



THE
COLORADO
EDUCATION
INITIATIVE



Colorado Workforce
Development Council

STEM Career Pathways RFP

The Colorado Education Initiative and Colorado Workforce Development Council

Introduction

[The Colorado Education Initiative](#) (CEI) is spearheading a process for improving STEM education in ways that increase opportunities for all students, meet business needs, and attract new companies to the state. The [Colorado STEM Education Roadmap](#) (Roadmap) was created in collaboration with numerous stakeholders to identify three common goals and underlying strategies necessary to reach these goals: develop a strategy to sustain and advance STEM education; support all students P-12 in achieving STEM literacy; and build a local STEM-ready talent pipeline.

A key component of this work is to ensure students have access to opportunities to develop employable skills in occupations requiring less than a four-year degree that offer a path to a better standard of living (see the Roadmap Appendix D Goal 3.2.b online at [Appendix D: Detailed Goals, Strategies, and Actions](#)).

Partners

This work is dependent on collaboration across key partners to ensure alignment between K-12, workforce development, and higher education. Partners on this project include: The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI), the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT).

The Colorado Education Initiative, co-lead, has a mission to unlock the unique potential of every student in Colorado by incubating innovation, shining a spotlight on success, and investing in sustainable change that improves outcomes for all students. CEI is helping to drive the work outlined in the Roadmap and functions as a convener and supporter. CEI is responsible to administer grant funds and, along with the Colorado Workforce Development Council, will evaluate metrics of success.

The [Colorado Workforce Development Council](#), co-lead, works to create and sustain a business-led Colorado talent system that appropriately integrates the work of economic development, education, training, and workforce development to meet the needs of business, students and job-seekers. CWDC will serve as a resource to connect to active and emerging sector partnerships and career pathway initiatives.

The [Colorado Department of Education](#) is the administrative arm of the State Board of Education and is responsible for implementing state and federal education laws, disbursing state and federal funds, holding schools and districts accountable for performance, licensing all educators, and providing public transparency of performance and financial data. CDE will act as a resource partner on this work and assist with technical support for grantees as needed.

The mission of the [Colorado Department of Higher Education](#) is to improve the quality of, ensure the affordability of, and promote access to, postsecondary education for the people of Colorado. In pursuing its mission, the CDHE will act as an advocate for the students and institutions of postsecondary education and will coordinate and, as needed, regulate the activities of the state's postsecondary education institutions. CDHE will be a resource for grantees and will provide technical assistance as needed.

The [Colorado Department of Labor and Employment](#) provides information and tools to help Colorado businesses and workers remain competitive. Its mission is to protect and promote the integrity and vitality of Colorado's employment environment. CDLE will serve as a resource partner for information about the state economy and job trends in Colorado and to connect individuals and programs with career services at local workforce centers.

The [Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade](#) is the division of Governor Hickenlooper's Office responsible for encouraging economic development and job growth across the state. When Governor Hickenlooper took office in 2011 he issued an executive order to create a statewide economic development strategic plan – [The Colorado Blueprint](#) (Blueprint). The Blueprint outlines a bottom-up approach that focuses on growth in key industries across 14 economic regions.¹ OEDIT will serve as a resource to connect to regional partners and to state wide efforts.

Purpose & Background

CEI, through generous support from JP Morgan Chase and the Women's Foundation of Colorado, has \$60,000 of available grant funding for up to three (3) grantees. Grants cover a period of 12 months and will result in youth gaining skills, experiences, and employment in middle-skill STEM occupation in Colorado growth sectors.

The purpose of this request for proposal is to solicit proposals from Colorado Sector Partnerships and/or regional partner representatives to develop career pathways for youth to acquire in-demand middle-skills jobs in STEM occupations within growth sectors with upward salary mobility.

The CWDC website has [resources](#) to explain how Career Pathways are created and how Sector Partnerships foster their creation. Brief definitions are provided below for context.

Career Pathways

A career pathway is a series of connected education and training programs, work experiences, and student services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in a demand industry or occupation.²

¹ <http://www.advancecolorado.com/blueprint>

² <http://www.sectorssummit.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Creating-Career-Pathways-in-Colorado-A-Step-By-Step-Guide.pdf>

Sector Partnerships

Sector partnerships bring together employers, at a regional level and from the same industry, with the education, training, and other community support programs needed to implement solutions and services that ensure the target industry thrives.³

Eligibility

Applicants must be representatives of an active or emerging Sector Partnership in Colorado. A representative must be verifiable by CWDC or have a letter of support from a verifiable representative of a Sector Partnership.

Representatives can be nonprofit partners, K-12 education institutions, higher education representatives, or other qualified members of a Sector Partnership.

Proposal Guidelines

In their applications, applicants must:

- Create a career pathway that builds on existing regional efforts
- Include an [active \(or emerging\) Sector Partnership](#)
- Include and engage with K-12 education
- Align to labor market needs in industry growth sectors in middle-skill STEM occupations with upward salary mobility (as defined by The Brookings Institute report, [The Hidden STEM Economy](#), the [Colorado Jobs for Skills 2014 legislative report](#), and local labor data)
- Target and serve low- to moderate-income (LMI) youth and underrepresented populations
- Focus on occupations with upward salary mobility
- Expose students to career opportunities (e.g., internships and apprenticeships)
- Result in employment, industry-valued credentials or job training, and/or industry certification in growth sectors
- Include robust mechanisms for measuring impact
- Show how they are demonstrating competencies valued for the in-demand jobs

Indirect costs cannot exceed 10% of total budget.

Format

Applications must:

- Be five pages or less
- Be standard letter size with numbered pages, 12-point font, and single-spaced with 1-inch margins
- Include the following supporting documents:
 - 501c3 and tax exempt forms
 - Board of Directors
 - Financials (year-end, current budget, financial statement)
 - Letter of support from any grant partners
 - Roles and responsibilities of the grant partners
 - Biographies of staff who will support the grant

³<http://www.sectorssummit.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Creating-Career-Pathways-in-Colorado-A-Step-By-Step-Guide.pdf>.

The proposal should include the following sections:

Section Title	Description
Organization Contact Information	Executive Director and Primary Contact (Name, Title, Phone, Email, Address)
Organization Description	Mission, Vision, Short History
Details of Proposal	Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target industry sector and occupation(s) • Proof of labor growth, local demand & salary • Lead entity & key partners • Populations served • Reach (# of students, # of companies, etc) • Description of other supports (e.g. TANF, Title I, etc.)
Outcomes and Impact	Describe mechanism for measuring impact and describe how you will determine competency
Milestones and Deliverables	12 month timeline
Budget and Budget Narrative	Detailed breakdown of budget and narrative supporting budget items

Information Sessions

CEI will host two informational conference calls to answer questions for applicants. Please email Liz Kuehl at lkuehl@coloradoedinitiative.org to register for a call on one of the following dates:

- Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 1pm MST
- Thursday, February 19, 2015 at 10am MST

Submission

Notice of intent to apply must be submitted electronically to lkuehl@coloradoedinitiative.org by **Friday, February 27, 2015**. Email subject line should be “**STEM Career Pathways RFP**” and body should briefly indicate your intent to apply.

Final proposals must be submitted electronically to lkuehl@coloradoedinitiative.org in one PDF document by **Friday, March 13, 2015, before 5pm MST**. Email subject line should be “**STEM Career Pathways RFP.**”