

Report on HB1288 – Industry Infrastructure Grant

Over the 2018-2019 and final year of the Industry Infrastructure Grant (HB1288), CareerWise Colorado has continued to lead the development of robust frameworks for youth apprenticeship, which can then be applied across the spectrum of work-based learning to ensure broad access, high-quality and equitable outcomes in a variety of industries and business contexts across Colorado. The work that we have completed to identify, refine and launch tools, processes and new types of relationships between industry, education and the workforce of tomorrow has gained attention from around the country, and is now being replicated not only here in Colorado, but in other national communities as diverse as New York City and Elkhart County, Indiana. Though the work is continually evolving, CareerWise is committed to gathering, analyzing and reacting to feedback from partners and constituents in order to move toward a codified, best practice model for competency-based training in the workplace that is linked to and complementary of classroom-based education, both at the K-12 and post-secondary level.

The result is: the development of robust occupation and pathway development process, including specific training “roadmaps” for occupations in high-demand, high-growth, high-wage career pathways that have been defined in partnership with industry; a robust applicant tracking system that allows businesses and students to connect in a closed marketplace; the design of a new training plan management process and new competency rubrics to guide the assessment of competency mastery; a new training module for apprentices and their supervisors to improve onboarding and acclimation to the idea of having young people in an adult workplace, as well as technical training on the use of tools and processes to facilitate learning; new model for a team structure that enables support to be centralized between businesses and students for mutual benefit, consistency of implementation across industries and sectors, and high-quality experiences that result in real skill-acquisition; and, an improved understanding of the student recruitment process and the real needs of schools and school-professionals for better support and training around individualized career exploration and work-based learning experience preparation in order to facilitate good matches between opportunities and candidates.

One project that is ongoing, and heavily informed by the above work, but not complete as of the completion of the grant, is the development of the competency-tracking system (now currently in development, as of fall 2019). By leveraging resources made available to us through a growing network of partners around the country, we were able to identify and secure support from a company who is building a custom platform us that will provide real-time data on apprentice competency attainment. We will be happy to share continued updates on this stream of work, particularly as it relates to the larger statewide conversation about the skills that matter for success in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. Additionally, the creation of a council to bring together higher education and industry for more alignment has been put on pause as we pursue a more bottoms-up approach to aligning coursework for specific industry-defined occupations to credit; we are also pursuing strategies to ensure the provision of transferable credit for work-based learning experiences like apprenticeship, the standardization of the prior-learning assessment (PLA) process across institutions of higher education and the re-organization of degree-bearing programs into smaller, stackable credentials so as to *both* provide more immediate benefit to industry *and* to increase student persistence and completion (by prioritizing more

relevant training upfront, and saving more broad requirements for degree attainment until the end of the degree program).

Ultimately, our efforts not only led to the successful launch of our third cohort of apprentices, including 176 young people in six career pathways across five Colorado geographies (metro Denver, Grand Junction, Fort Collins/Loveland, Estes Park and Eagle County), but have provided us with the data set we need to begin, over the next 3-5 years to codify a set of practices across partners (K-12, business and higher education), in order to begin rapid scaling of the model and increase the efficiency of launch and implementation in new communities.

In fact, leveraging the progress we have made so far, our team has supported the launch of two new affiliate programs outside of Colorado, one in New York City and one in Elkhart County, Indiana; our tools, processes and frameworks continue to be cited as leading examples in this nascent work as the momentum gathers around work-based learning in our country. In September of 2019, we hosted work-based learning initiatives interested in the youth apprenticeship model at a national conference here in Denver; we were profiled in a Harvard Business School case study and in the Atlantic magazine, and featured on Colorado Public Radio; we are partnering on a USDOL contract as a sub-contractor to expand youth apprenticeship in Colorado and beyond; and, we were selected by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as one of a handful of promising practice programs in a new portfolio of grantees.

Below, you will find a quick assessment of the statuses of each of the workstreams that were supported by the Industry Infrastructure grant. We would be happy to provide any further information that might help illuminate the work we have completed and the progress we have made, thanks to the support provided under this grant.

1. Identify industry-specific standards and assessments for accountability and implementation of competencies within workforce programs – **TECHNICALLY COMPLETE, BUT CONTINUING**
  - a. Occupational Competency-Set Development
    - i. (By June 2019) **NO NEW SETS DEVELOPED**. This work around competency standards (developing competency sets) is primarily complete for the short-term (12 completed sets). Within currently operating career pathways, we are exploring the **DEMAND** for the development of full competency sets for the following occupations:
      1. Healthcare: Healthcare Financial Management
      2. Healthcare: Healthcare IT Management
      3. Healthcare: Dietician/Nutritionist
      4. Technology: CRM System Administrator
    - ii. New Competency-Tracking Tool – **DELAYED PAST END OF GRANT, CONTINUING**
      1. (By December 2018) Complete research on competency-based performance management tracking tools (to replace current pilot “Learning Management System” (LMS))
      2. (By December 2018) Select new competency-tracking tool for implementation in June 2019 (Cohort 3)

3. (By March 2018) Test new competency-tracking tool
    4. (by April 2018) Customize and refine competency-tracking tool
    5. (By May 2018) Load/populate new tool with Cohort 3 apprenticeship competency data (by pathway, by role, by apprentice)
    6. (By June 2019) Launch competency-based performance management tool for tracking apprentices' progress
  - iii. New Training Plan Process and Codified Assessment Frameworks - **COMPLETE**
    1. (By November 2018) Identify and contract expertise to build best-practice training processes and toolkit
    2. (By February) Contracted expert to design and conduct employer trainings for use of toolkit
    3. (By March 2019) Design credential and/or assessment framework for each pathway and, as needed, occupation
    4. (By June 2019) Launch Cohort 3 of youth apprenticeships with clear expectations for both employers and apprentices about pace and process for mastery of competencies, as well as intermediate and final assessment milestones per occupation (i.e. some assessments may be in the form of one or a series of stackable credentials, while others may entail the development of a portfolio or presentation/demonstration)
2. Implement industry-defined competencies within workforce programs – **COMPLETE, 176 apprentices hired (40% growth over 2018)**
  - a. Ongoing Support: Ensuring Employer Success
    - i. (By October 30 2018) Hire Director of Customer (Employer) Success (formerly Director of HR and Implementation)
    - ii. (Fall-Winter 2018-2019, October until complete) Contract curriculum expert to re-assess current competencies and “clean” competency sets for increased relevance and applicability (based on year 1 learning)
    - iii. (Ongoing throughout 2018-2019) Support currently implementing employers in Cohorts 1 and 2. Goals include:
      1. Gather learning about successes and challenges
      2. Create best practice training processes for implementation toolkit
      3. Create a strategy, if needed, to bridge Cohorts 1 and 2 onto new technology/tracking systems and/or to incorporate new assessment protocols as they are designed and codified
    - iv. (By June 2019) Support Cohort 3 businesses in hiring 250 new youth apprentices in metro Denver, Eagle County, Grand Junction, Estes Park, and Loveland/Fort Collins
3. Assist businesses and industry associations with human resources training and development – **PROCESSES COMPLETE, TOOL STILL IN DEVELOPMENT**
  - a. New Capacity: Training Plan-Specific Support

- i. (By December 2018) Hire Training Plan Support Coordinator
    - ii. (By March 2019) Design training for employer partners on “Developing a Robust Competency-Based Training Plan for Apprenticeship” (to reflect the design of new competency-tracking system, above)
    - iii. (By May 2019) Train all employers on new competency-tracking processes and tools and begin to orient them toward assessment milestones
4. Collaborating with entities to facilitate training and education between the classroom and businesses – **K-12 COMPLETE, HIGHER ED STRATEGY UPDATED**
  - a. K-12 Support
    - i. (By December 2018) Pilot revised student recruitment funnel
    - ii. (By January 2019) Train K-12 partners on new Applicant Tracking System (application/screening/interviewing portal) to enable high quality student applications
    - iii. (By April 2019) Support K-12 partners in helping students apply and interview for apprenticeship
    - iv. (By May 2019) Provide recommendations on best practices for student schedules for students who are hired into Cohort 3
    - v. (Ongoing throughout 2018-2019) Collect best practices for development of K-12 partner implementation toolkit
  - b. Guiding Strategic Collaboration between Business and Higher Education
    - i. (by December 2019) revise mapping of technical and career-ready competencies to fundamental professional career higher education courses, in order to prioritize industry-agnostic business-acumen skills, rather than guaranteed transfer credits
    - ii. (by December 2019) Identify key participants for a coalition of business and higher education thought leaders; the goal will be to shift from a passive approach of “plugging” existing higher education offerings into apprenticeship, to an active, innovative strategy of co-creating a new pathway to and through higher education that encompasses robust work-based learning experiences
    - iii. (by January 2019) Convene the “Business/Higher Education Coalition” (name TBD). Define:
      1. Shared Strategic Priorities
      2. Meeting Structure and Schedule
    - iv. (by March 2019) Formalize Strategic Plan for Coalition
    - v. (by April 2019) Begin implementing Strategic Plan with action steps that are designed to lead to:
      1. Maximum educational value for students/apprentices (“Return on Education” (ROE))
      2. ROI for businesses via highly-relevant, up-to-date instruction
      3. ROI for institutions of higher education via a pipeline of business partners who can provide tuition reimbursement for their employees

and a pipeline of students who are more likely to complete a certificate or degree program