



Customized training resources
for business and employee success

Colorado First and Existing Industry Job Training Programs FY 2025 Program Overview

Transforming Colorado's workforce through customized training, the Skill Advance program offers State funding for **Colorado First** and **Existing Industry** job training reimbursement grants to strengthen business competitiveness and improve employment opportunities. Colorado First and Existing Industry Programs are jointly administered by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), and grants are locally managed by participating community colleges.

The Colorado First (CF) Job Training Program provides funds for net new hire training and focuses on new and expanding businesses in Colorado with a need to train workers with the skills necessary to increase their productivity, to increase their wages, and to reduce their need for public support.

The Existing Industry (EI) Job Training Program provides funding for incumbent worker training and supports established Colorado businesses with adapting to new technology and preventing layoffs.

Per learner maximum annual funding (based on total training funds approved factored against number of unduplicated learners):

Standard CF and EI Grants: CF - \$2,800, EI - \$2,500

CF and EI Pilot Mini Grants for Micro Businesses: CF - \$3,800, EI - \$3,500

Requirements/Eligibility (See FY 2025 CF and EI Policies and Procedures for Full Details)

- Skill Advance Colorado funding supports only Colorado businesses and employees. Employees funded by the CF and EI programs must be residing and working in Colorado during the grant period.
- All training funded by Skill Advance Colorado must take place within Colorado.
- All grant-funded training must be for full-time (32 hours/week), non-seasonal, non-retail employees who have significant career opportunities, require substantive instruction.
- Grant-funded learners must be working legally in the U.S.
- All training must be short-term and substantially customized (contextualized/tailored content) to specific business needs and related to substantive, resume-building, transferable employee skills.
- Grant applicants are required to pay employees an average wage based on business location. At the time of grant application submission, grant applicants in urban counties must pay at least \$2.00 per hour more than the Colorado State required minimum wage, and grant applicants in rural counties must pay an average wage of at least \$.50 per hour more than the Colorado State required minimum wage.
- Training Attendance Forms and an attendance attestation signed by the grantee are required as documentation of training completion.
- A grantee cash and/or in-kind contribution to training costs is required. Please consult a Skill Advance college representative for details.
- Only for-profit business and non-governmental 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible to apply for funding.
- Grant-funded activities may not begin until the grant application has been approved by State program administrators.
- On-site visits by college representatives are required for new grant applicants; an on-site grantee visit may be conducted by Skill Advance Colorado program administrators.
- Businesses are eligible to apply for Colorado First grants every year and Existing Industry grants every other year.

Additional Information

- The Skill Advance Colorado program fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. (Same as State fiscal year)
- Funding is disbursed to community colleges for reimbursement to grantees. Grantees are reimbursed after training completion.
- Funding is limited for training related to customer service, employer engagement and/or development, sales, marketing, and branding.
- Skill Advance Colorado does not fund
 - training related to grantee/business orientation, personality assessments (i.e., DiSC, MBTI, CliftonStrengths, etc.), strategic planning, project planning, foundational/beginning/basic computer skills or office administration/productivity software (i.e., Microsoft Office Suite and Google Workspace), and non-customized training available at local colleges, workforce centers, and public service providers;
 - training related to federal and state mandated training (e.g., OSHA, Commercial Driver's License (CDL));
 - labor union-required or labor union-funded training; or
 - consulting services.
- Training funds requests are capped at \$150,000 per application; total training funds are capped at \$200,000 per grantee per fiscal year. Grant awards are contingent upon available funding.

Grant Application, Training Completion, and Reporting Dates

State application submission period: July 1, 2024 – April 1, 2025

State Grant activity completion deadline: May 16, 2025 (College deadline may be earlier, consult college representative)

Final Reports due: Within two weeks after training completion

To apply for a job training grant, please contact your local Skill Advance Colorado [community college representative](#).

More information: [Tina Saucedo](#) - Program Manager, Rural Businesses: [Lisa Schaefer](#) - Program Liaison

