

Colorado Department of Labor and Employment SMART Act Hearing

Senate Committee on Business,
Labor and Technology House Committee
on Business Affairs & Labor

January 14, 2026



COLORADO
Department of
Labor and Employment



CDLE Mission & Vision

Our Mission:

Working together to promote a thriving employment environment with opportunity for every Coloradan to prosper.

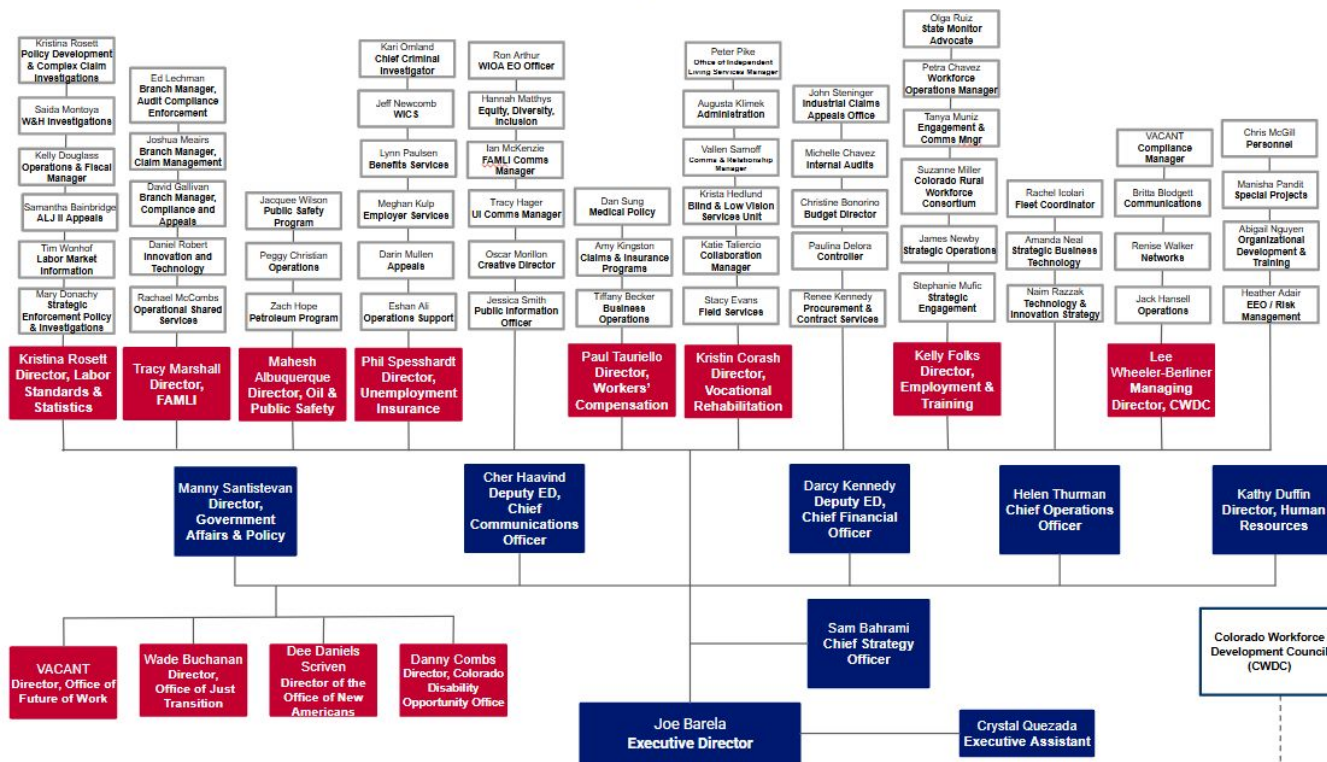
Our Vision:

A working economy that elevates all of Colorado.

CDLE Organizational Chart



Department of Labor and Employment January 2026



About CDLE

We Keep Colorado Working by:

- building Colorado's talent pipeline
- ensuring fair labor practices
- helping businesses recruit employees and job seekers find employment opportunities
- presenting an up-to-date and accurate picture of the economy
- protecting our communities with a variety of consumer protection and safety programs
- ensuring benefits to injured workers
- contributing to a stable economy by providing temporary wage replacement
- helping people with disabilities to obtain, maintain or regain employment
- assisting Colorado's coal communities and workers through transition
- advance integration and inclusion of New Americans in Colorado

CDLE's FY 2025-26 Wildly Important Goals (WIG 1)

Timely & Accurate UI Benefit Payments:

Increase the percent of Coloradans who receive their first UI benefit payment within three weeks (after the first compensable week) to 87% of claimants by June 30, 2026.

Increase the percent of Coloradans who receive their first UI benefit payment within three weeks (after the first compensable week) to 87% of claimants by June 30, 2026.



Context: Successful completion of this goal means unemployed Coloradans will be able to stay afloat and meet their financial obligations during periods of joblessness and our state's economy will see the benefit of that sustainability as they seek reemployment.

How CDLE will accomplish this WIG 1:

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

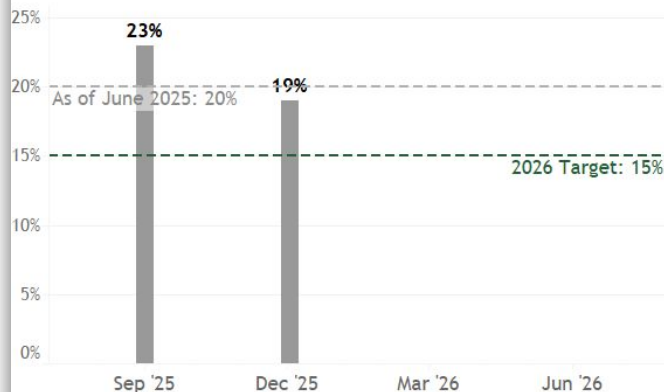
Improved Virtual Assistant

Implement improved virtual assistant system by June 30, 2026.

In Progress
as of December 2025

Workforce Registration

Reduce the number of claimants deemed ineligible for unemployment insurance due to lack of workforce center registration from 20% to 15% by June 30, 2026.



CDLE's FY 2025-26 Wildly Important Goals (WIG 2)

FAMLI Employer Experience:

Improve the FAMLI employer user experience by achieving an average customer satisfaction score of 4 or above on a 5-point scale for MyFAMLI+ Employer by June 30, 2026.

Improve the FAMLI employer user experience by achieving an average customer satisfaction score of 4 or above on a 5-point scale for MyFAMLI+ Employer by June 30, 2026.



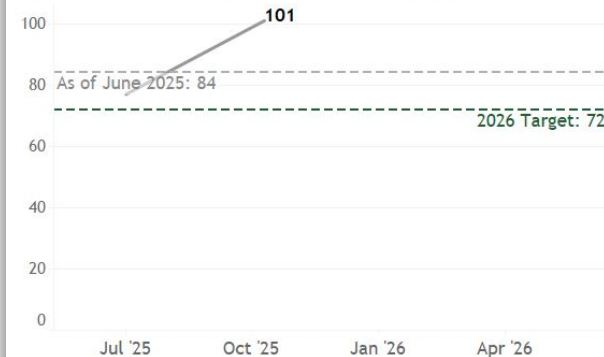
Context: Successful completion of this goal will increase the ease of employer participation in the FAMLI program by specifically improving the employer user experience of My FAMLI+ Employer, and thus more equitably distribute the positive impacts of paid leave to employers of all sizes across the state.

How CDLE will accomplish WIG 2:

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Faster Support: Ticket Resolution

Increase timeliness of employer support ticket resolution during employer reporting months by 14% from 84 hours to 72 hours by June 30, 2026.



Faster Processes of Bulk Payments

Increase timeliness for processing bulk employer payments during employer reporting months by 50% from 20 hours to 10 hours by June 30, 2026.



How CDLE will accomplish WIG 2 (cont.):

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Faster Processing of Wage Uploads

Increase timeliness for processing employer wage uploads during employer reporting months by 44% from 27 minutes to 15 minutes by June 30, 2026.



Faster Employer Premium Calculations

Increase timeliness for processing employer premium calculation during employer reporting months by 68% from 6.25 hours to 2 hours by June 30, 2026.

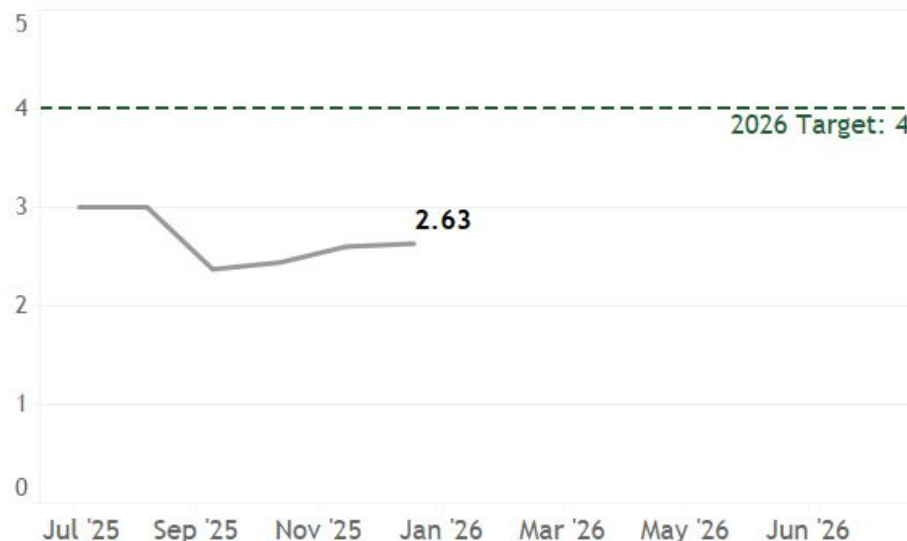


CDLE's FY 2025-26 Wildly Important Goals (WIG 3)

Supporting Colorado Business:

Connecting Colorado will achieve an average Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) score of 4 or above on a 5-point scale by helping employers meet their workforce needs by June 30, 2026.

Connecting Colorado will achieve an average Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) score of 4 or above on a 5-point scale by helping employers meet their workforce needs by June 30, 2026.



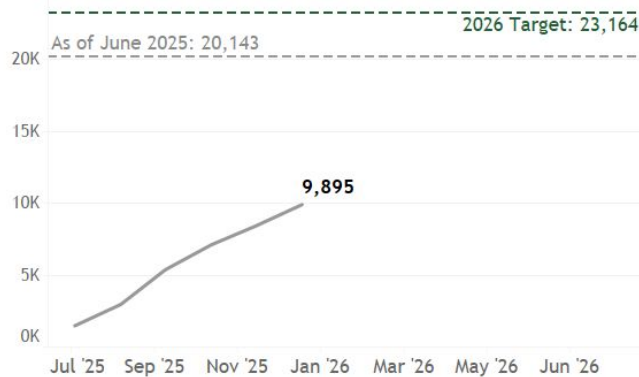
Context: Helping businesses expedite their hiring timelines through the user-friendly, online statewide workforce system supports business growth, strengthening Colorado's economy.

How CDLE will accomplish WIG 3:

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Business Engagement

Increase business utilization of the public workforce system by 15% from 20,143 in FY 24-25 to 23,164 in FY 25-26 by June 30, 2026.



Hiring Through Connecting Colorado

Help 2,000 job seekers get hired directly through the modernized Connecting Colorado labor exchange by June 30, 2026.

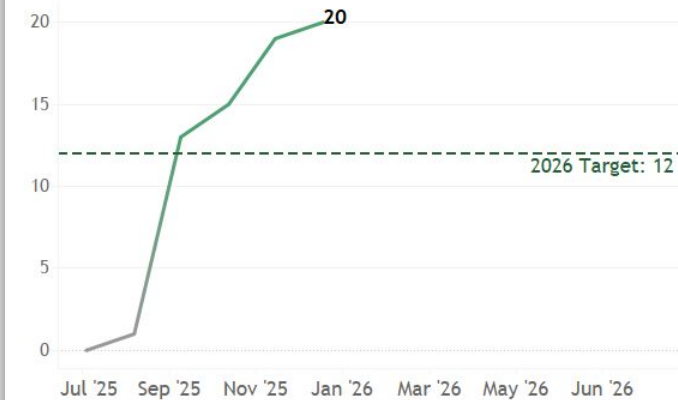


How CDLE will accomplish WIG 3 (cont.):

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Skills-Based Hiring Education

Organize 12 business events across the state to promote skills-based hiring practices in job postings, with the goal of improving candidate matching by June 30, 2026.

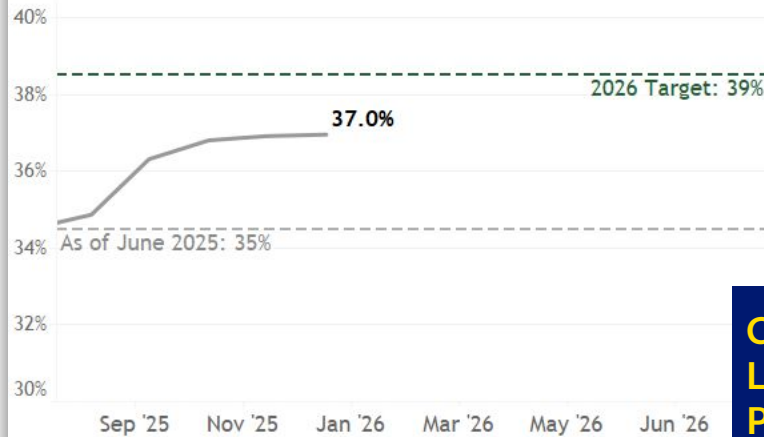


CDLE's FY 2025-26 Wildly Important Goals (WIG 4)

Youth Labor Force Participation:

Increase the percentage from 34.5% to 38.5% of youth connected to jobs, continuing education or apprenticeships after receiving services from the Public Workforce System.

Increase the percentage of youth who are placed in jobs, apprenticeships or continuing education after receiving youth employment services from the Colorado Public Workforce System from 34.5% to 38.5% by June 30, 2026.



Context: Successful completion of this goal will ensure the state's continued prosperity by providing youth with valuable opportunities, whether that be a work-based learning program, apprenticeship, internship or continuing education.

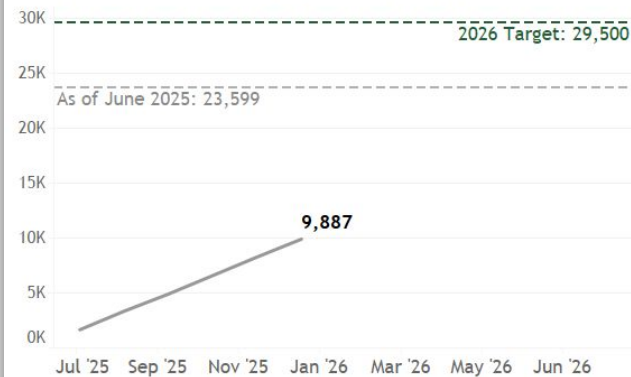
Colorado's Youth Labor Force Participation Rate is 3% above the national average.

How CDLE will accomplish WIG 4 (cont.):

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Youth Employment Services Registration

Increase the number of registrations for youth employment services by 25%, from 23,599 in FY 24-25 to 29,500 in FY 25-26, by June 30, 2026.



Youth Apprenticeship Enrollment

Increase the percentage of youth 24 and under enrolling in a registered apprenticeship program by 25% from 1,999 to 2,500 by June 30, 2026.

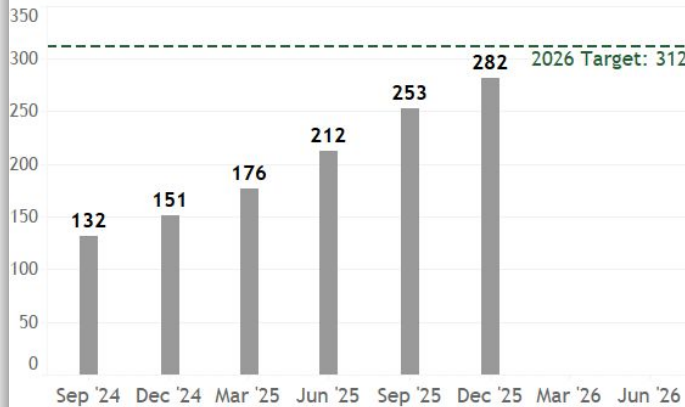


How CDLE will accomplish WIG 4 (cont.):

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Add or expand 100 registered apprenticeship programs in Colorado by June 30, 2026.



Increase Business Engagement in Youth Programming

Increase the number of youth registered to participate in the Governor's Summer Job Hunt program by 5% from 30,400 to 31,920 by June 30, 2026.

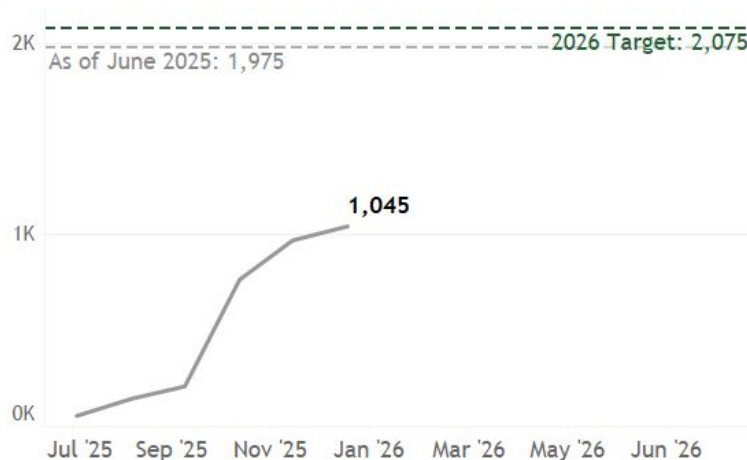


How CDLE will accomplish WIG 4 (cont.):

The Department will pursue and track completion of the following strategies to achieve this goal:

Increase Participation in the Governor's Summer Job Hunt

Increase the number of businesses served through the Governor's Summer Job Hunt program by 5% from 1,975 to 2,075 by June 30, 2026.



More Information

To view monthly updates on Wildly Important Goals and corresponding lead measures, please visit the [Governor's Dashboard](#).

For more information on additional Department goals and context, view our [FY 2025-26 Performance Plan](#).



CDLE Performance Management

CDLE Priorities



Model Employer

Lead the state in becoming a model employer



Workers Prosper

Through meaningful employment, every Coloradan prospers



Exceptional Services

Exceptional execution of core services in collaboration with partners and stakeholders



Future of Work

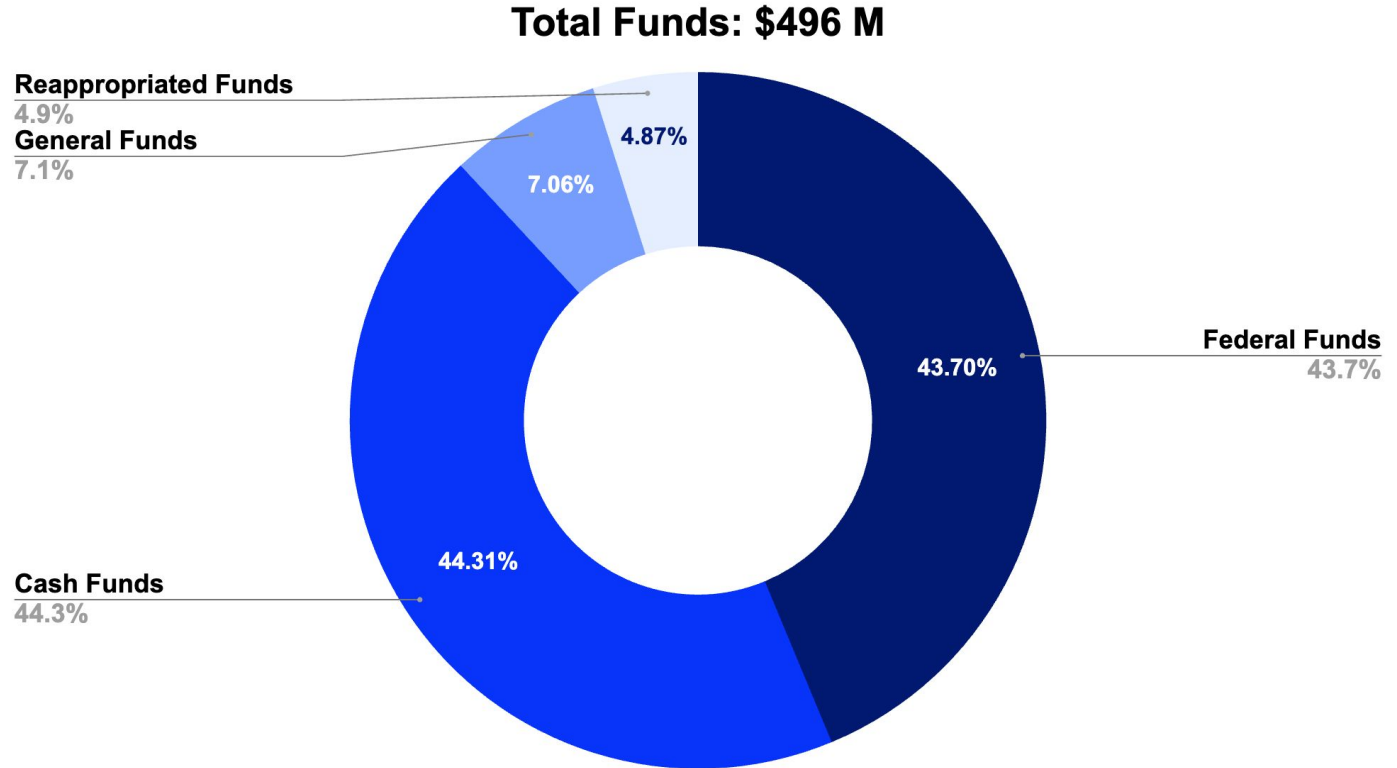
Ensure Colorado is prepared for the Future of Work



Employers Thrive

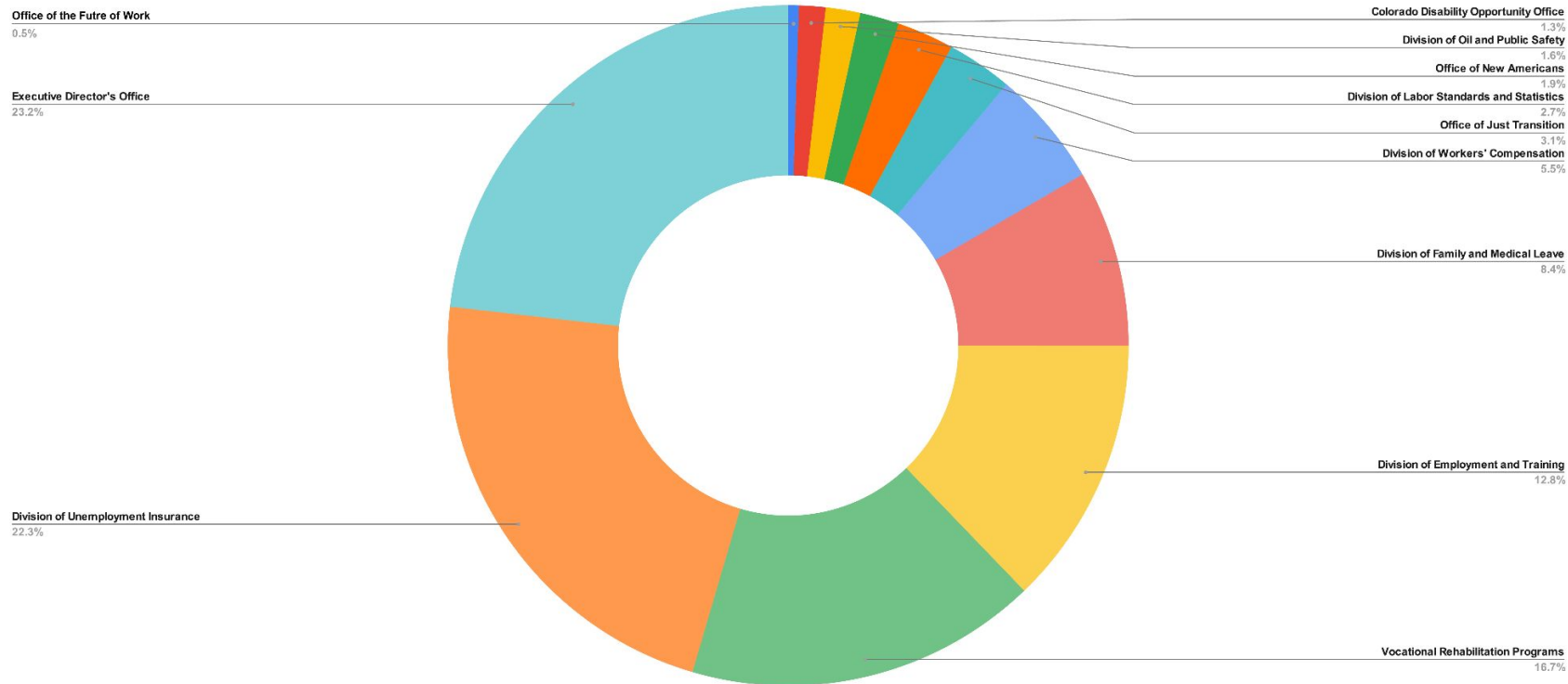
Cultivate policies and processes that help Colorado employers thrive

CDLE FY 2025-26 Budget



CDLE FY 2025-26 Budget

Total Funds: \$496,020,269



CDLE FY 2025-26 General Fund Budget

General Funds Total: \$35,040,149

Oil and Public Safety

0.6 %

Division of Unemployment Insurance

0.3 %

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Services

35.4 %

Office of Just Transition

1.2%

Office of New Americans

2.5%

Office of Future of Work

4.4%

Employment and Training

5.2%

Division of Labor Standards and Statistics

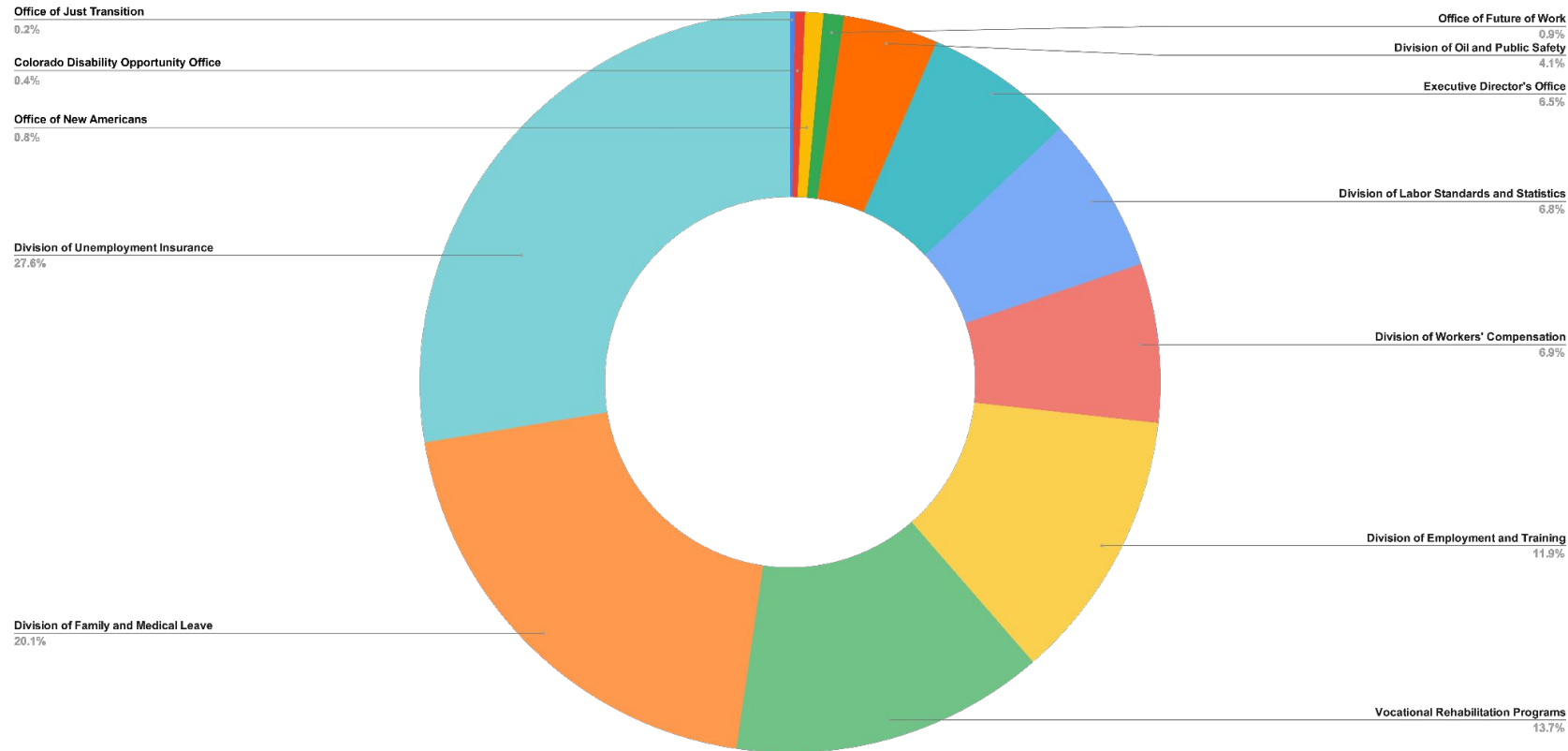
15.4%

Executive Director's Office

35.2%

CDLE FY 2025-26 Budget

FTE: 1753.6



CDLE's FY 2026-27 Budget Requests

CDLE's FY 2026-27 Budget Request includes the following:

- R1 Colorado Disability Opportunity Office spending authority increase and new special purpose authority (SPA)
- R2 Wage Theft Enforcement program spending authority increase
- R3 Employment Support and Job retention (ESJR) program elimination
- R4 Office of Just Transition operating cost reduction
- R5 Labor Standards program reduction
- R6 Office of Future of Work reduction
- R7 office of Independent Living Services reduction
- Statewide R6 prior reductions - Hospitality Education Grant reduction

Legislative Agenda

The Department respectfully requests the General Assembly consider legislation on the following:

- Workers' Compensation Modernization: Update the Workers' Compensation Act to modernize filing requirements in line with recent technology system upgrades and clean up outdated requirements
- Family and Medical Leave Division Enforcement Enhancements: Align the Department's investigatory authority with that of the other Divisions.
- Talent Pipeline Report: Update the Talent Pipeline Report requirements and refresh the tasks of the working groups to better align with Colorado's current and future needs.

Regulatory Agenda

- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
 - Rehabilitation Services Revision (Spring & Winter 2026)
- **Office of Oil and Public Safety**
 - Retail Electric Vehicle Charger (Early 2026)
- **Office of the Future of Work**
 - State Apprenticeship Agency Rules Revision (Fall 2026)
- **Office of New Americans**
 - Colorado Refugee Services Addressing the Move from CDHS to CDLE (February 2026)
- **Division of Labor Standards and Statistics**
 - The Publication And Yearly Calculation of Adjusted Labor Compensation (PAY CALC) Order (Fall 2026)

Regulatory Agenda

- **Division of Family and Medical Leave Insurance**
 - Private Plans Revision (Spring 2026)
 - Premiums and Individuals Electing Coverage Revision and Program Integrity Revision (Fall 2026)
 - Local Government Participation with the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program Revision (Fall 2026)
 - Benefits and Employer Participation Requirements Revision (Fall 2026)
 - Coordination of Benefits and Reimbursement of Advance Payments Revision (Fall 2026)
 - Employee Job Protection, Anti-retaliation, and Anti-interference Revision (Fall 2026)
 - Concerning Investigations Revision and Concerning Appeals Revision (Fall 2026)

Regulatory Agenda

- **Division of Workers' Compensation**
 - Surcharge Revision (Spring 2026)
 - Self-Insurance Revision (Spring 2026)
 - Provider Education Revision (Spring 2026)
 - Fee Schedule Revision (Fall 2026)
 - Definitions Revision (Spring 2026)
 - Closure of Claims and Petitions to Reopen Revision (Spring 2026)
 - Provider Accreditation Revision (Summer 2026)

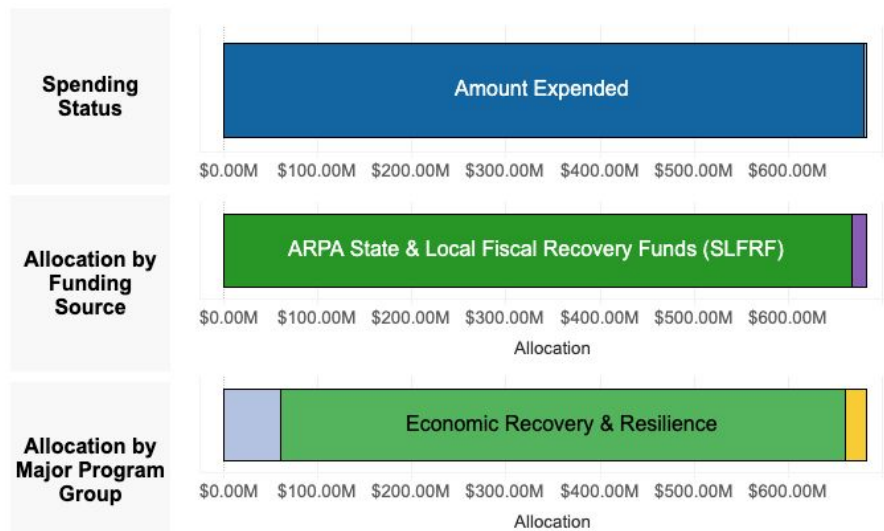
Colorado For All

In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order [2020 175](#), the Department has implemented the following efforts:

- Ongoing accessibility review to ensure CDLE's sites exceed all digital accessibility standards
- Develop a unified process for coordinating all Title II work within the Department
- Ensuring access to information in other languages

Stimulus Funding Implementation

CDLE received funds through 5 state bills in 2021 and 2022
Federal funds are spent or encumbered to spend by the deadline of
12/31/2026



For ongoing updates, please visit Colorado's stimulus website: coforward.colorado.gov.

Stimulus Funding Implementation, Workforce

[HB21-1264: Increasing Worker Skills](#)

Additional information is available in the [public quarterly report](#) on the CWDC website.

- RUN Programs show a 61% increase in quarterly median wage 6 months after program participation
- 12,552 Coloradans have been enrolled in skill development programs
- 3,182 Coloradans received career coaching

Required SMART Act Reporting

- Employment Support & Job Retention Program Update (HB22-1230 (8-83-405(2))
- Colorado Call Center Job Losses (HB19-1306 (24-48.5-125(2))
- Work-Based Learning Incentive Program Report Update (SB22-140 (8-83-602(2)(h))
- SPARC Annual Report (HB21-1149 (24-46.3-504(2))*)
- UI Trust Fund (8-72-101 (3)(b)*)
- Financing Components of the Office of Just Transition Plan & Expected Results (HB19-1314 (8-83-503(3)(c)*)
- Talent Pipeline Report Recommendations (24-46.3-103(3))
- Construction Registered Apprenticeship Grant Program (HB23-1246 (8-83-701(3)(b))
- Employment First Advisory Partnership (8-84-303(7))

*All CDLE Reports submitted to the General Assembly and Office of the Governor can be found on the CDLE Stakeholder Website ([linked here](#)).

HB22-1230: Employment Support & Retention Services Program

- **360** individuals served from July 1, 2025 through December 30, 2025
 - 57 (15.83%) Rural
- Work status of individual when referred to the program:
 - 60 Underemployed
 - 300 Unemployed
- Average Amount per Request: \$309.71 spent on individuals (\$400 cap)
- Top three services requested:
 - #1 Emergency Housing
 - #2 Transportation Vehicle
 - #3 Work Tools
 - Individuals may receive more than one service, but individuals cannot exceed the \$400 allotted cap

HB19-1306: Colorado Call Center Job Losses

Call Contact Centers Impacted from January 1 - December 31, 2025

WARN TOTAL: 848

While not specifically in NAICS: 561422: Telemarketing & Contact Centers, these company call centers in other industries had significant layoffs

- Comcast, 302 employees
- Teknowledge OPS USA, 324 employees
- Nordstrom Credit Bank Centennial, 222 employees

Non-WARNs - TOTAL: 87

- 0 call centers reported unemployment Initial Claims of 10+ per month in 2025 for NAICS: 561422 Telemarketing Bureaus and other Contact Centers
- Federal Agencies: BLM National Operations Center, 87 Employees

SB22-140: Work-Based Learning Incentive Program

KEY PROGRAM OUTCOMES



Workforce Investment: 175,367
Work-Based Learning Hours
Completed by nearly 3,000 individuals.



Direct Job Placement: 196
Participants Hired in the Industry as
a direct result of their program
participation.



Employer Engagement: 289
Participating Employers, including
75 Small Businesses (over 25% of
participants).

STRATEGIC FINANCIALS



\$3 Million
Total Budget: \$3 Million




Funding to Employers: 74%
of funds were allocated
directly to employers (or
intermediaries) to support
training, mentorship, and
infrastructure.



Targeted Incentives: Additional
incentives were provided to
small and rural businesses to
promote economic diversity.

IN THE 2024-2025 FISCAL YEAR

Nearly 3,000 
individuals were engaged in
the WBLI program.

175,367 
work-based learning hours.

SPARC: Strengthening Photovoltaic and Renewable Careers

This program concluded in Fiscal Year 2025. The [final report](#) was submitted to the legislature in October 2025. Highlights from the final report include:

High volume of referrals to programs through workforce centers:

- 2,868 referrals were made to job seekers to share information about SPARC training opportunities
- 790 students were trained through the community college system
- 7 new courses were developed, 8 new programs were submitted for approval, and 11 new entrance options were created for existing programs

UI Trust Fund 8-72-101 (3)(b)*

- Total fund
 - Revenues: \$1,418 million in FY2025 (Net Employer Contributions plus Interest)
 - Expenditures \$887 million in FY2025 (Regular State UI Payments)
- Highest Balance: \$1,293 million (May 2025)
- Lowest Balance: \$670 million (March 2025)
- Reserve Ratio: 0.64% as of June 30, 2025
- Average high-cost multiple: 0.46 as of December 2025 (estimated)

[2025 CO UI Trust Fund Status Report.](#)

Financing Components of the Office of Just Transition

Through HB21-1290 and HB22-1394, the General Assembly transferred \$30 million in General Funds to the Just Transition Cash Fund to assist coal communities and workers in Colorado. And HB21-1312 will provide at least \$7 million more in dedicated funding through 2030 from changes made to the coal severance tax.

- Action Plan Implementation and Community Assistance Program (\$15m GF)
 - OJT has dedicated \$11.46 million for community grants. As of the end of CY25, OJT has awarded \$8.85 million for 24 projects by 16 entities.
 - OJT provides a grant writer to assist transition communities in applying to other funders, with a high return on investment.
 - OJT has funded facilitators and attorneys to help some transition communities participate at the Public Utilities Commission. OJT's investment of \$200,000 has resulted in at least *\$89 million* in community assistance commitments from utilities, a return on investment of at least \$445 for each \$1 spent.
- Transition Worker Program (\$15m GF, \$7m Severance Tax revenues)
 - With layoffs at mines and power plants just beginning in 2025 and likely extending through 2030, OJT has committed at least \$22m to a wide range of services to assist workers and families in their transitions.
 - Services include financial planning, career coaching, peer counseling, education and training reimbursements, retirement assistance, business start-up assistance, and more - as outlined in C.R.S 8-83-504.5



For more details, please see the [November 2025 OJT Expenditure Report](#).

Talent Pipeline Report Recommendations



Current WIOA Strategies

Increase the **QUALITY** of upskilling opportunities, jobs, and career pathways

Increase **EQUITABLE** economic opportunity for individuals who experience barriers based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, age, zip code, and/or socioeconomic status

Enhance **ACCESS** to programming by creating more seamless connections between high school, post-secondary education, and the workforce

Increase **AFFORDABILITY** of career-connected education and training for Coloradans of all skill levels who have completed or left the K-12 education system

Report Policy Recommendations

Using Data to Make Informed Decisions & Measure Impact

Make the Postsecondary Talent Development System Easier to Navigate

Construction Registered Apprenticeship Grant Program (HB23-1246)

- 9 BuildUp Grants awarded in FY 24/25, serving 107 apprentices
 - 5 grants in Round 1 (5/2024 - 9/30/25)
 - 4 grants in Round 2 (12/2024 - 12/31/2025)
- Funding Allocation and Expenditure Summary (as of 12/1/25)
 - Staff time: \$169,090.90
 - Other Expenses: \$8,114.70
 - Grantee Allocation: \$980,432.53
 - Grantee Reimbursement: \$654,932.03
- Final grant outcomes (employment/completion/earnings) will be reported in 2027

Employment First: Prioritizing Competitive, Integrated Employment

- Employment First Advisory Partnership (EFAP) C.R.S. 8-84-303(7)
 - AKA the “Employment for All Partnership” (EFAP) is led by the Disability Employment First Collaboration Manager. This position is grant funded.
 - EFAP’s focus areas include employment resources for youth and developing the Virtual Connection Center with a grant from SIPA
- As part of the State as a Model Employer initiative (SAME) CDLE continues the pilot of a Disability Hiring Preference in partnership with DPA to increase employment of people with disabilities within the State of Colorado, with over 40 employees with disabilities hired.
- DVR goal to increase co-enrollment with Workforce Center participants, supported by co-located Disability Program Navigators who help remove barriers to accessing services
- Subminimum Wage Employment eliminated through SB-21-039
- Business Relations team focused on improving access to Registered Apprenticeships.
- Awarded multiple grants to further Employment First initiatives in Colorado including Disability Innovation Fund Pathways to Partnership Grant to expand pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities in underserved communities

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