

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
September 8, 2021, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee
Meeting Summary – FINAL**

RMRI WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE	
ATTENDANCE: Samantha Albert, Kim Hunter, Molly Pitts, Time Reader, Ellen Roberts, Kendra Rodriguez, Tina Saucedo, Scott Segerstrom, Nathan Van Schaik	
ACTION ITEMS	
Scott Segerstrom	Continue working on the white paper that outlines the high-level details of a potential private industry apprenticeship/ internship through the corps program for the November meeting.
Tim Reader and Molly Pitts	Discuss a roadmap for developing a curriculum for using a training simulator before reaching out to Sam Dosumu, PCC Southwest Executive Dean, and Bethany Powell, PCC Southwest Assistant Coordinator, to discuss the opportunity to purchase a training simulator.
Tim Reader	Reach out to economic development staff in OEDIT’s Region 9 and 11 to determine if they are interested in applying for EDA grants.
MEETING SUMMARY	
PRESENTATION TOPIC: Skill Advance Colorado Presentation	
<p>Presentation Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill Advance Colorado is a legislatively-based workforce development grant program designed to support Colorado businesses with state funding for customized job training to strengthen business competitiveness, foster talent, and maintain quality jobs. • Two statutes established the program: the <i>Colorado First</i> statute and the <i>Existing Industry</i> statute. • The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and the Colorado Community College System oversee and administer the program. The program is legally housed in the Governor’s Office. OEDIT oversees strategic planning, policy development and enforcement, and grant approval. The Colorado Community College System provides the same services and oversees fiscal management. • The typical annual appropriation to the program is \$4.5 million. The program serves 14 Colorado industries and provides 70-100 grants per year. The funding cap for the grant is \$150,000. Over 800 companies have participated in the program since 2006, resulting in an average of 4,000 employees trained per year. • The local community colleges administer the program in their local service areas. Businesses work with community college administrators to provide training to employees. College representatives work with the businesses to conduct a training needs assessment before the grant application development phase. The businesses then write and submit their grant application. Once approved, the college representatives monitor the training throughout the grant cycle and write a final report. OEDIT distributes the funding to colleges; the community college then reimburses businesses as they pay for training. • There are two primary programs: the Colorado First Job Training Program and the Existing Industry Job Training Program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Colorado First Job Training provides grants for new and expanding businesses and only provides training for Colorado employees filling newly created positions. There is a \$1,400 cap per learner average across the training budget. 	

- The Existing Industry Job Training Program is for established Colorado businesses. The program provides funding to training incumbent Colorado Workers. There is a \$1,200 cap per learner average across the training budget.
- Training must be short-term and customized to meet business needs to be eligible for funding. The training provider may be a college, college contractor, third-party training vendor, or grantee employee. Third-party vendors have to adhere to certain policies and procedures to qualify for the program.
- There are several other training grant programs: the US Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Apprenticeship Support Program and the Workforce Development Innovation Program.
 - An apprenticeship must be registered or in the process of being registered with the DOL to qualify for funding from the DOL Registered Apprenticeship Support Program.
 - The Workforce Development Innovation Program has strict established guidelines to fund training programs that employ new, creative methods to building workforce.
 - For these programs, the community colleges are the grantees. The colleges then work with an employer partner on program development and training implementation.
- The application requires a cover page, business information, training descriptions, policies and procedures, and a signature. They also require data on employee count and wage information, training budget, and supplemental budget worksheets. Businesses have to contribute a 40% match, which is normally not a big barrier because businesses can account for in-kind match.
- The programs fund training for both hard/technical and soft/essential skills.
- More information on the program and application process can be found at [this link](#).

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Skill Advance Colorado Opportunities

Discussion Points:

- Logging and forestry businesses would qualify for the program under the natural resources industry. It is rare to disqualify a business from the program for not fitting under one of the eligible industries. Other logging businesses have used the program in the past.
- The Skill Advance Colorado programs cannot fund training programs for government agencies. They can fund training programs for for-profits and 501c3.
- The Workforce Development Innovation Program may be a good fit for developing a logging equipment operation training program. In the past, Skill Advance Colorado programs funded training development. The local community college then took the curriculum and integrated it into their regular offerings.
- Skill Advance Colorado grants can fund the full, direct training costs for eligible programs.
- There may be an opportunity for a third-party association to apply for funding to then distribute to for-profit businesses to train new employees. This idea may be possible if the third-party association is a 501c3 and all training occurs in

Decisions/Action Items:

None

<p>Colorado. The grant programs do not provide funding for travel for trainees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Lewis College is working with Pueblo Community College (PCC) through a RISE grant to build a pathway into trades and careers in the environmental sciences. • The primary training need for forestry and logging businesses is heavy equipment operation training. Having trained employees would help reduce costs and risks for businesses. There are existing training programs in Maine and California. • The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has discussed purchasing a simulator to help train the workforce. The cost of a simulator is between \$25,000 and \$50,000. The Skill Advance Colorado programs cannot fund equipment purchasing, but they have another program that can fund the development of a mobile training unit. Under this program, a college has to be the owner of the unit and will be responsible for long-term maintenance and insurance costs. • There are many wildland firefighting modules that employees could take to develop their skills. Skill Advance Colorado can only fund customized training, but it is possible to customize training using a baseline curriculum. They can also fund the cost of certification if the certification is associated with customized training. • Skill Advance Colorado can provide cluster grants for rural areas. A cluster grant is one grant with multiple businesses participating. Cluster grants are complex and challenging to manage, but they can be beneficial in rural areas where there is a small number of employees to train at each business. • There is a need to provide training for businesses and non-profits working in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). The training could focus on providing skills in community outreach and landowner engagement. • Skill Advance Colorado can pay for a specialist to travel throughout Colorado and provide specialized training. 	
<p>DISCUSSION TOPIC: Action Item Updates</p>	
<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Segerstrom is working on a white paper that outlines the high-level details of a potential private industry apprenticeship/ internship 	<p>Decision/Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Segerstrom: Continue working on the white paper that outlines the high-level details of a

<p>through the corps program. Due to the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) being short-staffed, he will provide that white paper by November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellen Roberts reached out to Kevin Heiner to explore opportunities to work with a local foundation to generate extra funding for mitigation work. • Molly Pitts reached out to Clarke Becker, Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium, to continue the discussion on getting the forest restoration industry recognized in the <i>Colorado Talent Pipeline Report</i>. They continue to work on that effort. • Molly Pitts reached out to the Colorado Workforce Development Council to determine whether there was time to provide input on their statewide initiatives. They informed her that the timeline for providing input had passed. • Molly Pitts, Samantha Albert, and Tim Reader have coordinated a meeting time to talk with Trent Thompson from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). 	<p>potential private industry apprenticeship/ internship through the corps program for the November meeting.</p>
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DISCUSSION TOPIC: Partner Updates

<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly Pitts presented to the Wildfire Reviews Committee of the Colorado Legislature on the industry status in Colorado. Molly brought up the need for workforce training. The legislature is interested in identifying priorities to increase implementation. • At this time, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should identify how to best utilize the funding and programs that the legislature passed in the last session rather than develop a policy ask for legislatures in the next session. • The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) received the authority to fund projects related to biomass utilization. The legislature left it up to the CSFS to develop a small grant program for biomass utilization. The CSFS is determining how to best distribute funding, but there may be an opportunity to allocate funding to purchase a training simulator. PCC Southwest would likely be in the best position to purchase a simulator if there is funding available. Purchasing a simulator will not be helpful unless there is a developed curriculum for using it. 	<p>Decision/Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tim Reader and Molly Pitts: Discuss a roadmap for developing a curriculum for using a training simulator before reaching out to Sam Dosumu, PCC Southwest Executive Dean, and Bethany Powell, PCC Southwest Assistant Coordinator, to discuss the opportunity to purchase a training simulator.
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Discussion Topic: EDA Opportunities

- The American Rescue Plan allocated \$3 billion to the EDA, so there may be opportunities to access that funding for workforce development.
- Several programs received funding. Some of those programs may apply to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.
- The Good Jobs Challenge program would apply to the development of higher-skilled, above-average income jobs in the forestry sector, such as engineering and forester jobs. There may be an opportunity for Fort Lewis College to take advantage of this program to create a pipeline to higher-skilled jobs for students.
- The Build Back Better Regional Challenge program has funding set aside for coal communities. This program could help support promoting forestry-related jobs in north-central Colorado. Tim Reader will reach out to economic development staff in OEDIT's Region 9 and 11 to determine if they are interested in applying for EDA grants.

Decisions/Action Items:

- **Tim Reader:** Reach out to economic development staff in OEDIT's Region 9 and 11 to determine if they are interested in applying for EDA grants.

Next Steps

Samuel Wallace will send out a Doodle to schedule the next Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting in October.