



# PY 19/20

# Final Legislative Report

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

633 17th St., Denver, CO 80202 | (303) 318-8000 | [colorado.gov/cdle](http://colorado.gov/cdle)

Innovative Industries Legislative Report HB 15-1230; Fiscal Year 2019-2020

### I. Background<sup>1</sup>

The Colorado state legislature approved the Innovative Industries Internship (III) workforce development program in 2015 with the goal to impact the state's economic development and job creation in innovative industries. This program addresses the challenges that businesses face in finding qualified employees with the skills and training needed to fill long standing job vacancies and to create new positions in innovative industries. This legislation provides students and job seekers in Colorado with internship opportunities in small and large businesses that contribute to Colorado's fast growing economy. Not only have businesses had



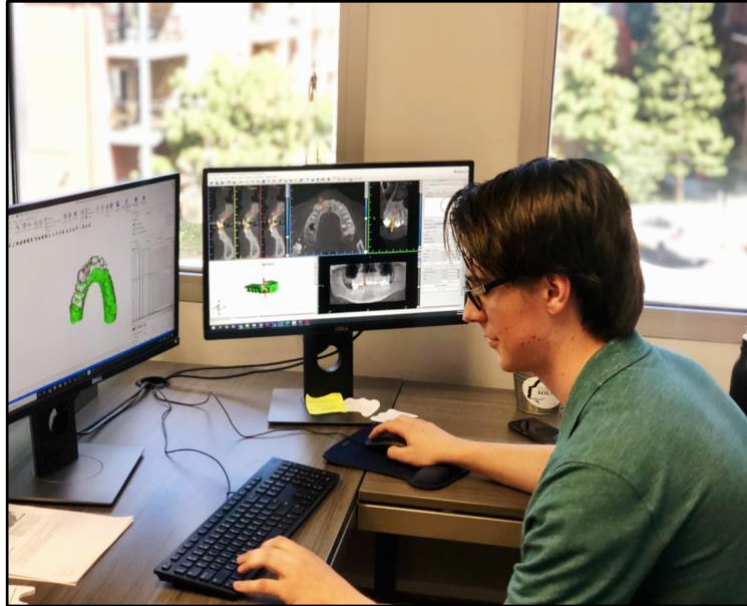
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<sup>1</sup> IMG 1: Bioscience intern; DNA cancer research project.

access to qualified talent in historically underrepresented communities, but they have also found, trained, and evaluated potential long-term employees while providing opportunities to students to get a real-world experience beyond an internship. Many of the III interns have not only had the opportunity to earn while they learn, but the level of work they produced is impressive. Interns have had the opportunity to work on DNA research projects, test safety designs for the Broncos helmets, and guide surgical doctors for implant procedures. III interns have had incredible opportunities, the impacts of which will last a lifetime. This report will provide highlights for the final year of performance and outcomes of the grant for Program Year (PY) 2019-20, cycles 4 and 5 respectively.

**HB 15-1230 set out to accomplish the following goals:**

- Meet the critical needs of our local economy by finding qualified talent for innovative industries.
- Create work-based training opportunities via exposure to career employment through internship opportunities that create career pathways.
- Promote internships that are recognized as a way to support our local talent pipeline in conjunction with education.
- Offer program incentives to employers to find, hire, and train interns by providing up to \$5,000 to help provide students with hands-on experience in one of the eight innovative industries.
- Encourage students to explore the world of innovation, especially non-traditional career paths for young women and underrepresented populations.



In order to achieve these goals, the III Program supported students and industry by upskilling young talent with experiential learning through high-level internships. This grant was pivotal in supporting local small businesses and start-ups, especially prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The III Program was intended to create high-level internships in innovative industries to meet the demands of our massive and ever-changing world of innovation and start-up related industries. This final report captures relevant information from Cycle 4 and the conclusion of Cycle 5, which was cut short when the program ended on June 30, 2020.

**The eight innovative industries include:**

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Bioscience
- Information Technology
- Construction
- Aerospace Electronics
- Photonics

Before the III program was enacted, there appeared to be few internship programs of this caliber available to secondary or postsecondary students, and those in training programs who

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<sup>2</sup> IMG 2: Bioscience & Engineering Intern assisting with a dental surgical implant procedure.

could benefit from an opportunity to earn while they learn and fill a gap within the innovative industries workforce. Through this grant, many opportunities were organically created. The grant increased communication and partnerships within industry, education, and workforce while implementing a program that provided quality learning, valuable work experience, and access amongst underrepresented populations.

## II. <sup>3</sup>Program Impacts

III program cycles 4 and 5 (a shortened cycle) showed trends, challenges, successes, and other outcomes during FY 19-20. The III Program helped shape the internship experience with breakthrough opportunities for young students who participated in their respective fields of study and career exploration. Internships offered professional development networks for students and academic applications in work settings. Unfortunately, the final cycle of the program was cut short and the students were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as subsequent business and school closures.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many businesses throughout the state. Mass lay-offs and closures occurred over a short period of time, which impacted businesses hiring interns in the second and third quarter of the grant period. Businesses approved for the III program experienced difficulty finding interns due to schools and colleges changing to virtual platforms. It was difficult for businesses to prioritize posting internship positions in time for a spring and early summer internship, while also keeping their businesses up and running during the pandemic.

The III program intermediaries provided a quick response to their business members by continuing to facilitate outreach to employers, marketing the program, and identifying work experiences for individuals. Their outreach resulted in successfully filling all 30 internships for cycle 5.



## III. Program Performance & Activities

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<sup>3</sup> IMG 3: Advanced Manufacturing Intern testing safety helmets for children and Broncos players team.

For each cycle, the application process for businesses and interns has always been competitive. Traditionally, there is always a higher demand for intern slots than the program funding can support. During the last two cycles, new software products such as Purple Briefcase and Handshake for career services systems were implemented which created a steep learning curve for businesses. Both systems are job and internship databases where openings are posted annually for students to access nationwide opportunities. Due to the shift in new procedures, we made some adjustments to support the demand for businesses to upload their opportunities to these websites with support. Since identifying this barrier, we've incorporated resources to assist businesses.



Because of the pandemic and temporary business and school closures, the final III program was modified due to the limited time frames which prevented some internships from happening in a timely manner. As a result, a smaller number of businesses and interns were matched in time to begin internships and successfully complete by June 30, 2020, at the conclusion of the program. Of those businesses and interns that were in place, the interns were still able to have positive experiences and valuable learning opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

#### **IV. INNOVATIVE INDUSTRIES PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHICS**

Programmatic Data	PY 16-17	PY17-18	PY 18-19	PY 19-20	PY 20 (final)	Cumulative
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<sup>4</sup> IMG 4; Information Technology Intern working on a mobile application.

# of internships spots approved	208 <sup>5</sup>	130 <sup>6</sup>	110	110	30	588
# of businesses denied	25	53	38	51	75	242
# of interns approved	231 <sup>7</sup>	110	86	83	30	537
# of Veterans completed internships	14	4	0	2	1	21
Completed internships	181	110	83	83	30	484
Businesses under 100 employees	116	88	88	88	20	400
Businesses with 100+ employees	15	22	22	22	10	91
Average hourly wage	\$14.59	\$15.53	\$15.72	\$15.93	\$16.63	\$15.68
Number of interns hired as a result of internships	25 <sup>8</sup>	25	27	23	4	129

**\*Demographics Narrative:** Each cycle includes attrition factors for both businesses and interns, in addition to following the guidelines of the bill (20% of businesses that have 100 employees or more and/or 80% of businesses who

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<sup>5</sup> Includes data from two program years; one condensed and one complete.

<sup>6</sup> Total number for total number approved businesses includes attrition factors

<sup>7</sup> Total number of approved interns includes attrition factors

<sup>8</sup> Number of students hired as a result of a successful internship.

have less than 100 employees). The program also supports new and emerging small businesses and start-ups.

**INTERN DATA FOR FY 2018-2019 INTERNSHIPS**

<b>Intern School Data PY 19-20</b>	<b>Cycle 4</b>	<b>Cycle 5 (Final)</b>
Male	47	21
Female	36	9
Enrolled in high school	5	2
Enrolled in adult education, training, or cert. program	6	1
Enrolled in Community College	6	0
Working on Bachelor's or Associate's	52	27
*Had been enrolled full-time in one of the above schools less than six months ago	15	0
<b>Schools interns are attending</b>	<b>Cycle 4</b>	<b>Cycle 5</b>
Colorado State University System	20	3
University of Colorado Denver	6	1
University of Colorado Boulder	17	12
Colorado School of Mines	11	3
Metro State University Denver	3	1
Pikes Peak Community College	1	0
Pueblo Community College	1	0
Arapahoe Community College	2	0
Front Range Community College	2	0

All others	20	11
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#### IV. Testimonials

**Storyvine Intern Testimonial:** “My experience here at Storyvine has been filled with lots of laughs, as well as, lots of learning. I made it my personal mission to learn as much as I can about this early stage company. The fact that the company has less than 10 employees has given me a very unique and hands on perspective that I have come to appreciate. Over the last 10 weeks I have done various projects throughout the internship which I know I will be able to take with me moving forward in my professional career. In addition, I must note how Storyvine has demonstrated inclusive excellence in making sure that I (an African-American male) feel included and welcomed in their workspace. I truly appreciate the organization and the people for being so delightful.”



**HomeCourt Employer Testimonial:** This program was such a gift to my business. The program gave me the courage to hire my first intern. I was thankful to be able to give a college student a job during the Summer of COVID, when internships were so scarce. She has made significant contributions during the first six weeks, and I've agreed to keep her on as an intern through the end of the year at least. (She is a rising junior at CU and will fit me in around her classwork.) Thank you so much for all that you did to make this easy for me and to enable this program to do what it does.”

**For questions regarding this legislative report contact:**  
Patrick Teegarden, Director of Policy and Legislation



[Patrick.teegarden@state.co.us](mailto:Patrick.teegarden@state.co.us)

P: 303.318.8019

C: 303.908.0866