



# 2019

## Talent Pipeline Report Overview

**How prepared is Colorado's talent pipeline to support an economy that works for everyone, everywhere in Colorado?**

In 2019, the Colorado economy continues to thrive in the midst of steady job growth and low unemployment. However, questions regarding the timing of the next recession and the transition of our economy to a new future of work have dominated conversations. The future of work encompasses job growth and decline, shifts in the demand for skills, technology or digitalization shifts, labor force shifts, and other implications for our state's workforce and economy.

Colorado is still experiencing a skills gap that must be closed to support future prosperity. Partners of the talent development network are focused on ensuring all Coloradans have access to career-connected education and training to prepare them for the future of work.

The 2019 Talent Pipeline Report identifies **the areas of growing demand and opportunity, key features of the current labor force, and strategies to balance the supply and demand equation for talent.** It also highlights the Top Jobs in Colorado -- jobs with high annual openings, above average growth, and a good wage. Sixty-four percent of Top Jobs require a credential beyond high school.

Our labor force, however, is not adequately prepared for these Top Jobs, with just 57 percent of Coloradans holding a credential beyond high school. Progress has been made on this issue in recent years, but more work is needed to ensure our talent pipeline is ready to support the demands of a shifting economy and future model of work.

Through diligent work within public-private partnerships, strategy and policy are positively influencing the talent pipeline in Colorado. Those strategies highlighted in the report are meeting the unique needs of Coloradans and working toward balancing talent supply and demand. As Colorado looks to the future, the programs demonstrating success need to continue to be scaled and modeled to further drive progress without duplicating efforts.

The data and recommendations provided in previous Talent Pipeline Reports have led to the Colorado State Legislature passing more than 50 bills supporting talent development. The Colorado Workforce Development Council and its coalition of partners are ready to build on this by supporting the legislature in policy concepts to close the skills gap and support economic prosperity in every corner of Colorado.

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Colorado Workforce Development Council



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Department of  
Labor and Employment



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Higher Education



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Department of Education



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Office of Economic Development  
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## Recommendations

Based on the work that has been executed to date by the TalentFOUND network and the data presented in the report, the following actions can be taken in order to strengthen Colorado's talent pipeline and to support future economic growth.

**Priority: Enhance access to opportunities for quality, lifelong education connected to the future of work.**

**Strategy 1:** Support the front-end of Colorado's talent pipeline by expanding access to high-quality early childhood education so that all children enter kindergarten prepared to thrive.

**Strategy 2:** Support efforts to make postsecondary education and training more accessible and affordable while containing costs. Income Sharing Agreements have demonstrated some success for populations who are not able to access available and sufficient federal and state financial aid. Creating a policy framework or piloting a program could deliver new resources to individuals in need of financial support.

**Strategy 3:** Develop new mechanisms for upskilling and reskilling workers who are in occupations at high-risk for automation or market changes, and supporting populations who are over represented in these high-risk areas in coordination with the office of Just Transition as applicable. Solutions should include earn and learn models that allow individuals to obtain training without sacrificing income, or receive training for new roles prior to the loss of a current job.

**Priority: Foster an economy that works for everyone.**

**Strategy 1:** Recognize work experience and skills with academic credit to expedite credentialing and reduce costs for individuals.

**Strategy 2:** Reduce the barriers to occupational licensure that prevent skilled workers from participating in their chosen profession.

**Strategy 3:** Create options for employers to support the high-cost services that impact the availability and retention of talent in Colorado, such as housing and childcare. (See recommendations from the CWDC task force on affordable housing).

**Strategy 4:** Encourage employers and those charged with filling positions to utilize clear behavioral definitions of what "essential skills" are needed and what they mean in each position, giving job seekers a clear idea of job expectations and requirements, and the organizations and education and training providers clear training objectives.

**Priority: Focus resources on enhancing strategies that have already demonstrated results and effectiveness.**

**Strategy 1:** Renew programs that have produced positive gains for Colorado including the Innovative Industries Internship Program, the Employment First Advisory Partnership, and the WORK Act.

**Strategy 2:** Further enhance and promote opportunities for concurrent enrollment aligned to a student's program of study and the ability to earn industry-recognized credentials of value in high school.



### Demand

384,015

annual job openings  
across Colorado

64%

of Top Jobs require a  
credential beyond  
high school

2.6%

Colorado's overall  
unemployment rate  
in Oct. 2019

50

bills passed in the last  
six years since  
report inception

191,796 job seekers and 11,479 businesses were served by Colorado local workforce centers, with \$585,522,000 in wages returned to the economy



### Supply

57% of adults have a postsecondary credential

Colorado's labor force participation of those 55+ is 45.9%, which is 5.9% higher than the national average

Coloradans with a bachelor's degree or higher have the highest participation rate at 76.3%

The unemployment rate for Colorado youth who are Black or African American is 25.9%, more than double the unemployment rate for all other races in that age group