



## 2015 Job Skills Report summary

The third annual Job Skills Report ties postsecondary completions to projected future workforce needs and puts Colorado on the leading edge of using data to inform broader discussions about degree programs and offerings at the state’s public and private institutions. To create this report, the agency used workforce projections from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and postsecondary completions data from the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The report also outlines national trends regarding postsecondary education and workforce needs, alongside Colorado specific facts and figures.

### What’s new

- Alignment with the recently released [Talent Pipeline Report](#) and analysis of “Top Jobs” list.

### Key findings

- Colorado has a highly educated workforce and experts project that more jobs will continue to demand some level of postsecondary education (Carnevale, Smith & Strohl, 2013). The state unemployment rate is also lower for people who have a postsecondary credential than for those who have a high school degree or less.
- In 2013, public institutions in Colorado awarded 52,715 certificates and degrees, a 6.0 percent increase from the year prior. Over five years, postsecondary completions have seen an average annual growth rate of 5.8 percent. Looking at completion figures from both public and private postsecondary institutions, if the number of credentials awarded continues to increase, Colorado is on track to meet the [Colorado Commission on Higher Education master plan](#) targets for awards granted in Colorado.
- In alignment with the Talent Pipeline Report, this report isolates a selection of jobs with high projected growth rates and openings, while also offering a sustainable living wage. While not exhaustive of occupations that offer opportunities for Coloradans, it provides a glimpse into promising industries in Colorado overall and can help guide efforts in developing the state’s workforce talent in various sectors. Jobs on this list are concentrated in:

- Construction/extraction;
  - Healthcare;
  - Finance, and;
  - Information technology (IT) occupation clusters.
- A sample of fields where completions may not be meeting projected industry demand include:
    - A number of skilled trades;
    - Mid-level and bachelor's level IT;
    - Bachelor's level finance, and;
    - Graduate/professional level healthcare positions.

## Recommendations

- Use and improve state data sets and data alignment across agencies so as to better understand aggregate trends and use data address policy questions
- Develop effective career pathways, prioritizing a focus on fields in high demand and offer good employment opportunities for Coloradans;
- Closely examine and address supply-demand relationships in areas such as healthcare, IT and skilled trades;
- Build strong industry-institution partnerships;
- Find ways to increase postsecondary success for our fastest growing demographic groups; and
- Provide students and families with the tools and knowledge to make informed educational decisions.

## What's next

- Continued collaboration across state agencies to develop better tools to measure progress made toward meeting the economy's need for appropriately skilled workforce. Work to create a Talent Development Dashboard, identifying shared goals, unifying metrics and tools for tracking this progress on various fronts.

## Learn more

- Read the full report at:  
<http://higher.colorado.gov/Data/Workforce/JobSkillsPage.html>
- For more information or to arrange an interview, contact Communications Manager Julie Poppen at [Julie.Poppen@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:Julie.Poppen@dhe.state.co.us).

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