since 2013, Colorado has implemented more than 26 industry-led, regional sector partnerships. Our state leads the nation in adopting this approach and it has provided positive outcomes for more than 750 businesses. However, the model has been concentrated in urban areas and parts of rural Colorado have not been able to access the economic benefits.

**Solution:** Invest in the capacity necessary for the CWDC and agency partners to provide technical assistance on sector partnerships effectively statewide, specifically as a component of rural economic development efforts in partnership with DOLA and OEDIT.



2018 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report  
**FACTS**

**78%** OF TIER 1 JOBS

require education/training beyond high school

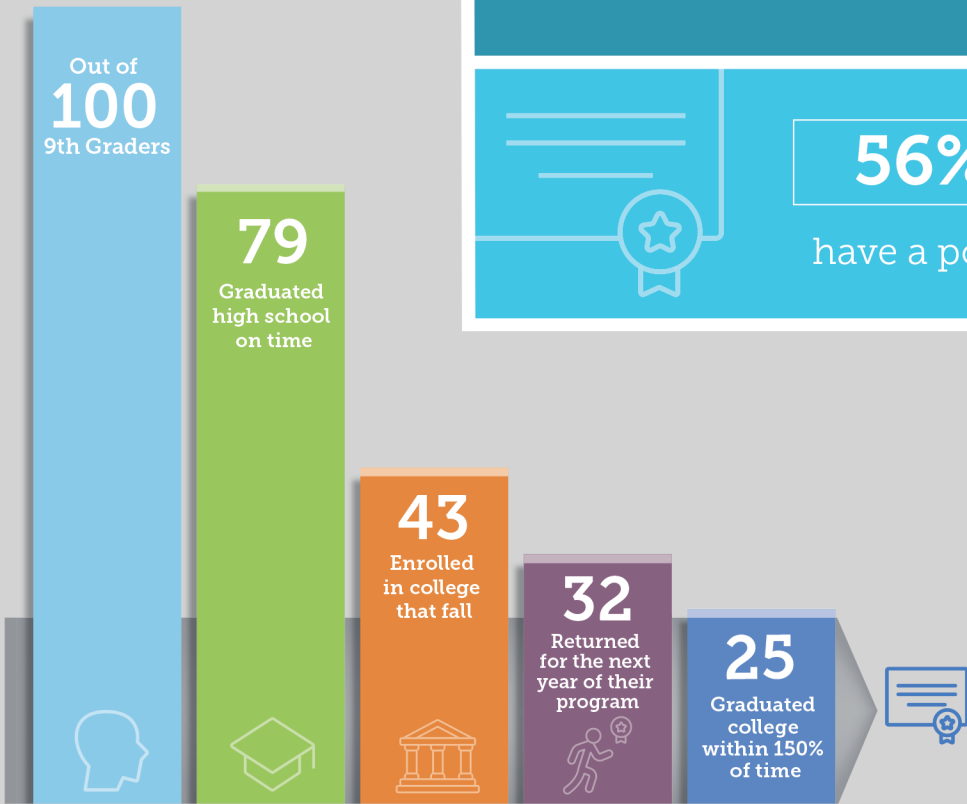


**79%** OF COLORADO

high school students graduate in four years

**Colorado STUDENT**

postsecondary completion



SOURCE: Colorado Department of Higher Education. Numbers are approximate based on available data.

**74%** OF JOBS

will require attainment beyond high school by 2020



**56%** OF COLORADANS

have a postsecondary credential



**26+** BUSINESS-LED

sector partnerships

that bring together private and public organizations to discuss talent demands



**70,000** COLORADANS want a job but are not in the labor force

**75%** OF MALES and **62%** OF FEMALES

ages 16 and older are in the labor force

**30+** BILLS

have become law based on the findings of the Talent Pipeline Report over the past five years

