

Adult CTE Pathways Rooted in Equity, Care, and Completion



Introductions!



Your facilitators:

Junior Reina Toc: Director of Engaging Learning Assets & Career Experiences, RRCC

Mel Toering: Co-Director of Adult Education Services, TSC

Anna Super: Director of First Year Experience, ACC

Dr. Ally Garcia: Director of Adult Education Initiatives, CDE

Lauren Jones: CTE Program Director for Special Populations, Counseling & Career Development CTE in CO/Community College System

WHO ARE YOU?

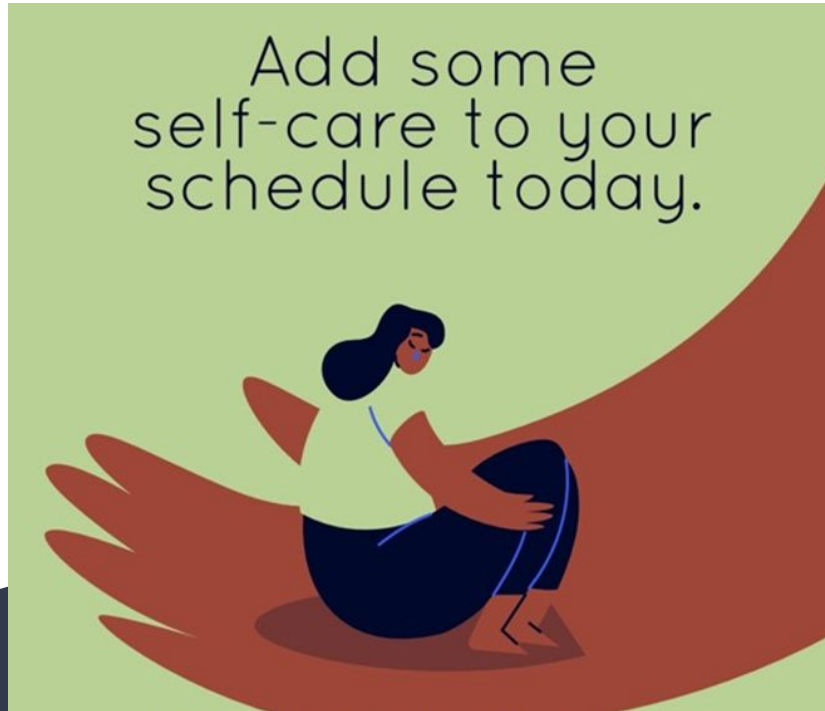
Learning Outcomes



By the end of our session, we aim to help you:

- Identify where adult learners encounter barriers within their pathways.
- Examine how systems either support or hinder completion.
- Apply an equity and accompaniment lens to pathway design.
- Leave with one actionable strategy for improving learner persistence.

Care activity/ demonstration:



[16 Easy Brain Gym Exercises To Improve Focus And Memory](#)

Learner Profile Group Activity

View Profiles through a lens of Care:

Walking Alongside Adult Learners

- Care for the whole person-See the whole learner
 - Design systems that reduce barriers
 - Build partnerships
 - Measure success
 - Lead with accompaniment
- Care is not an add-on to s

Then.....

Take a Gallery Walk

Reflection for Institutional Leaders

After reviewing each profile, administrators can ask:

What barriers are created by our institutional policies rather than by the student?

Which campus offices should collaborate to support this student?

Where might this student encounter friction during enrollment, advising, financial aid, or registration?

Which existing resources could be better coordinated?
What additional partnerships or services are needed?

How can we redesign systems so students do not have to navigate support on their own?

How would you **leverage**: CTE programming? AEI? WIOA? Workforce Pell? HS Diploma Programming for Adults? Ability to Benefit? Other alphabet soup of initiatives....



Guiding Principle

The goal is not to ask, "**How can this student adapt to our institution?**" but rather, "**How can our institution adapt to better serve this student?**" By designing systems that are flexible, equitable, and student-centered, institutions can improve access, persistence, and completion for the diverse adult learners they serve.



Big picture things:



The Colorado Paradox

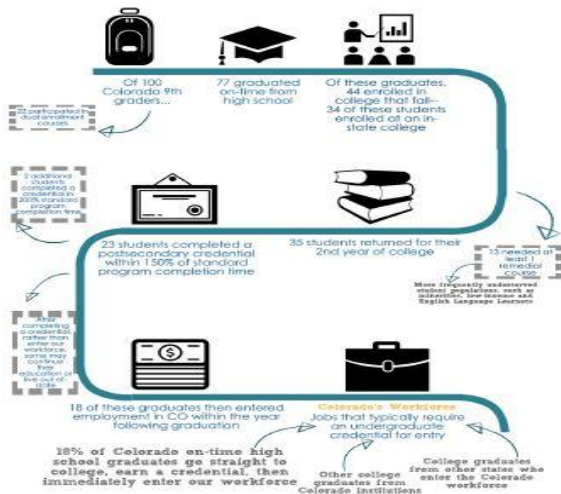
The state has one of the most highly educated populations, but its homegrown students go to college at very low rates. Why?

It is often listed as one of the [most educated states](#) in the country, where 38 percent of the population has a bachelor's degree, and 63 percent have some kind of postsecondary credential. And yet, the percentage of homegrown students in Colorado going on to college and earning a degree is one of the lowest in the nation.

Colorado Talent Gaps

The Colorado

Our conventional concept of a talent pipeline is the progression of our high school graduates who enroll directly in college, complete a credential, then enter our workforce, as depicted below...



OF EVERY 100 COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

83 will earn a diploma

43 will enroll in college after one year

26 will graduate college within 6 years

20 will make a living wage for an individual within 5 years (\$40K)

7 will make a living wage for a family within 5 years (\$77K)

Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Higher Education



Colorado Workforce
Development Council



Current Labor Demand

CTE Strategic Plan 2024-2028



According to the 2014-15 Colorado Skills for Jobs Report, 74 percent of all jobs in Colorado will require some level of post-secondary education or training by the year 2020. Jobs that are in great demand in Colorado and pay above a living wage that can support a family (such as nursing, engineering, information technology and accounting) overwhelmingly require formal education or training beyond high school for entry into these fields. Adult education programs help adult learners acquire skills necessary to compete successfully in today's workplace.

Adult education programs may offer a range of services, which may include:

- adult basic education (math computation and reading, writing, speaking, and listening)
- adult secondary education (generally high school equivalency preparation)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships

Adult education programs are available to individuals that:

- Are generally 17 years or older.
- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school.
- Do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Want to learn to speak, read, and write the English language

See the [Find a Program](#) page for information about federal and state-funded adult education programs and the services they offer.



D 2025 006

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Reimagining the Future of the Postsecondary Talent Development System in Colorado

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order reimagining the future of the postsecondary talent development system in Colorado.

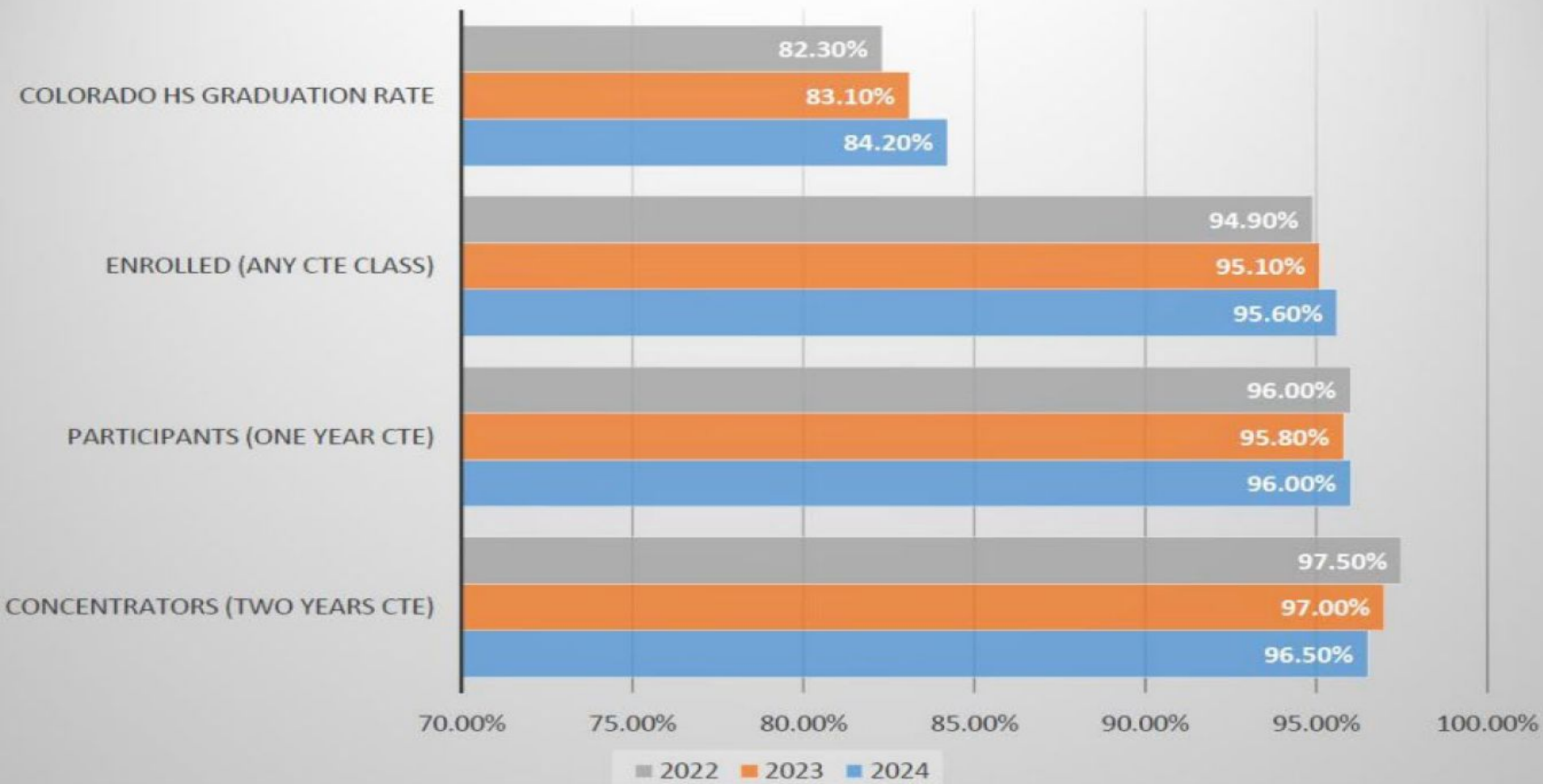
I. Background and Purpose

Colorado's workforce is one of the secrets of our success. Colorado has a strong track record of high labor force participation and credential attainment. Over the course of my administration and in partnership with the General Assembly, Colorado has created a policy framework that identifies and prioritizes the skills needed in our economy and expands learner pathways to success. To date, Colorado has invested in free in-demand credentials, created stackable credentials, grown registered apprenticeships, developed the continuum of work-based learning, encouraged skills-based hiring, expanded access to postsecondary and workforce readiness programs in K-12 and higher education, supported dual and concurrent enrollment, developed business-led talent development solutions, improved the affordability of higher education, created a statewide longitudinal data system for measuring outcomes, and led the nation by adopting an equivalency framework for different modalities of education. This policy framework is foundational to ensure there are no wrong doors and no dead-ends on a Coloradan's journey to success.

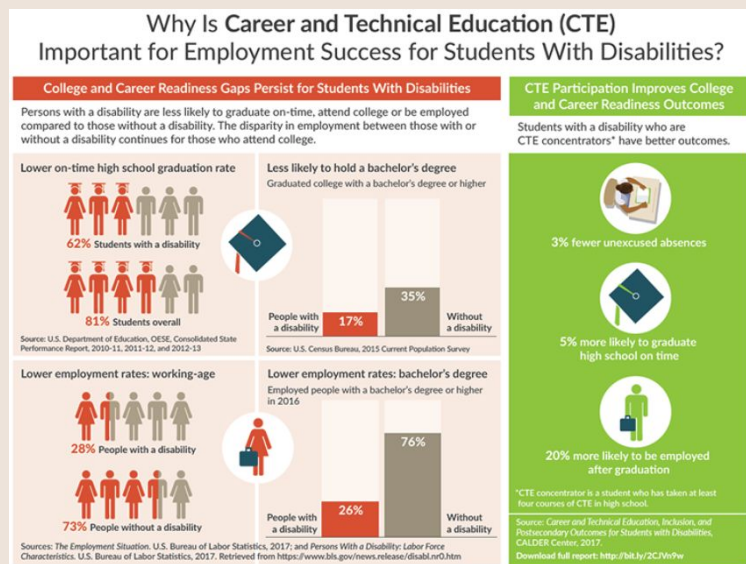
To that end, the General Assembly championed HB 21-1330, which created a Student Success and Workforce Revitalization Task Force. Through the work of this task force, Colorado set a bold new vision for education and training. The HB 21-1330 Task Force recommended building a learner-centered talent ecosystem, ensuring better results from targeted increases in State education and training investments, and ensuring a flexible and adaptive talent development system. To build on the vision for a learner-centered talent ecosystem, we must continue to close the gaps between academic and occupational education and training. State postsecondary education and training efforts must meet learners where they are and serve them dynamically to continue to meet the workforce demands of Colorado's growing economy.

[May 2025 Exec Order](#)

CTE Graduation Rates



In 2022-23 school year, the four-year graduation rate for **CTE students with Disabilities** in Colorado was **94.59%** compared to **69.3%** in traditional high school settings.



PWR = Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Essential Skills

Preparation for the Educational Opportunities and the Workforce

Colorado Graduates have the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Colorado Academic Standards) that can be applied in an interdependent, interdisciplinary way, and leveraged in a variety of situations both locally and globally.

Colorado Graduates are:

Communicators

Media Literacy
Digital Literacy
Data Literacy
Interpersonal Communication

Problem Solvers

Critical Thinking & Analysis
Collaboration & Teamwork
Creativity & Innovation
Adaptability & Flexibility

Community Members

Civic Engagement
Global & Cultural Awareness
Social Awareness

Empowered Individuals

Self-Awareness
Self-Management
Perseverance & Resilience
Self-Advocacy & Initiative

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cwdc/colorado-talent-pipeline-report>

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/essentialskills>

Edits
coming

Each

Equity is when ~~every~~ student
has what they need to succeed.



Special Populations (as defined by Perkins V) \$\$ For CTE

Members of the Special Populations Section of New and Related Services are professionals working with youth or adults, who are:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals from economically disadvantaged families
- Individuals preparing for non-traditional fields
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Out-of-workforce individuals
- English learners
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of the foster care system
- Youth with a parent who
 - Is a member of the armed forces
 - Is on active duty



🔍 Search...

HOME CTE VISION ▾ ABOUT US ▾ FUNDING ▾ DATA ▾ **PATHWAYS AND PROGRAM QUALITY ▾** CAREER DEVELOPMENT ▾ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ▾

ACE: Special Populations

Home » PATHWAYS AND PROGRAM QUALITY » ACE: Special Populations

ACE Menu

- > [ACE: Special Populations](#)
- > [ACE Programming & Resources](#)
- > [ACE Promising Practices](#)
- > [ACE Credential](#)
- > [ACE Teacher Conference](#)
- > [ACE CTSO – \(SC\)2](#)





Caring for Communities

Education - Michelle Dennis
Early Childhood Development
Education Administration & Leadership
Learner Support & Community Engagement
Outdoor Recreational Leadership
Teaching, Training, & Facilitation

Healthcare & Human Services - Jordan Whittington & Michelle Dennis
Behavioral & Mental Health
Biotechnology Research & Development
Community & Social Services
Health Data & Administration
Personal Care Services
Physical Health

Public Service & Safety - Jordan Whittington
Emergency Response
Judicial Systems
Local, State, & Federal Services
Military & National Security
Public Safety

Building & Moving

Advanced Manufacturing - Alex Dickey & CarrieAnn Mathis
Engineering
Industrial Machinery
Production & Automation
Robotics
Safety & Quality Assurance

Construction - Alex Dickey
Architecture & Civil Engineering
Construction Planning & Development
Equipment Operation & Maintenance
Skilled Trades

Supply Chain & Transportation - Alex Dickey
Air & Space Transportation
Ground & Rail Transportation
Maintenance & Repair
Planning & Logistics
Purchasing & Warehousing

Connecting & Supporting Success**

Digital Technology** - CarrieAnn Mathis
Data Science & AI
IT Support & Services
Network Systems & Cybersecurity
Software Solutions
Unmanned Vehicle Technology
Web & Cloud

Management & Entrepreneurship** - Jody Bennett
Business Information Management
Entrepreneurship & Small Business
Leadership & Operations
Project Management

Marketing & Sales** - Jody Bennett
Market Research, Analytics, & Ethics
Marketing & Advertising
Retail & Customer Experience
Strategic Sales

Alternative Cooperative Education** ACE - Lauren Jones

Creating & Experiencing

Arts, Entertainment, & Design - Michelle Dennis & CarrieAnn Mathis
Design & Digital Arts
Fashion & Interiors
Lighting & Sound Technology
Media Production & Broadcasting

Hospitality, Events, & Tourism - Michelle Dennis
Accommodations
Conferences & Events Management
Culinary & Food Services
Travel & Leisure

Cultivating Resources

Agriculture - Kelly Schmidt
Agribusiness
Agricultural Power Technology & Automation
Animal Systems
Food Science & Processing Plant
Systems
Water Systems

Energy & Natural Resources - Kelly Schmidt
Clean & Alternative Energy
Conservation & Land Management
Ecological Research & Development
Environmental Protection
Resource Extraction
Utilities

Investing in the Future***

Financial Services - Jody Bennett
Accounting
Banking & Credit
Financial Strategy & Investments
Insurance
Real Estate

****Interdisciplinary Clusters**
Denote careers that overlap in all industries, highlighting the versatile and interconnected nature of today's workforce. These careers can stand on their own or be contextualized in each Cluster and emphasize the need for adaptability in navigating the modern economy.

Notes:
Clusters are listed in alphabetical order. Clusters and Sub-Clusters represent the current and emerging world of work in Colorado. PWR skills are embedded in every CTE program and course.

**Business and Marketing secondary CTE programs will include Management & Entrepreneurship, Marketing & Sales, plus Financial Services under Investing in the Future.

Communication: Media Literacy, Digital Literacy, Data Literacy, Interpersonal Communications
PWR Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness

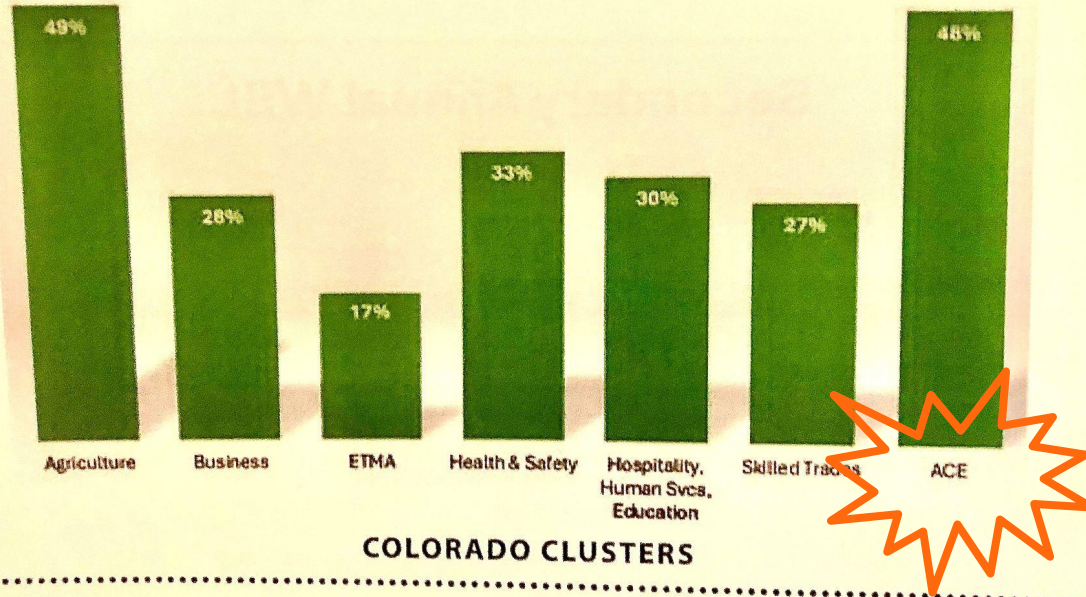
Problem Solving: Critical Thinking & Analysis, Collaboration & Teamwork, Creativity & Innovation, Adaptability & Flexibility
PWR Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness



Empowered Individual: Self-Awareness, Self-Engagement, Self-Advocacy & Initiative, Career Awareness
PWR Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness

cluster, Business, Agriculture, and Health Sciences contributed most to the overall performance in the Colorado clusters, Agriculture, ACE, and Health Sciences had the highest percentage Learning.

2024 GRADUATE CONCENTRATORS PERKINS WBL PERFORMANCE



2024 GRADUATE CONCENTRATORS % CONTRIBUTION TO PERKINS WBL

■ Agriculture

■ Media Arts

■ Business

Two-Prong Approach CTE and ABE = foreseeable **Adult/PS ACE CTE** in CO!



Secondary
CTE

The Youth Prong
(based on secondary CTE and dual
enrollment in post-secondary CTE)

In-school youth are provided shortened programs so they earn an associate degree, complete an apprenticeship, and earn stackable, industry-recognized credentials at the time of high school graduation.

Workforce Pell
TLI
CCCS HS
Diploma
programming

Postsecondary
CTE and
WIOA Title 1

→ STACKABLE CREDENTIALS →

→ MAPPED TO AA/BA DEGREES →

BOTH PRONGS OF THE CAREER PATHWAYS MODEL ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TO EARN STACKABLE CREDENTIALS ACROSS A COMPETENCY MODEL FOR IN-DEMAND CAREER PATHWAYS

Low-skill jobs

Middle-skill jobs

Advanced-skill jobs

Adult Basic
Education

The Adult Prong
(based on co-enrollment in postsecondary
CTE and adult basic education)

Adult learners are provided lengthened career pathways with multiple on and off ramps so they can upskill, earn a credential, and reenter the workforce to receive a higher wage.



Ally – Larger picture happenings in AEI for CO & nationwide

Who are adult learners & Why does this matter?

Dual-enrollment is about access!

[Big Blur](#) integration (for adult learners) - tools, platforms, data systems

Happenings

-WIOA Title II opportunity

-Workforce Pell

-Ability to Benefit

-Reimaging Postsecondary and Workforce- state office

-High School Diploma Program Model in Community Colleges

Awesome article: [How a community college program is giving adults another chance at a high school diploma](#) (5 min listen)

Ally & Anna – Visual that highlights the GAP/

How would you support a learner who has some high school education but would like to also get into the workforce as soon as possible with a job that pays a liveable wage?

GED waiting times

Funding - what ways are you seeing/using funding in creative ways?

Transition from secondary to post-secondary

Inequities across state campuses (personnel, leadership, policies, community partners, etc...)

Secondary perspective - where are you running into issues?

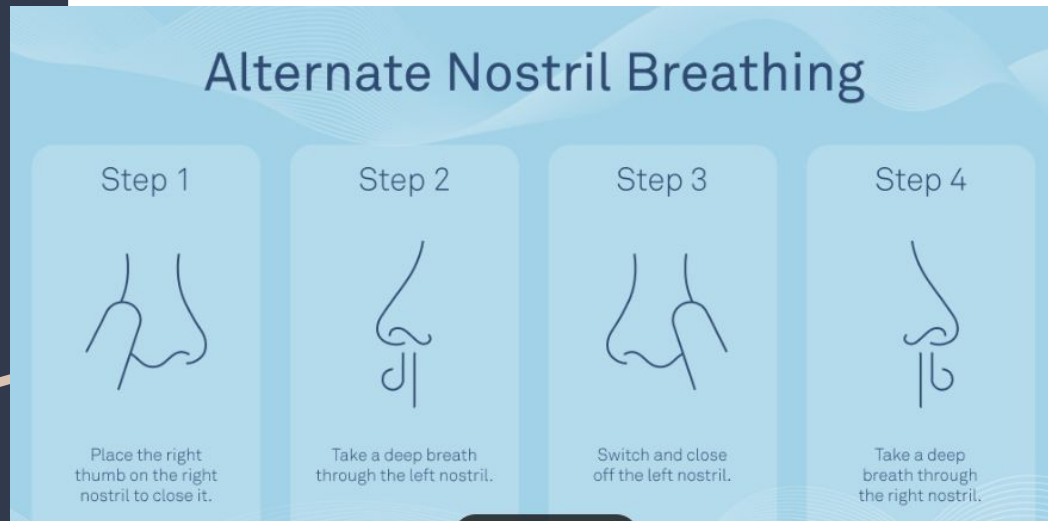
DOC voices - where are you running into issues?



Care activity/ demonstration:

Walking Alongside Adult Learners

- Care for the whole person-See the whole learner
- Design systems that reduce barriers
- Build partnerships
- Measure success
- Lead with accompaniment
- Care is not an add-on to student success.
- Care is the pathway to student success





Hear from other campuses SHOWCASE (dreams and upcoming plans):

Junior: RRCC

Mi Casa hosted HS Diploma Program

Mel: TSC

Concurrent Enrollment 'dream'

Anna (zoom): ACC

[Elevate Program](#)



Small group Discussion (with agreements - led by Mel)
or big group attendee share out their dreams and plans

Resources

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

**Get College Credit for What You
Already Know!**

What is PLA?

PLA is an opportunity to earn credit for work and life experience, community service, job, military, in-service training and online or extension courses.

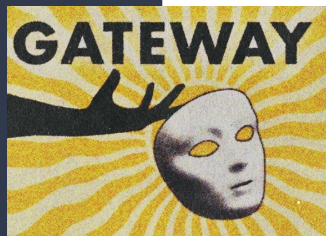
To be eligible to apply for PLA:

1. You must be a RRCC Student
2. PLA credit must be directly applicable to your declared certificate or degree program as outlined in the RRCC Catalog
3. Prior learning must be demonstrated and cover specific course competencies
4. It is the student's responsibility to determine the transferability of PLA credits outside the Colorado Community College System
5. Your RRCC transcript will show class credit only; no grades are assigned to PLA credit
6. You may receive PLA credit in any amount not to exceed 75% of the total credits required for your degree or certificate

Students can receive PLA credit through:

1. Portfolio of learning / certificates
2. Challenge Exams-offered through some academic departments
3. Previous transcripts-AP, IB, JST, ACE, CLEP, DSST, or other schools

rrcc.edu/admissions/prior-learning-assessment-pla



College Gateway was established in 2006 to support individuals transitioning back into their communities by reducing recidivism through education. The program provides a pathway to higher education while supporting participants in becoming engaged, contributing members of their communities.

The ADVANCE Adult High School Diploma Program empowers adult learners to move forward by providing a flexible, supportive, and student-centered pathway to earning a high school diploma while preparing for college, career advancement, and lifelong success.

Who Can Join?

- Adults 21+ who do not have a high school diploma
- Individuals balancing work, family, and other possibilities

You supported with enrollment, advising, and goal planning along with 1-1 attention for career planning and furthering your education.

Location: Mi Casa Resource Center
Time: 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Classes:
Mondays-Civics (PSC 0090)
Tuesdays & Thursdays-Math (MAT 0250)
Wednesdays- English (0090)
Program Fee: \$75 per course enrollment



Fill out the interest form under:
Career→Adult High School Diploma (Advance)

• ADVANCE: Adult High School Diploma

What You Will Gain

- Earn a High School Diploma
- Take English, Math, and Civics
- Prepare for college, career, or other opportunities
- Receive academic and personal support
- Learn in a welcoming, adult-focused environment

Trinidad State College Adult Education Services



Learn more about our programs
and resources online!
trinidadstate.edu/adult-education



Mel Toering, Co-Director of Adult Education Services
at Trinidad State College

- Joined the task force in February 2026 focus on credentials required for Adult Ed instruction to meet CTE criteria
- Supporting learners through elementary through post-secondary education with Adult Education Services
 - English as a Second Language
 - Adult Basic Education (help your children with homework, refresh yourself, improve skills)
 - Adult Secondary Education (help your children with homework, refresh yourself, improve skills, progress to GED)
 - GED Testing (Alamosa, Trinidad, and Walsenburg and Remote options coming soon)
 - Workforce Collaboration WCRA in Central and Eastern Regions
 - Family Literacy Programming in Alamosa
- Learning about gaps and opportunities to reduce friction in supporting learners in transition from Secondary to Post-Secondary education and employment

Elevate at Arapahoe Community College

Elevate at ACC is an inclusive post-secondary transition option for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that includes:

- Student-centered planning
- Internship opportunities
- Peer mentoring
- Career planning
- Self-determination and goal-setting assistance
- Individualized academic planning
- Campus life involvement
- Independent living skill development
- Community partnership opportunities

Comprehensive Higher Education Certificate

Required Courses (18 credit hours)

AAA 101- College 101: The Student Experience	1 credit
AAA 109 - Advanced Academic Achievement	3 credits
CCR 092 - College Composition and Reading	5 credits
CIS 118- Introduction to PC Applications	3 credits
MAR 106 - Marketing Your Image	3 credits
COM 125 - Interpersonal Communication	3 credits

Major Courses (18 credit hours)

Students will build an individualized academic plan in conjunction with an Elevate staff advisor to gain competencies for employment in their desired field.
Total: 36 credit hours

Director: Jennifer Woegens

jennifer.woegens@arapahoe.edu



Upcoming opportunities:



Join our taskforce!

1st Thursday of each month 11:30a-12:30p via
Zoom

August 4 Lead Together Summit: Connecting Adult Education, CTE, and Workforce Success ([Kansas](#))

August 10 no-cost webinar: *Creating Seamless Learner Pathways: Promising Practices for Aligning Adult Education, CTE, and Workforce Systems* 12-1p [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

September 16-18 Arlington, VA: [Postsecondary CTE Event - ACTE Online](#)

November 11-13 emPWR Conference Glenwood Springs: [Colorado ACE CTE Website - emPWR Conference](#)

What opportunities do YOU have?

Care activity/demonstration

5-4-3-2-1
calm



5 things you can see



4 things you can hear



3 things you can smell



2 things you can taste



1 thing you can taste

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Connect with us!

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Junior Reina Toc: Junior.ReinaToc@rrcc.edu

Mel Toering: Melissa.Toering@trinidadstate.edu

Anna Super: Anna.Super@arapahoe.edu

Dr. Ally Garcia: garcia_allyson@cde.state.co.us

Lauren Jones: lauren.jones@cccs.edu

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