CEEMI COLORADO EQUITABLE ECONOMIC MOBILITY INITIATIVE

Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

COLORADO WAGE OUTCOMES RESULTS COALITION

The Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative has partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver to launch the Colorado Wage Outcomes Results Coalition (CO WORC).

CO WORC is a data-sharing initiative created in response to the growing demand from public and private sector stakeholders to access meaningful employment and earnings data. Utilizing the Linked Information Network of Colorado, and connecting data safely and securely through the Governor's Office of Information Technology, CO WORC is unlocking previously unavailable administrative earnings data from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

In 2023, CO WORC launched a first cohort of six training providers, including: ActivateWork, the Center for Employment Opportunities, CrossPurpose, The Master's Apprentice, Mile High Workshop, and the Women's Bean Project. Each one of these providers works with slightly different target populations via different models, though they all aim to help individuals facing barriers to employment and provide services to those trying to maintain or achieve economic stability.

Providers in the first cohort were asked to share specific data elements, including social security numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers to ensure the greatest-probability of identifying a match in the CDLE earnings records. Through this process, we were able to match 88.8% of ActivateWork participants with CDLE earnings records. With this information, CO WORC was able to generate trends in earnings data typically beginning two years prior to beginning a training program and two years post entry into a program.

These data are a first step towards understanding return on investment. CO WORC is committed to building-evidence for Colorado's workforce training programs and expanding the number of programs with verifiable earnings data for their learners on a regular schedule.

About ActivateWork

Tuition Free Training Provider
15-17 weeks
*12 months of personalized coaching and wrap-around support post-job attainment*

ActivateWork prepares diverse, underrepresented candidates for roles in IT through a technical training and professional development model developed by Per Scholas. Per Scholas is a nationally recognized program with positive results across 24 cities: MDRC's WorkAdvance Study found that $1 spent on training translated to $8 returning to the local economy. ActivateWork implements the Per Scholas model in Colorado by connecting diverse, qualified talent to leading employers through free, rigorous skills training, community resources, and professional and life skills coaching. ActivateWork provides comprehensive durable skills coaching through the first 12 months of employment to ensure successful career transitions. From 2020 to 2024, ActivateWork enrolled 400 learners, with an 85% graduation rate and a 72% job attainment rate. Graduates on average increase their incomes by 2X post-training and attain job retention rates of 93% at 12 months, surpassing industry averages.

Average Earnings

Quarterly earnings data come from CDLE W-2 records. Earnings are income from formal employment (e.g., an hourly wage rate times the number of hours worked).[1] Earnings are gross (pre-tax and before any other deductions). All earnings values are inflation adjusted to reflect purchasing power in 2023 dollars using the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood area Consumer Price Index.[2, 3]

The following event-study graph plots the average total quarterly earnings of program participants. Participants include all enrolled learners, whether or not they graduated from the program. Quarter 0 is the quarter when participants started the program. Earnings are tracked starting 8 quarters prior to program start and ending 12 quarters after program start. For example, the average total quarterly earnings of participants in their quarter of enrollment (Quarter 0) was $5,776.
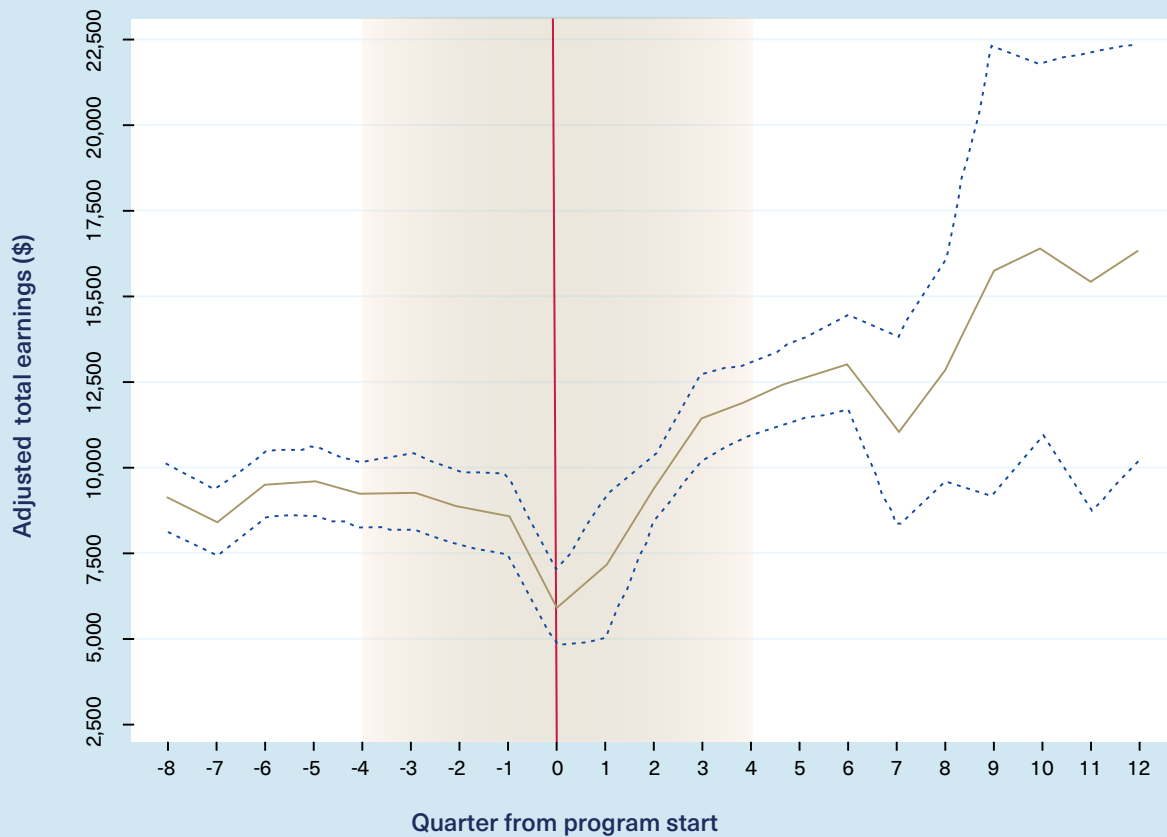
- Inflation adjusted average total quarterly earnings show a slight, but steady decline prior to program enrollment, suggesting a prolonged period when earnings are not keeping up with inflation and foreshadowing the need to access an alternative career pathway
- The decline in average total quarterly earnings at program enrollment is consistent with program participants diverting time from employment to training and upskilling
- After program completion, average total quarterly earnings increase, surpassing pre-enrollment levels and suggest continued growth two and three years out

Earnings Distribution

The following table summarizes of the distribution of earnings at select points in time.
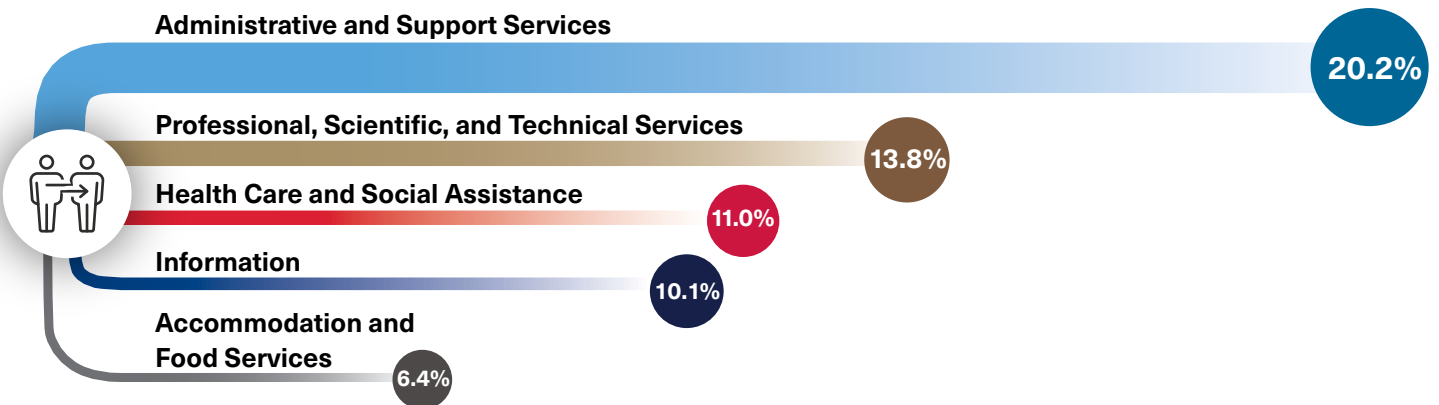
	Quarter -4 (n=168)	Quarter 0 (n=138)	Quarter 4 (n=83)	Quarter 0 to 4 growth	Quarter -4 to 4 growth
Average earnings	9,134	5,776	11,956	107.0%	30.9%
Median earnings	8,752	4,222	12,387	193.4%	41.5%
Standard error of average earnings	481	554	535		
Earnings of the 25th percentile participant	4,686	1,836	9,027	391.7%	92.6%
Earnings of the 75th percentile participant	12,053	8,014	14,402	79.7%	19.5%

- Average and median total quarterly earnings are 30.9% and 41.5% higher, respectively, four quarters after program enrollment when compared to four quarters prior to program enrollment
- Between Quarter -4 and 4, total quarterly earnings of the 25th earnings percentile participant grew 92.6%, indicating that the earnings floor rose

Industry Composition

CDLE provides North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to categorize participants' place of employment. Knowing what sectors participants are transitioning into one year after program enrollment can inform industry partnerships (n=109).

Administrative and Support Services 20.2%

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services 13.8%

Health Care and Social Assistance 11.0%

Information 10.1%

Accommodation and Food Services 6.4%

- ActivateWork participants are attaining jobs in diverse sectors including administrative and support services, professional, scientific, and technical services, health care and social services, and information in the fourth quarter after program enrollment"
- ActivateWork follow-up survey data shows that graduates attain tech jobs including Help Desk Technician, Systems Engineer, Data Center Operations Technician, Cyber Analyst Apprentice, Systems Engineer, Field Service Technician, and Software Developer Apprentice

Program Snapshot

The following table provides a demographic snapshot of participants when they start the program (n = 322). These data are collected by ActivateWork as part of an intake survey.

		Measure at intake
Median Age		32
Gender (%)	Women	33.1%
	Men	65.1%
	Prefer not to answer, other, or N/A	1.8%
Race/Ethnicity (%)	Asian	13.0%
	Black or African American	26.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	21.1%
	White	33.7%
	Prefer not to answer, other, or N/A	5.7%
Highest level of education (%)	HS diploma or equivalent	48.8%
	Some college	11.4%
	Bachelor's or higher	28.6%
	Trade school	2.7%
	Prefer not to answer, other, or N/A	8.4%

- 33.1% of participants are Women and 65.1% are Men
- 47.6% of participants identify as Black or Latino/Hispanic
- 42.7% have pursued education or vocational training beyond high school

[1] Earnings are not equivalent to compensation or income. Compensation adds employee benefits (e.g., in-kind benefits, employer-financed retirement benefits). Income adds unearned income (e.g., interest, dividends, government transfer payments like food stamps or unemployment compensation).

[2] Earnings prior to 2023 are adjusted to reflect their equivalent purchasing power in 2023. This accounts for the fact that a wage of $20 per hour in 2019 could buy more than $20 in 2023.

[3] Includes Adams, Arapahoe, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park counties.

This work would not be possible without anonymized data provided by the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC). The findings do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology or the organizations contributing data.

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