



#2: Supporting and Investing in Colorado's Untapped Talent Pipeline

The Issue and Need

- Research conducted by Skills2Compete demonstrates that current job-seekers in Colorado are often individuals with significant barriers to employment who have untapped potential and who want to work.
- Unfortunately, current workforce funding streams (WIOA, SNAP, etc.) are unable to cover the specific unmet needs of this population. Many individuals with barriers to employment also do not meet the eligibility requirements for a specific workforce development program. Furthermore, current funding streams for supportive services after the date of employment are limited in nature, or nonexistent altogether, and yet these individuals require ongoing support in order to be successful in a job. Because many Colorado businesses are facing a worker shortage, these resource shortages constrain the state's economic growth.
- Interviews and surveys of community based organizations (CBOs), workforce centers (WFCs) and public agencies (PAs) representing 62 of Colorado's 64 counties confirmed the efficacy of providing immediate, small-amount assistance to individuals with barriers to employment involved with an employment training or service program, and who have a specific employment goal.

What would this bill do?

- Creates a supportive services fund for employment and training related activities needs for individuals that are not being met by current workforce funding streams. This fund would also serve individuals ineligible for public workforce development programs (WIOA, SNAP, etc.)
- Individuals must be 16 and older, eligible to work in the United States and who have an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). Individuals must also be a client, customer or participant of a CBO, WFC or PA engaged in employment and training activities.
- Allocates \$1,437,500 for fiscal year (FY) 2018-2019 from the General Fund. For FY 2019-2020, and each FY thereafter for five years, the fund is to be allocated \$2,500,000. Gifts, grants and donations may also be accepted so as to increase the fund's capacity. The fund is to be located within the Colorado Department of Local Affairs' Division of Local Government, who will subcontract with an entity to administer the fund's reimbursement operations.
- Allows for WFCs, CBOs and PAs across the state to submit reimbursement requests to the subcontracting entity for eligible expenses. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to: emergency childcare; emergency housing; transportation needs; equipment repairs; legal assistance; interpretation services; refugee expenses; licensure fees; utility payments; employment and training supplies; phone and internet service bills and prepaid cell phones. Individuals can receive funds for these services only if they are directly related to an employment and training-related activity or have an impact on the participant's ability to achieve an employment goal.
- Prohibits duplication of services and requires that the fund be one of last resort. The bill also allows for supportive services related to job retention for up to 6 months after the date of employment if the individual still meets the income eligibility requirements.
- Allows individuals to access funds for services on a per need basis, capped at \$300 per individual, per calendar year; smaller organizations may be eligible to request upfront payments for a participant as determined by the subcontracting entity.
- Requires that an oversight and operational committee convene regularly to ensure the program is working effectively and serving individuals on a statewide basis.
- Establishes a public comment period for stakeholders to provide input prior to the program's launch date.
- Require a sunset review at the end of FY 2022-2023 by the General Assembly for renewal.

Supporting Organizations
Bayaud Enterprises
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition
CWEE
People's Advocacy Council
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

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Skills2Compete-Colorado is a multisector policy coalition focused on skill acquisition for employment. Our members include staff from community based employment programs, adult education providers, workforce center staff, state agencies, community colleges, businesses, and advocacy organizations.