

Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) - Denver, CO

Award Amount: \$12,000,000

Project Name: Colorado Healthcare Experiential Learning Pathways to Success

Projected Apprentices to Be Served: 5,000

Industry Focus: Healthcare

Private Sector Partners include a business consortium composed of Kaiser Permanente, Centura Health, HealthOne/HCA, UCHealth, and Colorado Rural Health Center.

Type(s) of Apprenticeship Program Proposed: Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program (IRAP), and others.

The Colorado Healthcare Experiential Learning Pathways to Success (CO HELPS) project seeks to make high-wage, high-demand occupations in the healthcare industry accessible to everyone, regardless of previous education. The project is targeting 23 healthcare industry occupations, most of which exist within career clusters in the diagnostic services, health informatics, nursing, and occupational/physical therapy fields. By partnering with the Colorado Rural Health Center, composed of rural health clinic members, the project also aims to increase participation among rural employers, while scaling the project to the state's rural and frontier communities.

CO HELPS's design allows apprentices to stack their learning to move into higher-skilled jobs within an occupational cluster. By awarding credit for prior learning and coupling paid OJT with non-credit (and thus less expensive), industry-vetted Related Technical Instruction (RTI), apprentices are receiving training in an accelerated format to pass national exams certifying their competencies. While all modularized and competency-based RTI is designed to be conducted online in order to facilitate national scaling, employer partners are committed to teaching all in-person labs. In turn, CO HELPS is training these employer staff members so that they can effectively convey their expertise to apprentices. Moreover, the project is ensuring that all programs of the Colorado partner colleges, which are providing the occupation-specific, online RTI, will articulate to Colorado State University, for the benefit of those students interested in completing a four-year health care degree.

To scale the project nationally, CO HELPS's employer partners have committed to expanding the apprenticeships to their company locations beyond Colorado—in particular, to Tennessee, Kansas, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Georgia, Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. In addition, lead applicant CDHE is developing partnerships with employers in states with similar licensing and regulatory structures. By the project's final year, CDHE, in partnership with the Colorado Community College System, plans to develop a curriculum package for each of the industry-vetted apprenticeship programs so that they can be licensed to other colleges across the country.

Lead applicant CDHE, Colorado's single-state higher educational board, represents every institution of higher education in the state, including 17 two-year and 14 four-year public colleges, and 103 private and 307 private occupational institutions. CO HELPS's nine higher education partners include Aims CC, Arapahoe CC, CC of Aurora, Emily Griffith TC, Lamar CC, Pikes Peak CC, Pueblo CC, Red Rocks CC, and Trinidad State JC.