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## **Workforce and Skills Legislation at the Capitol**

The following bills in the 2025 Colorado General Assembly focus on some issues related to skills training for adult Colorado workers. Copies of the full bills, fiscal notes and scheduled hearings are available at [leg.colorado.gov/](http://leg.colorado.gov/).

*List updated 1/21/2025*

Skills2Compete – Colorado positions on bills will be noted as they are adopted.

## **EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING**

### **House Bill 25-1018**

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Representative Gretchen Rydin (D)

The bill makes the following changes to current law regarding individuals to whom the department of labor and employment provides vocational rehabilitation services:

- Eliminates the requirement that an individual with a disability require financial assistance to participate;
- Allows the department to consider financial need before providing services during a period of cost containment to prevent or manage a wait list for services due to insufficient financial resources;
- Eliminates the requirement that an individual with a disability, or the individual's legally and financially responsible relative, must contribute toward the cost of their services to the extent that they are financially able; and
- To align Colorado law with federal law, eliminates the requirement that the department provide services only to individuals who are present in the state at the time of filing an application for the services and can satisfactorily achieve rehabilitation.

**Fiscal Note:** No appropriation needed

**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor

### **House Bill 25-1038**

#### **Postsecondary Credit Transfer Website**

Representative Eliza Hamrick (D) and Senator Janice Marchman (D)

The bill requires the department of higher education, subject to available appropriations, to develop and maintain a free, publicly accessible online platform to provide current and potential students who are pursuing postsecondary education in Colorado with relevant information about which credits and courses, work-related experiences, and prior learning opportunities are transferable to or between the state's public institutions of higher education.

On or before January 1, 2026, an institution shall submit to the department for inclusion in the platform:

- A comprehensive record of the institution's most recent awards of postsecondary transfer credit for all courses that the institution has identified as having learning outcomes equivalent to corresponding offerings at other institutions; and
- Descriptions of work-related experiences or prior learning opportunities for which the institution awards postsecondary academic credit.

Using the data provided by an institution, the department shall include in the platform information about the transferability to or between institutions for several sources of postsecondary academic credit. These sources include courses in the statewide common course numbering system, now referred to as the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix, and credits earned through various standardized tests.

A not-for-profit private institution of higher education may, but is not required to, submit applicable information for inclusion in the platform.

**Fiscal Note:** \$0 for 2025-26; \$12,000 for 2026-27. The actual work is being funded by an \$847,000 December 2024 Grant from the Statewide Internet Portal Authority to create a transfer website.

**Status:** House Education Committee

## **House Bill 25-1078**

### **Forestry & Firefighter Workforce & Education**

Representatives Andrew Boesenecker (D) and Elizabeth Velasco (D) and Senators Janice Marchman (D) and Lisa Cutter (D)

**Section 1** of the bill authorizes the Colorado cooperative extension service (extension) to expand and implement outreach programs and initiatives recommended by the Colorado forest health council for the purpose of increasing awareness of and interest in areas of forestry, wildland fire, and natural resources (forest health) in youth and young adults. The outreach programs and initiatives may be implemented for the 2025-26 state fiscal year through the 2027-28 state fiscal year and may include, in part:

- The expansion of 4-H programs and curricula in forest health;
- Partnerships with the forest health industry, local school districts, higher education institutions, conservation districts, the Colorado state forest service, the division of fire prevention and control in the department of public safety (division), and others to facilitate career and workforce readiness and entry into forest health careers;
- Outreach and support to youth and young adults relating to 2- and 4-year programs and certificates in forest health;
- Industry partnerships and scholarships for forest health certifications, such as wildland fire or chain saw certifications;
- Paid natural resources summer internships focused on forestry for high school students, including the potential to earn high school credit for completing the internship; and
- Paid internships in forest health careers offered by the extension, with mentoring of young adults by the extension, Colorado state university, the Colorado state forest service, and the division.

The bill requires the extension to report annually to the department of natural resources and the House of Representatives Agriculture, Water, and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Agriculture

and Natural Resources Committee on the implementation and outcomes of the outreach programs and initiatives.

**Section 2** authorizes the division to use money in the local firefighter safety and disease prevention fund to:

- Provide need-based grants to fire service governing bodies and volunteer fire departments for the cost of certain firefighter certification courses, course materials, textbooks, instructors, and written testing and to provide fire instructor I or equivalent certification for instructors who want to participate in a train-the-trainer program created by the division;
- Subject to appropriations by the general assembly, create a train-the-trainer program to ensure that all instructors providing grant-funded certification classes described in the bill teach a consistent curriculum; and
- Subject to appropriations by the general assembly, create a statewide outreach program to promote fire service careers, including marketing materials targeted to youth, an online portal to access career pathways and resources, and marketing materials that include social media.

**Fiscal Note:** Up to about \$1 million per year

**Status:** House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Senate Bill 25-008

#### **Adjust Necessary Document Program**

Senators Nick Hinrichsen (D) and Cathy Kipp (D) and Representative Meg Froelich (D)

The Necessary Document Program helps Coloradans who are experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, natural disasters, are seniors or low income by paying for Colorado IDs or Driver's Licenses or for documents need to obtain an ID, a Colorado Driver's License of a Social Security card. The bill would transition the program to a paperless voucher system obtainable at the point of service and allow for self-attestation of eligibility under this program.

**Fiscal Note:** TBD

**Status:** Senate Health and Human Services

### House Bill 25-1020

#### **Earned-Wage Access Service Provider**

Representatives Sean Camacho (D) and Monica Duran (D) and Senator Lisa Frizell (R)

The bill prohibits an entity from providing earned-wage access services without a license on and after January 1, 2026. Earned-wage access services are services that:

- Deliver consumer access to earned but unpaid income; and
- Provide consumer access to earned but unpaid income that is based on employment, income, or attendance data obtained directly or indirectly from an employer or an employer's payroll service provider.

**Fiscal Note:** TBD

**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor

## **CERTIFICATION & LICENSING BILLS**

### **House Bill 25-1075**

#### **Regulate Speech-Language Pathologist Assistants**

Representatives Lori Garcia Sander (R) and Jacqueline Phillips (D) and Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer (R)

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill authorizes the certification of an individual as a speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA). The director of the division of professions and occupations in the department of regulatory agencies (DORA) may certify an applicant if the applicant demonstrates that the applicant has a bachelor's degree in speech communication, speech-language pathology, or a related field and has completed an SLPA program and a clinical practicum.

An SLPA shall practice speech-language pathology only in collaboration with and under the direction and supervision of a certified speech-language pathologist. The bill establishes requirements and guidelines for an SLP supervising an SLPA.

The bill prohibits an SLPA from engaging in certain speech-language pathology tasks, such as the diagnosis of patients and preparation of a treatment plan.

An SLPA is required to complete 10 hours of continuing education each year and is subject to discipline by the director for violations of statutes governing the practice of speech-language pathology by an SLPA.

The bill repeals SLPA certification on September 1, 2033, subject to sunset review by DORA.

**Fiscal Note:** \$21,697 in cash funds

**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor

## **JOB QUALITY LEGISLATION**

### **Senate Bill 25-005**

#### **Worker Protection Collective Bargaining**

Senators Rodriguez (D) & Jessie Danielson (D) and Representatives Javier Mabrey (D) & Jennifer Bacon (D)

Under current law, employees may unionize with a simple majority vote but must conduct a second vote with 75 percent approval to negotiate a union security agreement clause in the collective bargaining process. The bill eliminates the requirement for a second election.

**Fiscal Note:** REDUCES expenditures by \$24,614 in FY 2025-26 and by \$36,920 in FY 2026-27

**Status:** Senate Business, Labor, & Technology

## **House Bill 25-1001**

### **Enforcement Wage Hour Laws**

Representatives Monica Duran (D) & Meg Froelich (D) and Senators Jessie Danielson (D) & Chris Kolker (D)

**Section 1** of the bill amends the definition of "employer" for purposes of wage and hour laws to include an individual who owns or controls at least 25% of the ownership interest in an employer. **Section 2** prohibits an employer from making a payroll deduction below a worker's applicable minimum wage. **Section 3** allows the director of the division of labor standards and statistics to waive the penalty for an employer's failure to pay claimed wages or compensation within 14 days after a written demand if certain specified conditions are met. **Section 4** repeals language allowing a court to award an employer reasonable costs and attorney fees in a civil action for unpaid wages or compensation in certain circumstances. In such an action, the court may pursue all equitable relief to deter future violations and prevent unjust enrichment.

Current law limits the ability of the director of the division to adjudicate claims for nonpayment of wages or compensation to \$7,500 or less. **Section 5** increases this threshold over the years by increasing the amount to \$13,000 for claims filed from July 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027, and in an amount specified by the director of the division to adjust for inflation beginning January 1, 2028. **Section 5** also requires the division, in adjudicating wage claims, to determine whether a violation is willful. For each violation:

- The director shall publish on the division's website the names of all employers found to be in violation and whether the violation was willful; and
- If the violation is not remedied within 60 days after the division's finding that there was a violation, the division must notify all government bodies with the authority to deny, withdraw, or otherwise limit or impose remedial conditions on the employer's license, permit, registration, or other credential.

Additionally, the division may report an employer found to have violated a law related to wages and hours to any government body with authority to deny, withdraw, or otherwise limit or impose remedial conditions on a license, permit, registration, or other credential that the violating employer has or may seek. **Section 5** also repeals language requiring the division to issue a determination on a wage complaint within 90 days. **Section 6** requires an employer found to have misclassified an employee as a nonemployee to pay a fine in the following amounts, in addition to any other relief ordered:

- For a willful violation, \$5,000;
- For a violation not remedied within 60 days after the division's finding, \$10,000;
- For a second or subsequent willful violation within 5 years, \$25,000; or
- For a second or subsequent willful violation not remedied within 60 days after the division's finding, \$50,000.

The director of the division must adjust these fine amounts for inflation by January 1, 2028, and every other year thereafter.

**Section 6** also decreases the amount of time the division must wait before paying an employee out of the wage theft enforcement fund from 6 months to 120 days.

Current law prohibits an employer from discriminating or retaliating against an employee for taking protection under wage and hour laws or the law related to the employment of minors. **Section 7** expands this provision to specify additional protected behavior and expands the prohibition to include other persons in addition to employers. **Section 7** also:

- Requires a fact finder to consider the time between an individual's exercise of a protected activity and an employer's adverse action when determining whether an employer has retaliated against the employee or worker;
- Specifies that any effort to use an individual's immigration status to negatively impact the wage and hour law rights, responsibilities, or proceedings of any employee or worker is an unlawful act of intimidation, threatening, coercion, discrimination, and retaliation; and
- Allows the division to order reasonable attorney fees and costs after investigating a discrimination or retaliation claim.

**Fiscal Note:** TBD

**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor

### **House Bill 25-1042**

#### **Air Quality Control Regulation Workforce Impact**

Representative Shannon Bird (D) and Senator Lindsey Daugherty (D)

The bill requires the executive director of the Department of Public Health and Environment to establish a workforce advisory council on or before August 1, 2025, for the purposes of:

- Discussing recommendations concerning the incorporation of workforce impact analyses into the rule-making procedures for rules that impact air quality;
- Recommending standard procedures for the department and the air quality control commission to follow when conducting workforce impact analyses for inclusion in rule-making procedures; and
- Determining if the establishment of a full-time workforce advocate position would add value to the air quality control rule-making process.

The bill requires the department to report the council's recommendations to the general assembly on or before January 15, 2026.

After January 15, 2026, the council is required to:

- Meet at least 4 times per year;
- Continue to advise the department on the impact of proposed air quality control rules on matters related to employment; and
- Make ongoing recommendations to the governor, the department, and the commission on legislative and regulatory air quality control policies that impact employment matters.

**Fiscal Note:** TBD

**Status:** House Energy & Environment

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**Skills2Compete Colorado** is a multi-sector policy advocacy coalition focused on greater access to education and training opportunities which ultimately lead to middle skilled jobs. For more information on this bill list, contact:

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