



**Laura Ware, S2C Coordinator**  
**Colorado Center on Law and Policy**  
789 Sherman St #300, Denver, CO 80203  
[www.copoly.org/skills2compete](http://www.copoly.org/skills2compete)  
[lauraware985@gmail.com](mailto:lauraware985@gmail.com)  
[@skill2competeco](mailto:@skill2competeco)

## Workforce and Skills Legislation at the Capitol

The following bills in the 2026 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 1/23/2026*

Skills2Compete – Colorado positions are noted at the bottom of the bill listed. A blank next S2C position means we currently do not have a position.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

### **House Bill 26-1006**

#### **Thriving Institutions Designations for Higher Education**

Representatives Elizabeth Velasco (D) & Mathew Martinez (D) and Senator Dylan Roberts (D)

The bill requires the department of higher education (department) to:

- Identify institutions of higher education (institutions) that meet the definition and outcome standards to be designated as a thriving institution;
- Notify each institution that meets the outcome standards to be designated as a thriving institution and request the institution to respond within 10 calendar days with the institution's decision of whether to be recognized as a thriving institution;
- Post on the department's website the names of the institutions that earn a thriving institution designation and agree to be listed as a thriving institution; and
- Notify the general assembly of the names of the institutions that are recognized as thriving institutions.

The bill requires the department to establish an advisory committee to provide input to the department on the outcome and recognition standards, and continuous improvements set by the department to identify institutions that meet the requirements for one or more thriving institution designations.

The bill requires the advisory committee to submit a report to the department summarizing the outcome standards for thriving institution designations determined by the advisory committee, practices and continuous improvement efforts, and recommendations for policy or resource alignment to support the state's attainment and workforce goals. The department is required to include this report as part of its "SMART Act" hearing and submit the report to the Colorado commission on higher education and to each institution of higher education's governing board.

#### **Fiscal Note:**

**Status:** House Education

**S2C position:**

**House Bill 26-1010****Older Adult Support & Representation in the Workforce**

Representatives Jenny Willford (D) &amp; Jamie Jackson (D) and Senator Jessie Danielson (D)

The bill increases participation, representation, and support for individuals 60 years old or older in the Colorado workforce and in organizations related to employment and the workforce by:

- Requiring the state work force development council, the Colorado commission on the aging, and other entities to meet twice a year, collect data, and work collaboratively on issues related to individuals in the workforce who are 60 years old or older;
- Requiring the department of labor and employment and the department of human services to jointly submit a report compiling the data collected by the council, the Colorado commission on the aging, and other entities to the general assembly and requiring the department of labor and employment, during the department's annual "SMART Act" hearings, to summarize the report to certain legislative committees; and
- Requiring that the council, the commission on higher education, the state apprenticeship council, and the state board for community colleges and occupational education, or their successor entities, each have at least one member serving on their governing entity that is at least 60 years old and either is actively involved in or has interest, knowledge, or experience in advocating for the interests of individuals who are 60 years old or older as related to the functions of each entity.

**Fiscal Note:** No appropriation is required.**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor**S2C Position:****House Bill 1029****Student Representative on Commission on Higher Education**

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

The bill enhances student representation in higher education by expanding the Colorado commission on higher education (commission) from 11 to 13 voting members by adding 2 student members who are enrolled at a state-supported institution of higher education (student members). The bill adds:

- One student member from a graduate research university or a 4-year institution of higher education; and
- One student member from a community college, local district college, or area technical college.

The bill shrinks the advisory committee to the commission from 13 to 12 members by removing the advisory committee member designated to represent the students of the state.

**Fiscal:** No appropriation is required. Reimbursement expenses in the Colorado Department of Higher Education by \$3,460 annually beginning July 1, 2027.**Status:** House Education**S2C Position:**

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### **House Bill 26-1016**

#### **Continuation of Open Educational Resources Program**

Representative Jacque Phillips (D)

The bill continues the Open Educational Resources Council and Grant Program for five years, through November 1, 2031. The council and grant program are currently scheduled to repeal on November 1, 2026. The bill also continues program reporting requirements for five years, through December 1, 2031.

In addition, the bill expands the council from 12 to 15 members and modifies the requirements for the annual open educational resources report completed by the Department of Higher Education (CDHE) to include the portion of courses that have zero textbook cost for Students.

Open educational resources are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits free use and repurpose by others. The Open Educational Resources Council recommends policies for using these resources at institutions of higher education (IHEs), implements the Open Educational Resources Grant Program, provides professional development opportunities, and reports on the use of open educational resources in the state. The grant program provides funding for public IHEs, faculty, and staff to create and expand the use of open educational resources.

**Fiscal Note:** The bill increases state expenditures by about \$757,826 in FY 2026-27; \$1,131,047 in FY 2027-28.

**Status:** House Education

**S2C position:**

### **House Bill 25-1046**

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

Representatives Sean Camacho (D) & Monica Duran (D) and Senators Lisa Frizell (R) & Kyle Mullica (D)

The bill requires a person to obtain a license to provide earned-wage access services (provider) but allows current providers to continue providing the services without a license until a license is issued or denied. The licensing, administrative, and disciplinary functions of the regulation of providers are performed by the assistant attorney general (administrator) who administers the "Uniform Consumer Credit Code". The administrator is given several powers, including adopting rules, related to this regulation.

License application and issuance standards and procedures are established. A provider is issued a license if the administrator finds that the financial responsibility, character, and fitness of the applicant and of the applicant's members, managers, partners, officers, and directors are sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant will operate the business honestly and fairly and in compliance with the bill.

The license fee is set by the administrator to cover the cost of regulating providers. Administrative procedures are established. A license is valid for one year, and to renew a license, a licensee must file a renewal form annually. If a licensee fails to pay the prescribed renewal fee on or before May 1 of each

year, the licensee must pay a penalty of \$5 per day per license until the license is renewed, but if a licensee fails to pay the appropriate renewal and penalty fees by May 15, the licensee's license automatically expires.

The administrator may deny an application for a license or take disciplinary action against a licensee for failing to meet the standards set in the bill.

To discipline a provider, the administrator may deny an application for licensure, revoke the license, suspend the license, issue a cease-and-desist order, impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation, bar the person from applying for or holding a license for 5 years after a revocation, issue a letter of admonition, or impose a penalty of \$200 per day for records violations. A respondent aggrieved by an action or order of the administrator may obtain judicial review of the action or order in the Colorado court of appeals.

A licensee is required to maintain records in conformity with the bill, rules adopted under the bill, and generally accepted accounting principles and practices in a manner that will enable the administrator to determine if the licensee is complying with the bill. A licensee shall give the administrator free access to the records in the licensee's storage location. A licensee need not preserve records pertaining to an earned-wage access services transaction for more than one year. Standards are set for this access.

A licensee must file an annual report that includes all relevant information that the bill and the administrator reasonably require concerning the business and operations conducted during the preceding calendar year. Standards are set for the report. The administrator must keep the report confidential and not open it to the public for inspection pursuant to the "Colorado Open Records Act". If a licensee fails to file an annual report by April 15, the administrator may impose a penalty of \$5 per day until the report is filed, but if the licensee fails to file the report and pay this penalty by May 1 of the same year, the licensee's license automatically expires.

After the administrator has examined a licensee's records, the administrator shall provide a report of the examination to the licensee and may require the licensee to take corrective action. The licensee shall take the corrective action and provide proof that the corrective action was taken. The administrator is prohibited from disclosing the name or identity of a person whose acts or conduct is under investigation or examination or the facts disclosed in the investigation or examination, except for disclosures in actions or enforcement proceedings.

A provider has the duty to:

- Develop and implement policies and procedures to respond to questions raised by consumers and address complaints from consumers;
- If the provider offers a consumer the option to receive proceeds for a service fee (proceeds), offer to the consumer at least one reasonable option to obtain proceeds at no cost to the consumer and clearly explain how to elect the no-cost option;
- Make certain disclosures about the earned-wage access services to the consumer;
- Inform the consumer before implementing material changes to the terms and conditions of the earned-wage access services agreement;
- Allow the consumer to cancel use of the earned-wage access services at any time without incurring a cancellation fee;
- Provide proceeds to a consumer by the means mutually agreed upon by the consumer and the provider; and
- To be repaid for outstanding proceeds or payment of service fees or other amounts owed in connection with earned-wage access services from a consumer's account at a depository institution, comply with federal law and reimburse the consumer for the full amount of any

overdraft or insufficient funds fees imposed on the consumer that were caused by the provider attempting to seek payment on a date before the date or in an amount different from the amount disclosed to the consumer.

A provider shall not:

- Share with an employer a portion of a service fee that was received from or charged to a consumer for earned-wage access services;
- Require a consumer's credit score provided by a consumer reporting agency to determine the consumer's eligibility for earned-wage access services;
- Accept payment of outstanding proceeds or service fees from a consumer by means of a credit card or charge card;
- Charge a consumer a late fee, a deferral fee, interest, or any other penalty or charge for failure to pay outstanding proceeds or service fees;
- Report to a collection agency or to a debt collector information about a consumer regarding the inability of the provider to be repaid outstanding proceeds or service fees;
- Impose a service fee in excess of \$5 for an advance of proceeds in an amount less than \$75 or \$7 for an advance of proceeds in an amount more than \$75; except that the fee may be increased for inflation;
- Enter into an agreement with an employer that would require a consumer who is an employee of the employer to use earned-wage access services as a necessary condition of receiving payment of wages;
- Compel a consumer to pay outstanding proceeds or service fees to the provider through a lawsuit, the use of a third party to pursue collection from the consumer, or the sale of outstanding proceeds to a third-party collector or debt buyer. The collection limitations do not apply to the act of compelling payment of outstanding proceeds paid through fraudulent or other unlawful means or to pursuing an employer for breach of its contractual obligations to the provider.
- Solicit a tip, gratuity, or donation during the time between when a consumer requests proceeds and when the provider confirms that a transfer of proceeds has been approved and provides a listing of the fees that will be charged.

The administrator may bring a civil action to recover a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 for willfully violating the bill, and, if the court finds that the defendant has engaged in a course of repeated and willful violations, the court may assess a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per violation. In addition, the administrator may recover reasonable costs of the investigation and action and may request an order for reimbursement of reasonable attorney fees.

**Fiscal Note:**

**Status:** House Finance

**S2C position:**

## JOB QUALITY

### **House Bill 26-1005**

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

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

The bill makes the following changes to the "Labor Peace Act":

- Specifies that employees' right to bargain collectively includes the right to bargain collectively concerning any mandatory subject of bargaining;
- Eliminates the requirement for a second election to negotiate a union security agreement clause in the collective bargaining process;
- Declares that it is not an unfair labor practice for an employer to refuse to agree to a lawful proposal made by the exclusive representative of the employees, or for the exclusive representative of the employees to refuse to agree to a lawful proposal made by the employer, concerning a mandatory subject of bargaining if the refusing party has bargained in good faith with the other party; and
- Requires employers and employees, through their exclusive representative, to bargain in good faith.

**Fiscal Note:** The bill reduces state expenditures in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment by about \$27,000 in FY 2026-27 and \$40,000 in FY 2027-28 and ongoing years.

**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor

**S2C position:**

### **House Bill 26-1054**

#### **Protections for Worker Safety**

Representatives Manny Rutinel (D) & Elizabeth Velasco (D)

**Section 1** of the bill requires an employer to ensure the employer's workplace is free from recognized hazards, as interpreted consistent with the federal occupational safety and health administration's interpretation of the general duty clause of the "Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970" (OSH Act) as of September 1, 2025. Additionally, employers have the general duty to:

- Ensure that each workplace is constructed, equipped, arranged, operated, and conducted as to provide reasonable and adequate protection to the lives, health, and safety of all individuals employed or working in the workplace; and
- Comply with standards for workplace health and safety adopted by rule by the division of labor standards and statistics in the department of labor and employment (division).

The bill authorizes the following actions to address workplace health and safety concerns:

- The attorney general or the division may refer workplace health and safety concerns to relevant state or local authorities;

- The attorney general, the division, a labor organization, or a person aggrieved by a violation of the bill may file a civil action;
- For each violation of the bill or of rules adopted pursuant to the bill, a court may order the person that violates the bill or rules to pay statutory damages to a person aggrieved by the violation; and
- A court may order a person that violates the bill or rules adopted pursuant to the bill to pay a penalty to the attorney general for each violation.

The bill creates the workplace health and safety fund (fund) into which penalties collected pursuant to the bill are credited. The money in the fund may be used by the division for specified purposes.

The bill authorizes the division to adopt rules:

- To replace any requirement of the OSH Act or the "Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977" that is repealed, revoked, or amended in any manner that results in the federal protections of workers' rights or worker safety becoming less stringent;
- To define standards for workplace health and safety if there is no standard in effect under the OSH Act; and
- As necessary to implement the bill.

**Sections 2 through 8** make conforming amendments.

**Fiscal Note:**

**Status:** House Business Affairs & Labor

**S2C position:**

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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:

**Laura Ware, S2C Coordinator:** [lauraware985@gmail.com](mailto:lauraware985@gmail.com)

**Chaer Robert, CCLP Emeritus Advisor:** [crobert@copolicy.org](mailto:crobert@copolicy.org)