

The First Year: Colorado Resource Partners' WORKNOW Economic Impact

In June 2017, Gary Community Investment made a two-year investment, which included co-creating a collaborative partnership with multiple state and local government employers, to expand the Community College of Denver's Center for Workforce Initiatives (CWI) and establish it as the backbone organization of WORKNOW, the metro region's first collective impact workforce platform.

WHY WE INVESTED

The metro Denver region has experienced rapid growth that has adversely impacted many low-income communities through rising housing costs and displacement. GCI's partnership with CWI and the Colorado Department of Transportation takes advantage of the state's intention to use economic development opportunities, like the Central 70 expansion project, to benefit low-skilled, low-income working parents by providing them with meaningful pathways to jobs with middle-class wages. Our investment ensures the integration of a two-generation approach to mitigate barriers for employees participating in WORKNOW. This investment also creates a dedicated funding stream for a network of child care centers along the I-70 corridor, to support working parents. GCI's investment means work supports like child care, are available to increase opportunities for success working parents.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Being born into poverty can severely restrict a child's opportunities in life. But research shows that boosting families' income, and helping them build assets, improves children's short- and long-term education, health and economic outcomes. Programs like WORKNOW, which promote job training and entrepreneurship, lead to meaningful economic advancement for families living in low-income communities, providing them with the resources they need to stay in their homes, support their children and share in the benefits of Denver's overall economic expansion. In addition, the WORKNOW platform will be a longer-term solution to issues in Colorado's workforce development ecosystem. In just over a year, with collaboration across government, business, philanthropy, nonprofit organizations and community residents, this platform has already had a significant impact on families and the local workforce ecosystem.

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Preparing Workers for Industry Success & Increasing Family Income

WORKNOW Participant Profile

- 252 WORKNOW participants have secured “new” industry employment.
- 190 additional WORKNOW participants are incumbent workers seeking to upskill their careers.
- 69% of WORKNOW participants are parents.

Growth in Wages

- Before enrolling in the program, WORKNOW participants reported an average wage of \$10.43./hour.
- Over the past year, WORKNOW participants' average wages have risen to \$18.56/hour.

Impact on Families & the Economy

- In under six months, 305 families have experienced a 20% gain toward economic self-sufficiency.
- For the local economy, conservatively, this means about a \$1,921,000 boost in new revenue for goods and services in the local economy.

Resident County	Pre-WORKNOW as Hourly Percent of Self-Sufficiency Wage	WORKNOW as Hourly Percent of Self-Sufficiency Wage	Percent gain toward Self-Sufficiency (2018 Standard)
Adams	27%	48%	21%
Boulder	22%	40%	18%
Arapahoe	26%	46%	20%
Denver	25%	45%	20%
Douglas	23%	41%	18%
Jefferson	25%	45%	20%

Resident County	Self-Sufficiency Hourly Wage
Adams	\$38.72
Boulder	\$46.46
Arapahoe	\$40.78
Denver	\$41.48
Douglas	\$45.67
Jefferson	\$41.25

We're on the right track—and we can do even better. The construction industry provides several critical career pathways to the middle class, and many positions provide family-sustaining wages and health benefits.