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 [Women's Bean Project](#). Each one of these providers works with 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 96.8% of Center for Employment Opportunities 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 Center for Employment Opportunities

Paid transitional job experience, job readiness coaching and training, and 12 months of continued support post-placement

Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is an evidence based program dedicated to ensuring that legal-system impacted job seekers have opportunities to achieve socio-economic mobility. CEO provides immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services to people recently released from incarceration. CEO's participants often face significant barriers to employment, including gaps in work history or no work history, limited access to supportive services, and the stigma of a criminal record. CEO guarantees every participant up to four days a week of transitional work on its social enterprise and daily pay – a critical asset during an important time of transition. In addition, CEO provides a robust set of wraparound vocational support services, including job development and coaching. Once participants find full-time positions, CEO continues to provide support for a year, helping them grow in their careers. CO WORC is helping CEO understand more about wage growth trajectories for their Colorado crews.

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 for 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. Individuals are hired into CEO's transitional jobs program and earn daily pay immediately upon enrollment. Earnings are tracked starting 8 quarters prior to program start and ending 3 quarters after program start. For example, the average total quarterly earnings of participants in their quarter of enrollment (Quarter 0) was $2,328.
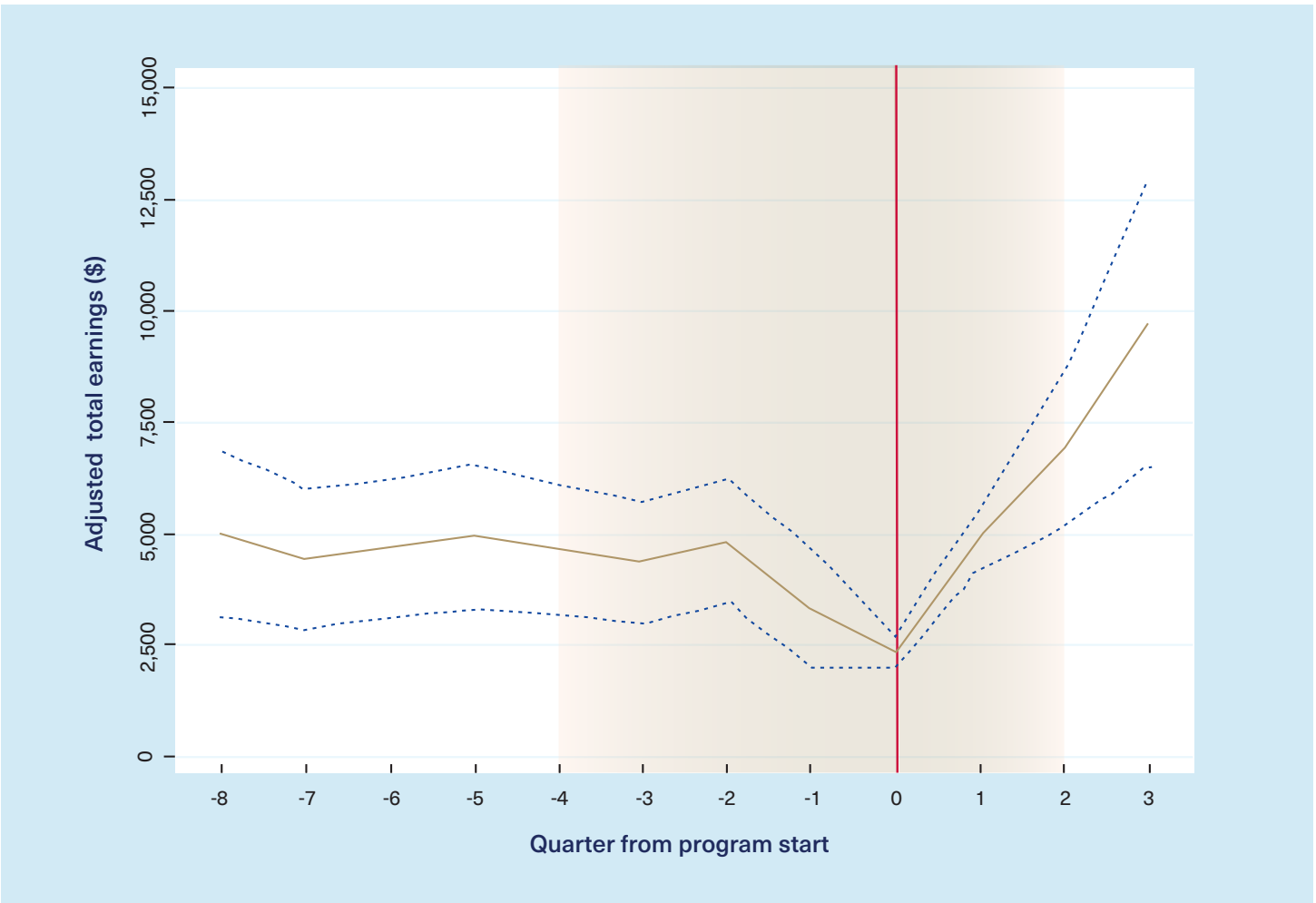
- Inflation adjusted average total quarterly earnings display no upwards or downwards trend prior to program enrollment, indicating a prolonged period of earnings keeping up with inflation
- The dip in average total quarterly earnings at program enrollment is consistent with program participants experiencing a change in their financial situation, and reflects the reasons individuals may choose to seek CEO's services
- After program enrollment, average total quarterly earnings recover quickly, surpassing pre-enrollment levels. Most individuals spend 2-4 months in the transitional job, before finding full-time employment outside of CEO, typically during Quarter 2

Earnings Distribution

The following table summarizes the distribution of earnings at different points in time.
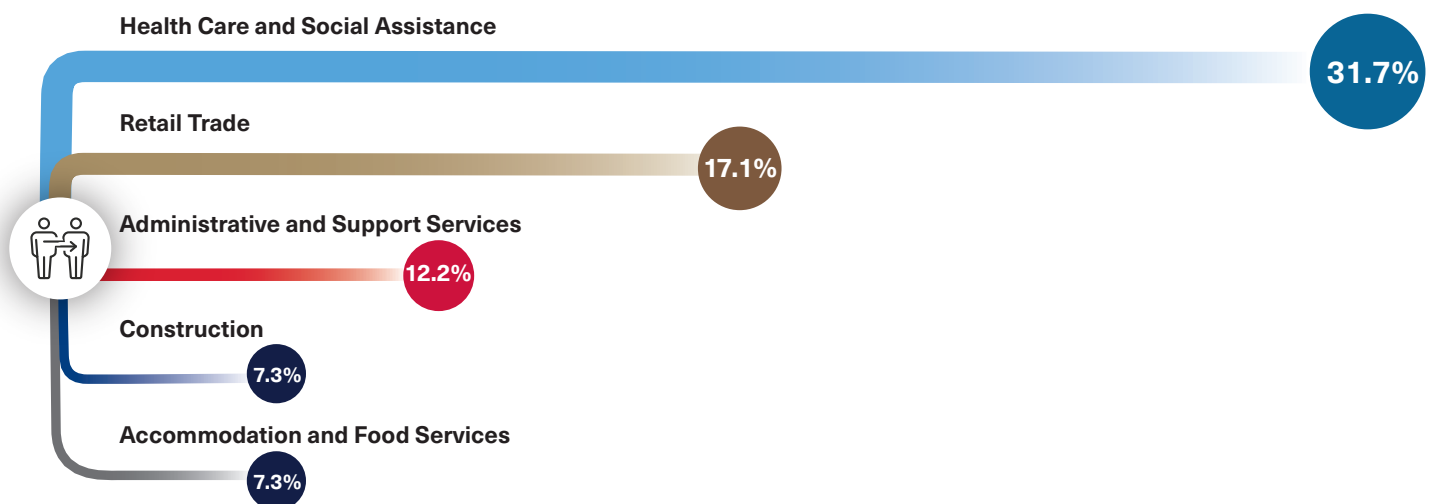
	Quarter -4 (n=39)	Quarter 0 (n=110)	Quarter 2 (n=26)	Quarter 0 to 2 growth	Quarter -4 to 2 growth
Average earnings	4,608	2,328	6,861	194.7%	48.9%
Median earnings	3,137	2,090	6,518	211.9%	107.8%
Standard error of average earnings	722	165	836		
Earnings of the 25th percentile participant	509	819	3,963	383.9%	678.6%
Earnings of the 75th percentile participant	7,658	3,363	8,711	159.0%	13.8%

- Average and median total quarterly earnings are 48.9% and 107.8% higher, respectively, two quarters after program enrollment when compared to four quarters prior to program enrollment
- Between Quarter -4 and 2, total quarterly earnings of the 25th percentile participant is nearly 8 times higher, suggesting that the earnings of participants at the lower end of the distribution rose substantially

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=41).

Health Care and Social Assistance — 31.7%

Retail Trade — 17.1%

Administrative and Support Services — 12.2%

Construction — 7.3%

Accommodation and Food Services — 7.3%

- A majority of participants are working jobs in health care and social assistance, retail, and administrative and support services in the second quarter after program enrollment; this includes working for employers providing medical, social assistance, and business support services

Program Snapshot

The following table provides a demographic snapshot of participants when they start the program (n = 124). These data are collected by Center for Employment Opportunities as part of an intake survey.

		Measure at intake
Median Age		38
Gender (%)	Women	19.4%
	Men	79.8%
	Prefer not to answer, other, N/A	0.8%
Race/Ethnicity (%)	Black or African American	25.8%
	Hispanic/Latino	23.4%
	White	37.9%
	Prefer not to answer, other, N/A	12.9%
Highest Level of Education (%)	Less than HS diploma or equivalent	14.5%
	HS diploma or equivalent	53.2%
	Some college	23.4%
	Bachelor's or higher	4.8%
	Prefer not to answer, other, N/A	4.0%

- CEO participants are predominantly men
- Almost 50% of participants are Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino
- 68% of participants have a high school education or less

[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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