

SB23-007

ENHANCING ADULT EDUCATION IN COLORADO

Prime Sponsors:
Sen. Zenzinger, Sen. Kirkmeyer, Rep. Kipp, & Rep. Catlin



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Adult Education in Colorado Falls Short

Colorado has extraordinarily low levels of state funding for adult education, resulting in fewer resources for the 300,000 Coloradans without a high school credential. Alarming, 10% of Colorado children rely on a head of household who doesn't have a high school diploma. Not only that, digital skills are increasingly needed to navigate daily responsibilities related to employment, housing, civic engagement, and parenting. But many people lack basic-yet crucial-digital skills.

Individuals & Families are Suffering

Lacking a high school credential not only blocks individuals from many jobs and promotions, it also renders them unqualified for numerous skills training opportunities. They are less likely to meet basic needs, more likely to experience unemployment, and primed to lose out on the estimated \$9,000+ in additional annual earnings associated with having a high school diploma or equivalency. Meanwhile, without digital skills, entire families face unnecessary barriers to employment, education, and other common facets of productive daily life.

Educators are Struggling

Adult education providers who work with the most vulnerable adult learners, namely those with literacy and numeracy competencies below the ninth grade level, have a harder time competing for limited grant dollars due to the arbitrary structure of outcome measures and onerous reporting requirements. At the same time, community colleges, technical colleges, and local district colleges that are a significant portion of Colorado's adult education providers are unable to grant high school credentials to their own students.

Employers are Missing Out

When individuals cannot qualify for jobs or even seek training opportunities, employers have a harder time finding skilled or credentialed employees.

SB23-007 is a bipartisan policy solution to address these problems and enhance adult education in Colorado.

What the bill does:

- Increases annual state adult education funding to \$2 million to create more opportunities for diverse adult learners across Colorado.
- Streamlines requirements for outcome reporting and better aligns them with the actual educational needs of Colorado's adult learners.
- Highlights the important role adult educators play in helping Coloradans attain the critical digital skills they need to succeed in work and in life.
- Allows community, technical, and local district colleges to grant their own high school diplomas, improving their services to a pipeline of adult learners who deserve to reach their educational and career potential in support of their families.

Support For **SB23-007**

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