Laura Ware, S2C Coordinator
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
789 Sherman St #300, Denver, CO 80203
www.copolicy.org/skills2compete
lauraware985@gmail.com
@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/**.

Updated 4/21/2026

STRONGLY SUPPORT

House Bill 26-1010

Older Adult Support & Representation in the Workforce

Representatives Jenny Willford (D), Jamie Jackson (D) and Senator Jessie Danielson (D)

The bill increases participation, representation, and support for individuals 55 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 55 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 state apprenticeship council, and advisory committee to the commission on higher education, or their successor entities, each have at least one member serving on their governing entity that is at least 55 years old and either is actively involved in or has interest, knowledge, or experience in advocating for the interests of individuals who are 55 years old or older as related to the functions of each entity.

It was amended in House Business Affairs & Labor to lower age cutoff to 55 instead of 60.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation is required.
Status: Senate Business, Labor, & Technology

House Bill 26-1143

Non-Employment Educational Opportunities Background Check Information

Representatives Naquetta Ricks (D), Junie Joseph (D) and Senator Mike Weissman (D)

The bill prohibits an entity from requiring an individual to provide a social security number for a background check for a non-employment-based educational opportunity unless the entity also accepts an individual taxpayer identification number in lieu of a social security number, including in clinical educational experiences for health-related academic programs, subject to certain exceptions.

The attorney general is authorized to bring a civil action to enforce the provisions of the bill.

Fiscal: No appropriation is required. The bill increases workload to the Department of Law and increases expenditures in certain higher education institutions by up to $100,000 per year starting in FY 2026-27.
Status: House Floor

SUPPORT

House Bill 26-1093

College Opportunity Fund Working Group

Representative Matthew Martinez (D)

The bill creates a working group to make findings and recommendations concerning how to implement the college opportunity fund for persons who are incarcerated in Colorado, including whether fee-for-service contracts for participating institutions of higher education need to be modified. The bill requires the working group to report its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate on or before December 1, 2026.

Fiscal: No appropriation is required.
Status: POSTPONED INDEFINITELY (KILLED) AT REQUEST OF SPONSOR

In the time between introduction and House Education Committee vote, two actions have happened which make the bill unnecessary:

1. *The State Board of Higher Education vote to clearly authorize incarcerated students to be eligible to receive the College Opportunity Fund allocation which generally covers what Pell grants don't cover. Incarcerated students were ineligible for Pell Grants for about 20 years, becoming eligible again July 1, 2023, as authorized by the FAFSA Simplification Act of 2020.*
2. *To work on other issues, such as the impact on higher education funding formula and time rates for completion, etc. The Department of Higher Education wrote a memo establishing a working group mirroring the one envisioned in the bill.*

House Bill 26-1207

Disclosure of Demographic Workforce Data

Representatives Jamie Jackson (D), Jennifer Bacon (D) and Senators Cathy Kipp (D), Jessie Danielson (D)

The bill requires a private entity conducting business in the state that employs 100 or more workers (employer) to include demographic workforce data collected through the United States equal employment opportunity commission's "Employer Information Report" (EEO-1 data) in periodic reports to the secretary of state. An employer is required to provide the EEO-1 data to the secretary of state even if the federal government repeals or discontinues the federal requirement to submit the EEO-1 data to the United States equal employment opportunity commission.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation is required. The bill increases state expenditures in the Department of State by about $58,000 in FY 2027-28, and by $34,000 in FY 2028-29 and future years.
Status: Senate Business, Labor, & Technology

OPPOSE

House Bill 26-1383

Repeal Employment Support Job Retention Program

Representatives Kyle Brown (D), Emily Sirota (D) and Senators Judy Amabile (D), Jeff Bridges (D)

Repeals the law creating the Employment Support Job Retention program which provided up to $400 a year to cover needs of low-income job seekers and new employees whose income is below the federal poverty level.

Joint Budget Committee. House Bill 19-1107, enacted in 2019, established the employment support and job retention services program (program) in the division of employment and training (division) within the department of labor and employment (department). The corresponding employment support and job retention services program cash fund (fund) was also created for the purpose of funding employment preparation, job training, employment pursuit, and job retention activities for eligible individuals.

The general assembly appropriated $750,000 from the general fund to the fund for state fiscal year 2019-20. Beginning in the 2022-23 state fiscal year, and for each state fiscal year thereafter, the general assembly is statutorily required to appropriate $250,000 from the general fund to the fund.

Currently, the program is scheduled to repeal September 1, 2029.

The bill changes the repeal date to July 1, 2026. The program therefore would repeal approximately 3 years sooner than when it is currently scheduled to repeal.

The bill requires the state treasurer to transfer all unexpended and unencumbered money in the fund to the general fund on June 30, 2026.

The bill also adjusts the annual general appropriation act for the 2026-27 state fiscal year to the department for use by the division, as follows:

- Decreases the general fund appropriation for the fund by $250,000; and

- Decreases the reappropriated funds appropriation from the fund for the program by $250,000.

A reduction of an appropriation in the annual general appropriation act for the 2026-27 state fiscal year is not required by the bill, however, if one of the following conditions is satisfied:

- The amount of the general fund appropriation to the department for use by the division for the fund is less than $250,000;
- The amount of the reappropriated funds appropriation from the fund to the department for use by the division for the program is less than $250,000; or
- The annual general appropriation act for the 2026-27 state fiscal year does not include an appropriation to the department for use by the division for the fund or the program.

Fiscal Note: For FY 2026-27, the bill includes a reduction in appropriation of $250,000 from the General Fund and a corresponding reduction in reappropriated funds to the Department of Labor and Employment.
Status: Passed the House and the Senate; onto the Governor for signature

MONITOR

House Bill 26-1317

Unified Postsecondary Talent Development System

Representatives Julie McCluskie (D), Rick Taggart (R) and Senators Jeff Bridges (D), Lisa Frizell (R)

The bill creates the postsecondary talent development system transition advisory committee (transition committee) to integrate oversight of higher education and workforce development programs (transition plan). The transition committee shall begin meeting by July 1, 2026, and shall submit the transition plan to the joint budget committee by November 1, 2026. The transition plan must include recommendations about the structure of the department of higher education (department), including a recommendation to rename the department, and recommendations about transitioning various offices, agencies, programs, and functions to the department or other state agencies.

Effective July 1, 2028, the executive director of the Colorado commission on higher education is renamed the executive director of the department. The governor appoints, with the consent of the senate, the executive director.

Fiscal: The bill requires an appropriation of $16,250 the Governor's Office in FY 2026-27; however, the bill requires all expenditures to be funded within existing appropriations.
Status: House Floor

NO POSITION

EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Senate Bill 26-067

Tuition Waiver for Dependents of Veterans

Senator Tom Sullivan (D) and Representative Chad Clifford (D)

The bill creates a tuition waiver for qualified dependents of disabled veterans to attend state colleges and universities.

Fiscal Note: The bill increases state expenditures in the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs by about $181,000 in FY 2026-27 and by about $167,000 in FY 2027-2028 and future years.
Status: Senate Appropriations

Senate Bill 26-080

Cradle to Career Grant Program Creation

Senators James Coleman (D), Cleave Simpson (R) and Representatives Meghan Lukens (D), Regina English (D)

The bill creates the cradle to career grant program (grant program) in the state department of human services (state department) to provide grants that promote coordinated community-based supports and services that open opportunities for economic mobility from poverty. The grant program must connect children and youth with high-quality educational and extracurricular programming and families with key health and social services in order to improve prenatal and early childhood outcomes, student achievement, workforce readiness, and wealth-building opportunities. A local government, local education provider, state institution of higher education, Indian tribe or tribal organization, or community-based nonprofit or not-for-profit organization (eligible entity) is eligible for a grant award.

The bill creates an advisory council to approve the state department's potential grant recipients and to collaborate with the state department to develop grant program guidelines and criteria for awarding grants.

To receive a grant, an eligible entity must submit an application that includes an economic mobility needs assessment and a comprehensive proposal to address the needs within its designated service area. The application must identify community partners as prospective subcontractors. A grant recipient must comply with various health and safety, financial responsibility, and anti-discrimination safeguards. Each grant recipient must annually report to the state department on a set of performance indicators assessing the economic mobility outcomes and impacts associated with the grant award. The state department must make a related report to the general assembly each year.

The state department may seek, accept, and expend gifts, grants, and donations for grant-program-related purposes. The state department is not required to implement the grant program until it receives

$900,000 to fund grant program operations. The general assembly shall not appropriate general fund dollars for grant program operations.

Fiscal Note: The bill is expected to increase state revenue from gifts, grants, and donations to the Cradle to Career Program Cash Fund. The fiscal note assumes that $900,000 in state expenditures is required in FY 2026-27 and $1.0 million in FY 2027-28 and ongoing.
Status: House Education

Senate Bill 26-156

Changes Practices of Work Force Development Council

Senators Cathy Kipp (D), John Carson (R) and Representatives Jacque Phillips (D), Ryan Gonzales (R)

The bill implements changes to the practices of the state workforce development council (council), including by:

- Streamlining requirements for the council's talent pipeline report based on industry changes over the last several years;
- Creating greater flexibility to allow the council to develop certain criteria for the creation of career pathways based on data and feedback collected by the council;
- Updating the duties of the council to better reflect the council's current education, training, and workforce preparation practices; and
- Amending the directives for and duties of the position of the postsecondary and workforce readiness statewide coordinator, who works under the direction of the council, to better align with the updated working structure of that position as related to several other entities.

Fiscal note: TBD
Status: Senate Business, Labor, & Technology

House Bill 26-1006

Thriving Institutions Designations for Higher Education

Representatives Elizabeth Velasco (D), Matthew 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: No appropriation is required.
Status: Senate Education

House Bill 26-1029

Student Representation 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 Appropriations

House Bill 26-1371

Adding Repeal Dates for Certain Higher Education Programs

Representatives Kyle Brown (D), Rick Taggart (R) and Senators Judy Amabile (D), Jeff Bridges (D)

Joint Budget Committee. The bill repeals the Colorado multidisciplinary health-care provider access training program, the career pathways program, and the career and technical education and apprenticeship programs alignment on June 30, 2028. *The bill also repeals fee-for-service contract funding for cybersecurity, distributed ledger technologies, and the food systems advisory council on June 30, 2026.*

Fiscal: Reduces expenditures in Department of Higher Education by about $100 million per year, beginning in FY 2028-29.

Status: Passed the House and the Senate; onto the Governor for signature

House Bill 26-1416

Transfers to General Fund and Colorado Economic Dev Fund

Representatives Kenny Nguyen (D), Kyle Brown (D) and Senators Judy Amabile (D), John Carson (R)

The bill requires the state treasurer to transfer $1.2 million from the universal high school scholarship cash fund (fund) to the Colorado economic development fund and $2.3 million from the fund to the general fund on June 30, 2026.

Fiscal note: $3.5 million in unspent money for universal high school scholarship transferred
Status: House Appropriations

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 to include the portion of courses that have zero textbook cost for Students.

Fiscal Note: The bill increases state expenditures by about $758,000 in FY 2026-27; $1.1 million per year in FY 2027-28 through FY 2031-32.
Status: House Appropriations

House Bill 26-1046

Regulate Earned-Wage Access Service Provider

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

Conditional upon the receipt of gifts, grants, and donations, the bill establishes the regulation of earned-wage access (EWA) services, which are services that provide employees with advance payment for wages earned but not yet paid by employers. These services may be offered by a third party through a partnership with an employer (employer-partnered) or directly to employees (direct-to-consumer).

The administrator of the Consumer Credit Code in the Department of Law (DOL) is responsible for EWA regulation, which is conditioned on the newly created Earned-Wage Access Fund receiving sufficient funds to pay the DOL's regulatory costs for three years. The EWA Fund is subject to annual appropriation. Once funds are received, a provider of EWA services must have a license issued by the DOL within 91 days.

Licenses are valid for one year and must be renewed annually for three years, when the licensing requirement repeals. Active providers may continue to provide services if they have submitted an application and until the DOL acts on the application, so long as they are otherwise in compliance with other regulatory provisions of the bill.

Fiscal Note: Conditional on the receipt of sufficient gifts, grants, and donations, the bill increases state expenditures in the Department of Law by about $426,000 in FY 2027-28, and by about $387,000 in FY 2028-29 and FY 2029-30, when the regulations are repealed.
Status: House Appropriations

JOB QUALITY

Senate Bill 26-081

Increase Agricultural Employee Overtime Protections

Senator Jessie Danielson (D) and Representative Elizabeth Velasco (D)

The bill increases overtime protections for agricultural employees by requiring that agricultural employees be paid at an overtime rate for any work performed in excess of:

- 40 hours per workweek;
- 12 hours per workday; or
- 12 consecutive hours.

Fiscal Note: For FY 2026-27, the bill requires an appropriation of $32,536 to the Department of Labor and Employment.
Status: POSTPONED INDEFINITELY (KILLED) in House Business, Labor, & Technology

Senate Bill 26-121

Overtime Threshold for Agricultural Employees

Senators Robert Rodriguez (D), Cleave Simpson (R) and Representatives Matthew Martinez (D), Ty Winter (R)

Beginning January 1, 2027, the bill requires an agricultural employer to pay certain agricultural employees overtime pay for time worked in excess of 56 hours in a workweek. By repealing and reenacting the section, the bill repeals the authority of the director of the division of labor standards and statistics to adopt rules concerning overtime pay for agricultural employees.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation is required.
Status: Passed the Senate and the House; onto the Governor for signature

[Senate Bill 26-127]

Family Medical Leave Insurance Duration Extensions

Senator Jeff Bridges (D) & Representative Yara Zokaie (D)

With regard to the family and medical leave insurance (FAMLI) program, the bill:

- Defines a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for the duration extension that applies to a covered individual who has a child receiving care in a NICU; and
- Extends the duration of paid FAMLI leave for claims arising on or after January 1, 2027, up to an additional 2 weeks, following the death of a family member for whom a covered individual cared for while using such leave.

Fiscal Note: Work on the fiscal note has been suspended since the sponsor will ask for his bill to be killed.
Status: Senate Business Affairs & Labor. Senator Bridges asked the committee to kill his bill, and they did.

[Senate Bill 26-127]

Family Medical Leave Insurance Duration Extensions

Senator Jeff Bridges (D) and Representative Yara Zokaie (D)

With regard to the family and medical leave insurance (FAMLI) program, the bill:

- Defines a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for the duration extension that applies to a covered individual who has a child receiving care in a NICU; and
- Extends the duration of paid FAMLI leave for claims arising on or after January 1, 2027, up to an additional 2 weeks, following the death of a family member for whom a covered individual cared for while using such leave.

Fiscal Note: Work on the fiscal note has been suspended since the sponsor will ask for his bill to be killed.
Status: POSTPONED INDEFINITELY (KILLED) in Senate Business, Labor, & Technology Committee; Senator Bridges asked the committee to kill his bill.

[Senate 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: Senate Floor

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 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: No appropriation is required. The bill conditionally increases state expenditures in the CDLE by about $185,000 in the first fiscal year following the modification of the OSH Act and by about $85,000 in the second fiscal year and ongoing.
Status: House Appropriations

House Bill 26-1210

Prohibit Surveillance Price & Wage Setting

Representatives Jennifer Bacon (D), Javier Mabrey (D) and Senators Mike Weissman (D), Iman Jodeh (D)

Surveillance data is defined in the bill as data that is obtained through observation, inference, or surveillance of consumers or workers and that is related to personal characteristics, online behaviors, or biometrics of an individual or group, band, class, or tier to which the individual belongs. The definition of 'worker' excludes federal and state employees and employees of public entities. The bill prohibits discrimination against a consumer or worker through the use of a price or wage setting algorithm (PWSA) that uses statistical modeling, data analytics, artificial intelligence, or other data processing techniques to analyze surveillance data, the output of which is a substantial factor in:

- Individualized price setting used to determine the amount charged to a consumer; or
- Individualized wage setting used to determine the wage offered a worker.

The bill also specifies activities that are not prohibited as individualized price or wage setting based on surveillance data regarding a consumer or worker.

A person that uses a PWSA shall develop and publish reasonable procedures to ensure the accuracy of data considered by the PWSA, to allow workers to request and receive information about what data is collected by the PWSA when setting particular wages, and to allow a worker to correct or challenge the accuracy of that data.

The bill authorizes the attorney general to adopt rules to implement and enforce the bill.

A violation of the prohibition against individualized price setting or individualized wage setting is a deceptive trade practice under the 'Colorado Consumer Protection Act', and is subject to the enforcement and penalty provisions authorized under the act.

Fiscal Note: No appropriation is required.
Status: Senate Business, Labor, & Technology

House Bill 26-1272

Extreme Temperature Worker Protections

Representatives Meg Froelich (D), Elizabeth Velasco (D) and Senators Lisa Cutter (D), Mike Weissman (D)

The bill requires the department of labor and employment (CDLE), on or before January 1, 2027, to begin compiling data concerning temperature-related injury or illness or temperature-related emergencies, including by requiring the division of labor standards and statistics (division) to:

- Develop a platform on CDLE's website where users can provide information about occurrences of temperature-related injury or illness or temperature-related emergencies;
- Obtain from the department of public health and environment (CDPHE) data that CDPHE has collected through its syndromic surveillance program regarding occurrences of heat-related injury or illness or heat-related emergencies; and
- Collect similar data from the division of workers' compensation and the Center for Improving Value in Health Care.

On or before July 1, 2028, the bill requires the division to develop a model temperature-related injury and illness prevention plan (TRIIPP) that thereafter must be made available on CDLE's website.

Employers of workers who are exposed to extreme hot or cold temperatures at worksites are required to develop and submit a TRIIPP to the division on or before September 1, 2028, and the division is required to develop procedures regarding how often employers will be required to submit an updated TRIIPP and how the division will handle review of TRIIPPs.

Lastly, the bill requires CDLE to develop training standards related to temperature safety and ensure that employers are providing proper training to workers who are affected by extreme temperatures.

Fiscal Note: The bill increases state expenditures by about $140,000 in FY 2026-27, by $245,000 in FY 2027-28, and by $75,000 in FY 2028-29 in future years.
Status: House Appropriations

****

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
Chaer Robert, CCLP Emeritus Advisor: crobert@copolicy.org