



## **Business Principles for Postsecondary & Workforce Funding in Colorado**

### **Prioritize learners first, including their needs and program outcomes**

- Outcomes should include timely, cost-efficient completion and alignment to the labor market.
- Funding should be nimble so that funding flows to programs with the greatest outcomes for learners.
- In addition to providing funding for all learners, resources should be directed toward learners with the most needs and providers with the best record for achieving outcomes for historically underserved learners.

### **Focus on high-demand fields and quality jobs to meet state and industry needs**

- The funding system should help address Colorado's skills gaps by focusing resources on fields or job categories where there is high demand.
- High demand should be defined based on labor market supply & demand data and industry input, and quality jobs should align with the state's Tier I and Tier II needs.
- Educators and program developers should consult with employers and employer intermediaries and alliances when determining resource allocation to ensure that they are teaching up-to-date skills that will prepare learners to launch into rewarding careers that pay family-sustaining wages.

### **Modernize programs to connect learning with relevant work-based experience**

- Provide learners, especially underserved populations, with access to career-connected learning that enhances employability and supports economic mobility.
- As students transition to postsecondary options from high school, they should have access to work-based learning that provides clarity and purpose for pursuing postsecondary education, ensuring a more seamless transition into Colorado's diverse workforce and education pathways.

### **Fund evidence-based programs regardless of educational model or pathway**

- Invest in practices and programs that have a track record of effectiveness and impact and reallocate resources away from programs that are no longer relevant, aligned to learner interest, or industry need. These measures should at a minimum include program graduation, job placement, retention, and wage data.
- Both traditional and non-traditional providers should be able to access funding for evidence-based interventions.
- Continue to fund and support research on what works in non-traditional pathways.

### **Ensure transparency and clarity to drive behavior change**

- Elements influencing the funding model should be transparent, accessible, and understandable so that providers, learners, and policymakers can make informed decisions.
- Funding based on outcomes must be weighted enough to influence behavior change.