



Presenters



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COLORADO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

COLORADO
SUCCEEDS

COLORADO
THRIVES



COLORADO
**INCLUSIVE
ECONOMY**



COLORADO
TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION

The Work



**Identify key
workforce gaps not
being addressed**



**Define solutions
at the system and
program levels to
address gaps**



**Monitor and
measure progress
to identify and scale
best practices**




MAXIMIZING HUMAN POTENTIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR COLORADANS

Recommendations from Our Report

- I. Measure outcomes and direct funding to education and training programs that help graduates achieve sustainable careers.
- II. Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary.
- III. Realign the pathways offered in schools with the needs of employers.
- IV. Streamline and incentivize employer participation in career-connected learning opportunities.
- V. Ensure education providers are focusing on the skills employers need.

Getting to Solutions



A scenic mountain landscape with a winding road and evergreen trees, overlaid with a blue gradient. The text is white and centered in the lower half of the image.

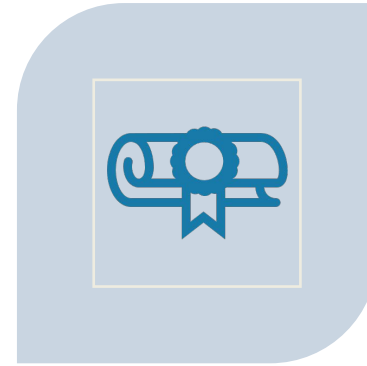
To address Colorado's challenges, there must be a shared responsibility and active collaboration between **business, education providers and government agencies.**

Recommendation 1:

Measure outcomes and direct funding to education and training programs that **help graduates achieve sustainable careers.**



Create a longitudinal data system that tracks what certificates and degrees lead to sustainable careers



Direct funding to proven programs — including non-traditional short-term training programs

Recommendation 1:
Measure outcomes and direct funding to education and training programs that help graduates achieve sustainable careers.

2024 Legislation: Education-Based Workforce Readiness

- Mandates the Colorado Office of Information Technology to establish a state longitudinal data system
- Will create the infrastructure we need to connect and make accessible education and workforce data for learners, families, and decision-makers

HB24-1364

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 1:

Measure outcomes and direct funding to education and training programs that **help graduates achieve sustainable careers.**

**BETTER
DATA FOR
BETTER
DECISIONS
COALITION**

Education and workforce organizations across CO committed to advancing a **relevant, accurate, user-centered data system** that aligns with the **goals of K-12, postsecondary, and workforce sectors.**

This new system will:

11

Help decision-makers understand the impact of investments

Allow learners, families, and communities access to critical information

Be governed by a cross-agency data governance board, aligned with national best practice

Increase data privacy and security

What We Are Doing

2025 Advocacy

- Releasing a set of business principles for higher education and workforce funding

Recommendation 1:
Measure outcomes and direct funding to education and training programs that **help graduates achieve sustainable careers.**



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.

Recommendation 2:

Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary

1

Require talent-development summits involving business, education and state government leaders

2

Identify gaps in the workforce-development pipeline and create plans to boost career pathways to fill them

3

Establish an independent workforce intermediary to ensure that these plans are fulfilled

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 2:
Create **regional talent-development goals** and
action plans overseen by a workforce
intermediary

2024 Legislation: Regional Talent Summits

- Created a program to support regional talent planning summits to encourage regional collaboration and pathway development based on labor need
- Coordinated by Office of Economic Development and International Trade in partnership with CDLE and local employer-facing intermediaries

HB24-1365

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 2:
Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary

Implementation

- Summits are bringing together business leaders, educators, and policymakers to tackle workforce shortages across seven Colorado regions, placing employers at the center of workforce solutions
- Each summit will focus on three priority industries, bringing together regional leaders to develop action plans for sustainable education and career pathways

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 2:
Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary

Summits Launched Feb. 25

- Northwest Region (2/25)
- Denver Region (3/18)
- Southern Region (4/2)

- Four more scheduled through June (Western, South Central, Northwest, & Pikes Peak)

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 2:
Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary

Northwest Region (2/25)

- Focused on advanced manufacturing, construction, and healthcare
- Ideas coming out of the summit:
 - Employers could help co-fund training with community colleges
 - Expand school-based outreach and career exposure for students and adults
 - Legal and insurance barriers limiting employer participation in training programs flagged for policy action
 - Build cross-employer pathways in healthcare

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 2:
Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary

Denver Region (3/18)

- More than 100 leaders convened, focused on advanced manufacturing, aerospace/defense, and renewables/clean energy
- Ideas coming out of the summit:
 - Create a 2-year security clearance path for students
 - Build a cybersecurity training center
 - Create a small business incubator
 - Allow 529 savings to include industry training
 - Improve outreach to families and students about high-wage careers in industry

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 2:
Create regional talent-development goals and action plans overseen by a workforce intermediary

Southern Region (4/2)

- Focused on advanced manufacturing, construction, and technology
- Discussed need to make a culture change to tell the stories of career possibilities in those sectors and get students and their parents to consider them more highly.
- Participants agreed that employers should be involved in schools earlier, helping to develop curricula, host career fairs and offer pre-apprenticeships.
- Determined that economic and business organizations can serve as central connectors to link employers to schools that need teachers, equipment donors and event participants

Recommendation 3: Realign the **pathways offered** in schools with the needs of employers.



Provide seed funding to school districts to create innovation centers and career-connected learning opportunities



Work with business leaders to implement cultural change through career fairs, classroom visits and field trips to businesses



Remove barriers to allowing professionals to teach courses

What We Are Doing

Recommendation 3:
Realign the **pathways offered** in schools
with the needs of
employers.



An **employer-led, data-driven** initiative to
create streamlined, easily-navigable,
stackable construction pathways for
I/earners using an **education to employment**
value stream approach

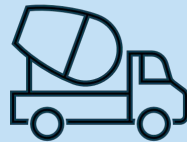
GOALS

**Fill 30K
Jobs by
2030**



Close the
Talent Gap in
Construction

**Blend &
Mend
Pathways**



Transparent &
Comprehensive Pathway
across High School,
Apprenticeship & Workforce,
& Postsecondary

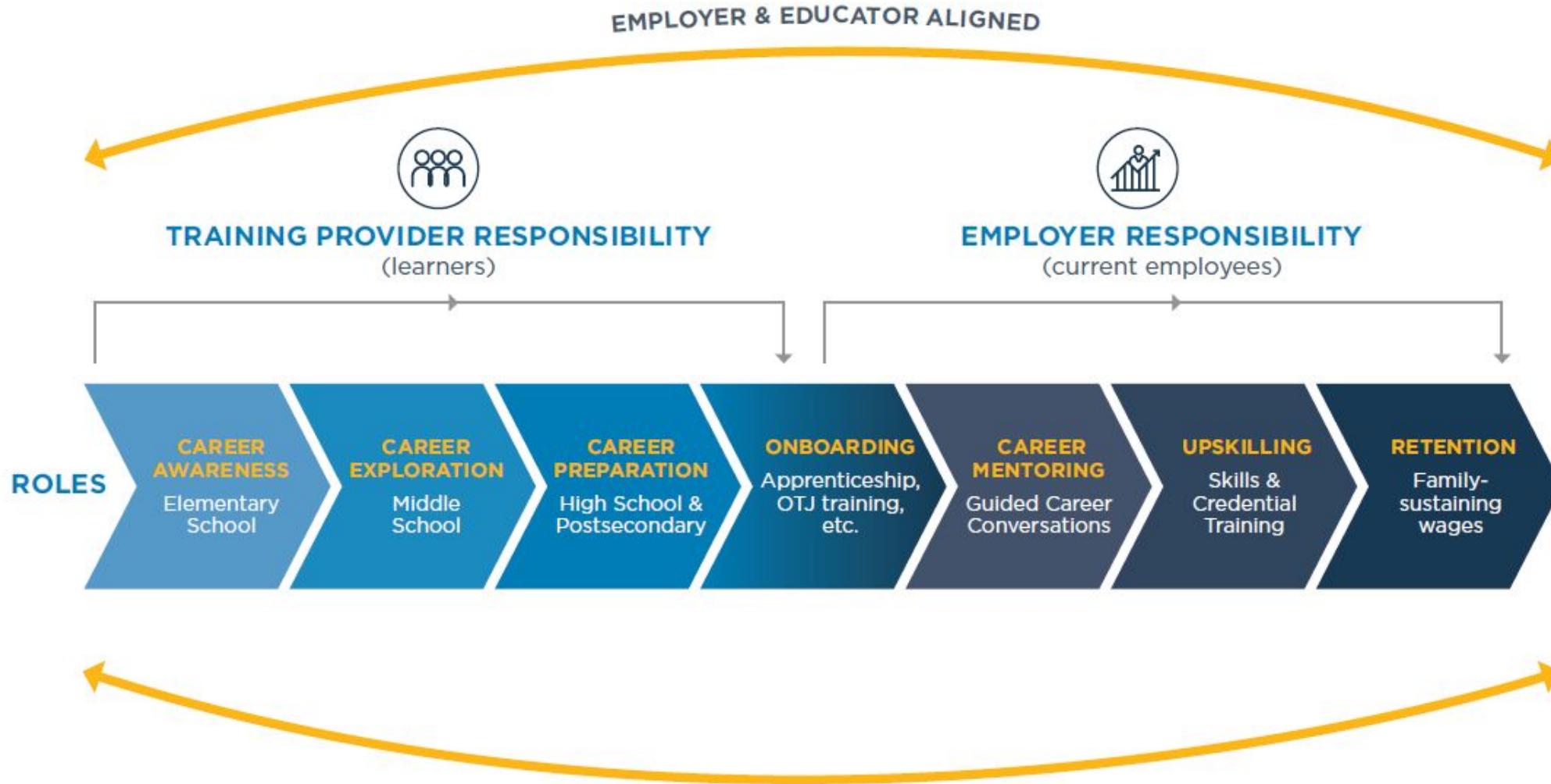
**Pathways
Promotion &
Integration**



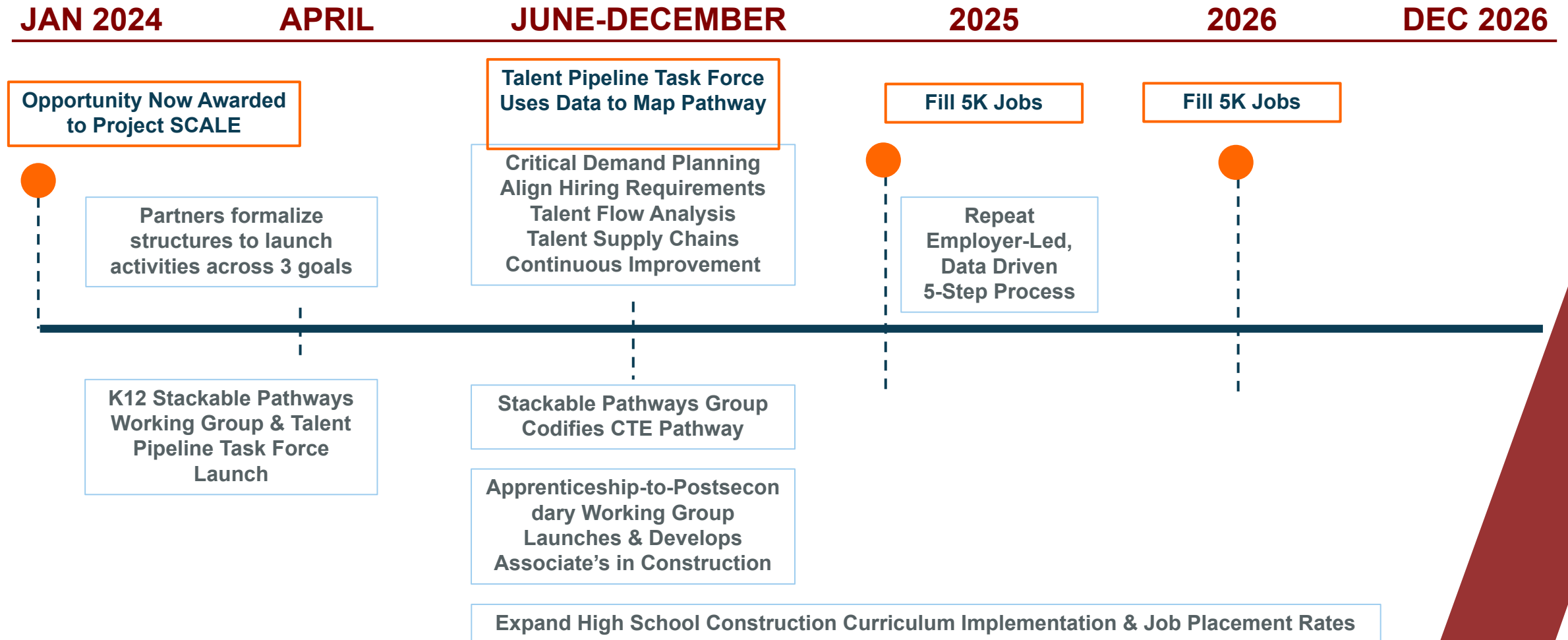
Demand from Students,
Job Seekers, Training
Providers, & Employers

3-YEAR PROJECT TIMELINE

OVERALL STRATEGY: Build an End-to-End Value Chain



TIMELINE



EMPLOYER PARTNERS



ACTIVELY ADDING MORE!

EDUCATION PARTNERS




COLORADO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM



SUPPORTING PARTNERS



A group of people, likely students, are shown from the chest up, with their hands raised in the air. The image is overlaid with a solid blue tint. The text is centered over the lower half of the image.

In partnership, employers, educators, and governments can **make changes that create greater opportunities for Colorado students** who too often find their pathways to economic mobility hindered by a lack of direction.

Key Themes from the Business Community - CO Thrives

1. More **coordination and collaboration** are needed between employers and educators to better align the skills that industry needs with what education and training providers teach.
2. **Support for small- and medium-sized employers'** ability to offer apprenticeships and other career-connected learning opportunities is critical to building and diversifying talent pipelines.
3. The public sector education, workforce-development, and job-training ecosystem should **prioritize training and upskilling pathways** that have been proven to lead to good jobs with good wages in in-demand, talent-starved sectors

Thank you for joining us.

Questions?



We'd love to tell you more...

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