

Chambers and Colorado's workforce system

A quick guide for Colorado Chamber Alliance members

Chambers are the front door to Colorado's employers. As the state reshapes its workforce and education system, chambers can add real value by convening employers, elevating their voice, and helping workforce and education partners reach businesses in a coordinated way.

New to workforce development? Start here.

- 1. Meet your local partners first.** Sit down with your local workforce development board director, workforce center business services team, K-12 CTE directors, and community college workforce and CTE leaders. Ask them what gaps exist and where the chamber could help.
- 2. Plan to support employer engagement in partnership.** Your employer network is your greatest asset. Engage employers on workforce development alongside workforce and education partners so businesses get one coordinated ask instead of several duplicative ones.
- 3. Expect every region to look different.** At first, the right way to partner will likely look different in each region. Start with what already exists locally and build from there.

What's changing: HB26-1317 and the Transition Advisory Committee

HB26-1317, the Unified Postsecondary Talent Development System Act, begins bringing more than 20 workforce and higher education divisions across seven state entities into one unified system. A Transition Advisory Committee (TAC), which includes business community representatives, is building the transition plan, due by November 30, 2026. **Chamber role:** share employer experience through TAC feedback opportunities and keep members informed as the new system takes shape.

Connect with a peer: Chris Romer, a chamber executive, serves on the TAC and welcomes questions or concerns (contact info on the back).

Links: [TAC hub, listening tour, and feedback](#) | [HB26-1317 bill page](#)

1. Regional action plans

The 2025 Opportunity Now Regional Talent Summits produced seven Tactical Workforce Plans built on employer input. Seven Regional Action Committees (RACs), led by local workforce development boards with business, education, workforce, and economic development partners, are implementing them, with progress reported annually in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report through 2030.

- **Read your region's plan** and note where employer engagement is a named strategy.
- **Ask your local workforce board** how the chamber can join or support your RAC.
- **Offer your network** to gather employer feedback and champion plan priorities.

Links: [Tactical Workforce Plans](#) | [Summit background \(OEDIT\)](#)

2. Talent Pipeline Management and the Colorado Talent Academy

Talent Pipeline Management (TPM), developed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, helps employers work together like a supply chain: organize around a shared talent need, define demand and competencies, and co-design solutions with education and workforce partners. Colorado Succeeds hosts the **Colorado Talent Academy** with the U.S. Chamber Foundation to train chambers, industry associations, workforce centers, and learning providers to lead TPM collaboratives. **Chamber role:** convene an employer collaborative around a shared need, often in coordination with an existing sector partnership.

Links: [TPM framework \(U.S. Chamber Foundation\)](#) | [Colorado Talent Academy](#)

3. Workforce development grants

Business-led applications are strongest when workforce and education partners are at the table from the start. Chambers can connect members to funding, co-apply, or serve as a convener or intermediary.

- **Skill Advance Colorado:** customized training grants for new hires and existing employees, accessed through your local community college. [Learn more](#)
- **Apprenticeship Colorado:** Scale-Up and Qualified Apprenticeship Intermediary grants, plus a state apprenticeship tax credit. The Grand Junction Area Chamber was a 2025 intermediary grantee. [Funding opportunities](#)
- **CWDC Strong Sectors, Good Jobs:** flexible funding for recognized sector partnerships (2026 round now closed; sign up for future notices). [CWDC funding](#)
- **Local workforce boards:** ask about on-the-job training and incumbent worker training funds available to employers in your area.

4. Workforce resources and partners

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. National home of TPM, with tools, case studies, and peer learning for chambers leading employer-driven workforce work. [Workforce resources](#)

Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The Governor-appointed, public-private state workforce board that advises, oversees, and integrates Colorado's talent development network. Its core strategies:

- **Sector strategies:** industry-led partnerships of employers from the same industry and region working with education, workforce, and economic development partners. [Sector partnerships directory](#)
- **Career pathways:** industry-driven, competency-based pathways published on My Colorado Journey. [Career pathways](#)
- **Shared language:** the CWDC glossary defines key talent development terms. [Glossary](#) | [Employer resources](#)

Workforce centers and local workforce boards. Workforce centers offer free business services, including recruiting, screening, hiring events, and training. Local workforce boards are business-majority boards that set local strategy, oversee workforce centers, and lead the RACs. Invite business services staff to member events and encourage members to serve on the board. [Find a workforce center](#) | [Workforce boards](#)

CareerWise Colorado. A business-led nonprofit running three-year modern youth apprenticeships for high school students. Chambers and economic development groups can serve as local business intermediaries. [CareerWise Colorado](#)

Career and technical education (CTE). K-12 and community college CTE programs rely on local industry advisory committees, which is an easy first ask for chamber members. [Colorado CTE \(CDE\)](#)

Connect with the panel

Chris Romer, President and CEO, Vail Valley Partnership; TAC member and chair of the CWDC Executive Committee. A fellow chamber executive to call with questions or concerns about HB26-1317 and the transition. cromer@vailvalleypartnership.com | 970-477-4016

Ed Sealover, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Colorado Chamber of Commerce. Reach out to learn about other Chamber initiatives and to propose new ideas for partnering with state government and education partners. esealover@cochamber.com | 719-659-7907

Abby Ault, Founder, Innovate Work Consulting. Abby consults with communities and sectors working to align their talent development systems and with organizations developing or strengthening their workforce development strategy. abbyaault@innovateworkconsulting.com | 314-707-0345