



COLORADO
Department of Education

Request for Qualifications

Responses Due: **Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 11:59 p.m. MT**

Workforce Diploma Pilot Program

Pursuant to C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103

For Request for Qualifications Questions:

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Workforce Diploma Pilot Program Request for Qualifications

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Introduction

The Workforce Diploma Pilot Program was established in 2019 through House Bill 19-1236 to support Colorado adults without a high school credential. This program provides financial incentives for eligible providers who are able to reengage adults and support them in obtaining a high school diploma and other credentials. This is a three-year pilot program. See the Colorado General Assembly [website](#) for the [full text of the law](#).

Purpose

The purpose of the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program is to provide Colorado adults ages 21 and older with the opportunity to complete a high school diploma, while transferring the risk to providers who receive performance payments only when those students meet performance milestones so the state can better meet its workforce goals for future economic growth.

Only eligible program providers that meet all of the qualifications listed in this Request for Qualifications and are one of the entities outlined in the below “Eligible Providers” section will be approved as qualified providers and will be eligible for reimbursements.

Eligible Providers

Eligible providers must demonstrate the required evidence set out in the law and explained in the “Required Application Elements” section. An eligible provider must also be:

- A. a public, nonprofit, or private diploma-granting institution accredited by a recognized regional accrediting body and which has at least two years of experience providing adult dropout recovery services, including recruitment, learning plan development, and proactive coaching and mentoring; or
- B. a local education provider, as defined by C.R.S. § 22-10-103(7), is one of the following entities that the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) recognizes as providing appropriate and effective adult education and literacy programs:
 - a. A secondary or postsecondary, public or private, nonprofit educational entity, including but not limited to a school district, charter school, board of cooperative services (BOCES), state institution of higher education, junior college, and area vocational school;
 - b. A community-based, nonprofit agency or organization;
 - c. A library;
 - d. A literacy council or other literacy institute;
 - e. A business or business association that provides adult education and literacy programs either on- site or off-site;
 - f. A volunteer literacy organization;
 - g. A work force board;
 - h. A one-stop partner; or
 - i. A consortium of entities listed above.

Applications will not be accepted from individual schools, but must be authorized and submitted through the local education provider. A charter school's authorizer will be the fiscal agent, if funded.

As outlined in C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(4)(b), once CDE determines that a provider is a qualified provider under the program, the provider remains a qualified provider without the need to reapply annually, unless the provider is removed by CDE from the list of qualified providers for failing to meet performance standards for two consecutive years. Qualified providers will be required, however, to sign an updated assurances form at the start of each fiscal year.

Available Funds

\$200,000 was appropriated by the State Legislature for 2020-21 fiscal year (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). Funding in subsequent years for the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program, including for the third year of this three-year pilot, is contingent upon continued appropriations and upon qualified providers meeting all program, fiscal and reporting requirements.

Reimbursements

The Workforce Diploma Pilot Program operates on a first-come, first-served reimbursement basis for qualified providers for outcomes earned in a given fiscal year. Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(6)(a), qualified providers shall submit requests for funds on an ongoing basis to CDE for student completion or attainment of goals outlined below. If available appropriations are insufficient to satisfy all requests for reimbursement received by a given submission date, the department shall reduce all payments by the same percentage until the money is exhausted. Note that if the available appropriations for a given fiscal year are exhausted, outcomes earned in that fiscal year may not be claimed for reimbursement in the next fiscal year.

CDE will publish monthly reports on the [State and Federal Grant Distribution Reports CDE webpage](#) that indicate the payments disbursed to each qualified provider.

Reimbursements may only be claimed for eligible students. Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-102(2), an eligible student means a student that:

- a) Is at least twenty-one (21) years of age;
- b) Is a resident of the state of Colorado; and
- c) Lacks a high school diploma.

Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(5)(a), a qualified provider that is eligible for reimbursement under the pilot program may receive reimbursements in the following amounts for each eligible student's completion or attainment of the following outcomes:

- I. \$250.00 for completion of each half-credit
- II. \$1,000.00 for completion of an accredited high school diploma
- III. \$250.00 for completion of an employability skills certification program equal to at least one Carnegie unit
- IV. \$250.00 for attainment of an industry-recognized credential requiring up to 50 hours of training
- V. \$500.00 for attainment of an industry-recognized credential requiring between 51 and 100 hours of training
- VI. \$750.00 for attainment of an industry-recognized credential requiring more than 100 hours of training

Note that, per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(5)(b)(II), a qualified provider that receives tuition or other payment from or on behalf of an eligible student shall not also receive a payment from the Workforce Diploma Pilot program on behalf of the eligible student for the same course or program.

A qualified provider is eligible for program payments for outcomes achieved thirty or more days after CDE publishes an updated list of qualified providers.

Reporting and Evaluation

Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-104(1), on or before August 15 of each year in which program payments were disbursed for the prior state fiscal year, each qualified provider that received reimbursement payments under the pilot program for the preceding state fiscal year shall report, at a minimum, the following information to the CDE in the template provided by the Department:

- a) The total number of eligible students for whom the qualified provider received payments
- b) The total number of half-credits earned by eligible students for whom the qualified provider received payments

- c) The total number of employability skills certifications issued to eligible students for whom the qualified provider received payments
- d) The total number of industry-recognized credentials earned by eligible students that required up to 50 hours of training for whom the qualified provider received payments
- e) The total number of industry-recognized credentials earned by eligible students that required between 51 and 100 hours of training for whom the qualified provider received payments
- f) The total number of industry-recognized credentials earned by eligible students that required more than 100 hours of training for whom the qualified provider received payments
- g) The total number of eligible students who earned a high school diploma for whom the qualified provider received payments

The Department may request additional documentation from a qualified provider to confirm the accuracy of the reported data.

Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(7), the Department shall review data from each qualified provider to ensure the programs offered by each qualified provider are meeting the following minimum program performance standards:

- 1.) A minimum fifty percent high school graduation rate from the qualified provider's programs, calculated one year in arrears. The high school graduation rate for a qualified provider is determined by dividing the total number of high school graduates for the cohort year by the total number of all students for the cohort year for which the qualified provider has received payments.
- 2.) The cost per graduate is not more than \$7,000.00. The cost per graduate is determined by dividing the total payments received by the qualified provider for the cohort year divided by the total number of students earning a high school diploma.

CDE shall place a qualified provider that does not meet the minimum program performance standards established in this section on probationary status for the remainder of the state fiscal year in which CDE determines that the performance standards were not met. The qualified provider will still be eligible to submit reimbursements to the Department while on probationary status.

CDE shall remove a qualified provider from the list of qualified providers if the provider does not meet the performance standards for two consecutive years. A qualified provider that does not meet the established program performance standards for two consecutive years will be removed from the list of qualified providers and will not be eligible for reimbursements. The provider may reapply to participate in the program two years after being removed from the qualified provider list.

Review Process and Timeline

Responses to the Request for Qualifications will be reviewed by CDE staff. The list of qualified providers, including contact and service information outlined in Part 1A: Cover Page – Eligible Provider Information, will be published on the [CDE website](#) no later than Thursday, October 8, 2020. Each eligible provider that submits a response to this Request for Qualifications will also be notified of its status via an email to the primary, secondary and fiscal contacts listed in the response by Thursday, October 8, 2020.

Note there is no limit to the number of qualified providers that may be included on the list of qualified providers.

Entities that do not meet the qualifications in this submission process may submit responses to the Request for Qualifications in future years. Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(2), CDE must issue a Request for Qualifications in any fiscal year in which funding is made available by the State Legislature.

Submission Process and Deadline

An electronic copy of the application (in PDF format) must be submitted to AEI@cde.state.co.us by Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 11:59 p.m. MT. The electronic version should include all required components as one document. Faxes will not be accepted. Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered. If you do not receive an email confirmation of receipt of your submission within 24 hours of the deadline, email AEI@cde.state.co.us. Application materials are available for download on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/wdpp>.

Application Format

- The total Qualification Criteria section of the application cannot exceed 22 pages. See the required elements of the application below. Note: Applications with Qualification Criteria narratives that exceed 22 pages will not be reviewed.
- All pages must be standard letter size, 8-1/2" x 11" using 12-point font and single-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.
- Use the Word versions of the Part I documents posted on the [WDPP webpage](#).
- The signature page must include original signatures of the lead organization/fiscal agent.

Required Elements

The format outlined below must be followed in order to assure consistent review of the applicant qualifications.

Part I: Application Introduction (does not count toward the page count)

Part IA: Cover Page – Eligible Provider Information

Part IB: Assurances Form

Part IC: Proposed Reimbursement Table

Part ID: Course Credits Table

Part II: Qualification Criteria Narrative (must be 22 pages maximum)

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Part IA: Cover Page – Eligible Provider Information

Eligible Provider Information			
Entity Name		DUNS # (if applicable)	
Mailing Address		LEA/BOCES Code (if applicable)	
Website			
Entity Type			
<input type="checkbox"/> School District <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Cooperative Services <input type="checkbox"/> Private School <input type="checkbox"/> Charter School (if qualified, the authorizer will be the fiscal agent) <input type="checkbox"/> Charter Management Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Community College <input type="checkbox"/> Technical College <input type="checkbox"/> Public College or University <input type="checkbox"/> Private College or University <input type="checkbox"/> Community-Based, Nonprofit Agency or Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Library or Library System <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy Council or Other Literacy Institute <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Literacy Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Private Company Offering Education Services <input type="checkbox"/> Business or Business Association <input type="checkbox"/> Local Work Force Board <input type="checkbox"/> One-Stop Partner			
Primary Contact Information			
Name		Title	
Telephone		E-mail	
Signature			
Secondary Contact Information			
Name		Title	
Telephone		E-mail	
Signature			
Fiscal Contact Information			
Name		Title	
Telephone		E-mail	
Signature			
Credentials/Outcomes Eligible Provider May Request Reimbursement For			
<input type="checkbox"/> High School Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> High School Half-Credits <input type="checkbox"/> Employability Skills Certificates <input type="checkbox"/> Industry-Recognized Credentials – Up to 50 Hours of Training <input type="checkbox"/> Industry-Recognized Credentials – 51 – 100 Hours of Training <input type="checkbox"/> Industry-Recognized Credentials – More than 100 Hours of Training			

Content for the CDE Website Qualified Provider List <i>If qualified, the following information will be posted on the WDPP webpage.</i>	
Webpage	
Contact Email	
Contact Phone Number	
Physical Location(s) of the Services <i>If there are multiple locations, provide information about each of the locations, in particular the services offered at each location.</i> <i>If there are no physical locations, describe the service area(s) the provider will accept students from.</i>	
Provider and Services Description <i>Brief (2-3 sentences) description of the provider and services offered.</i>	

Note: If the provider is deemed qualified, reimbursements will not be distributed until all signatures are in place. Attempt to obtain all signatures before submitting the application.

Part IB: Assurances Form

The appropriate Authorized Representative(s) must sign below to indicate their approval of the responses included in this Request for Qualifications, and the receipt of reimbursements for Workforce Diploma Pilot Program outcomes.

- 1) The provider will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.
- 2) The provider will annually provide the Colorado Department of Education the required reporting information.
- 3) The provider will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records. The provider will provide any additional fiscal and/or program records as requested by CDE to confirm the accuracy of reported data.
- 4) If any findings of misuse of these reimbursement funds are discovered and/or intentional data manipulation, reimbursement funds will be returned to CDE.
- 5) The provider will maintain sole responsibility for the services even though subcontractors may be used to perform certain services.
- 6) Funds will only be used to support eligible students as defined in this Request for Qualifications.
- 7) The provider will not collect any kind of tuition or fees from students or on behalf of individual students for reimbursable service outcomes; this includes not collecting tuition or fees from or on behalf of a student if the student does not attain anticipated outcomes.
- 8) Provider must disclosed any and all affiliated partnerships.
- 9) The provider may be requested to sign an updated assurances form provided by the Colorado Department of Education at the start of each fiscal year.

The Colorado Department of Education shall place a qualified provider that does not meet the program performance standards established in C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(7) on probationary status for the remainder of the state fiscal year. The department shall remove a qualified provider from the list of qualified providers if the provider does not meet the performance standards for two consecutive years.

Name of Organization/Business Authorized Representative
(if applicable)

Signature

Name of School Board President/BOCES President
(if applicable)

Signature

Name of District Superintendent or
Charter School/BOCES Executive Director (if applicable)

Signature

Name of Charter School Board President
(if applicable)

Signature

Name of Charter School Institute Authorized Representative
(if applicable)

Signature

Part IC: Proposed Reimbursement Table

Enter the proposed reimbursement by outcome type and calculate the total proposed reimbursement amounts for November 7, 2020 – June 30, 2021 in the chart below. Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(4)(3), a qualified provider is eligible for program payments for outcomes achieved thirty or more days after CDE publishes an updated list of qualified providers.

Eligible providers, once qualified providers, will not be held to the proposed reimbursements in the table below, nor will specific funding amounts be allocated to qualified providers based on this table. This tablet will simply be used to inform the extent of the need in Colorado.

Per C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(6)(a), qualified providers shall submit requests for reimbursement on an ongoing basis to the Department for payments for student completion or attainment of goals outlined below. If available appropriations are insufficient to satisfy all invoices received by a given submission date, the department shall reduce all payments by the same percentage until the money is exhausted. Note that, if the available appropriations for a given fiscal year are exhausted, outcomes earned in that fiscal year may not be claimed for reimbursement in the next fiscal year.

Outcome Type	Proposed Number of Reimbursements in 2020-21	Reimbursement Amount	Total Proposed Reimbursement Amount
Completion of an Accredited High School Diploma		\$1,000	\$
Completion of a High School Half-Credit		\$250	\$
Completion of an Employability Skills Certification Program Equal to at Least One Carnegie Unit		\$250	\$
Attainment of an Industry-Recognized Credential Requiring Up to 50 Hours of Training		\$250	\$
Attainment of an Industry-Recognized Credential Requiring 51-100 Hours of Training		\$500	\$
Attainment of an Industry-Recognized Credential Requiring More Than 100 Hours of Training		\$750	\$
Total Proposed Reimbursement for 2020-21			\$
Total Anticipated Learners to be served (unduplicated)			

Part ID: Course Credits Table

This table is related to criterion D. of the Qualification Criteria Narrative. If course credits are required for graduation, complete this table showing the total number of credits in each content area. Note that there are no specific courses, or numbers of courses, required by the [state's graduation guidelines](#), and there are no legislated course requirements other than one course in Civics: "History and civil government of the United States and of the state of Colorado," pursuant to C.R.S. § 22-1-104(3)(a):

The history and civil government of the state of Colorado shall be taught in all the public schools of this state. In addition, the history and civil government of the United States, which includes the history, culture, and contributions of minorities, including, but not limited to, the American Indians, the Hispanic Americans, and the African Americans, shall be taught in all the public schools of the state. Satisfactory completion of a course on the civil government of the United States and the state of Colorado...shall be a condition of high school graduation in the public schools of the state.

Should the application be approved, the numbers and types of credits shown in this table will be posted with the approved provider's contact information on the [WDPP webpage](#).

English	Math (includes Economics)	Science	Social Studies (includes History, Civics, Geography, Government)	Health / Physical Education	Career and Technical Education	Art	Financial Literacy	Educational Technology	Electives (General)	Total Credits Required

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Complete Parts IA - ID and include as the first pages of the application.

Qualification Criteria

Applicants must provide evidence of the following, as outlined in C.R.S. § 22-10.3-103(3). The estimated number of pages an applicant may want to utilize per criterion is included in the table below. The total number of pages for the qualification criteria may not exceed 22 pages.

Item	Criterion	Estimated Pages
A.	<p>Provide evidence of at least two years of experience providing adult dropout recovery services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment • learning plan development • proactive coaching • proactive mentoring <p>If planning to serve specific populations, outline those populations and the rationale for serving those populations in this section.</p>	3
B.	<p>Provide the names and websites of the academic skill intake assessment(s), including a rationale for how the proposed academic skill intake assessment(s) meet the provider's need to accurately assess students' skills and the assessment(s) frequency.</p> <p>Provide an explanation of how the provider will evaluate student transcripts, including how transcripts will be evaluated against the provider's graduation requirements.</p>	2
C.	<p>Describe the ability to develop a learning plan that integrates academic requirements and career goals, such as a description of student learning plans, how students will be provided with flexibility if unforeseen barriers to their success occur, and what coursework, activities, and counseling services will be provided.</p>	2
D.	<p>Describe the provider's high school graduation requirements, including how the requirements meet or exceed the Colorado Graduation Guidelines. If course credits are required for graduation, complete the Part ID: Course Credits Table.</p> <p>Graduation guidelines begin with the implementation of: Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP), Colorado Academic Standards for all content areas including Civics, and 21st Century Skills. Students must demonstrate college or career readiness in English and math based on at least one measure.</p> <p>The Graduation Guidelines adopted by the state board of education in September 2015 (and updated in July 2019) include a menu of college and career-ready demonstrations, called the Menu of Options. Eligible providers establish high school graduation requirements that meet or exceed the Colorado Graduation Guidelines for the graduating class of 2021. Eligible providers also select from the Menu of Options to create a list of options that their students must use to show what they know or can do in order to graduate from high school. Eligible providers may</p>	2

	<p>offer some or all of the state menu options, may raise a cut score on an included assessment, and may add graduation requirements in other content areas.</p> <p>View expanded descriptions and implementation strategies on the graduation guidelines.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, implementation of the graduation guidelines is now optional for the graduating class of 2021. For 2020-2021, local education providers may graduate students according to district determined graduation requirements, that include the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options and/or local options, such as courses. Full implementation of the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options is expected to continue for the class of 2022. Please see the Graduation Guidelines FAQ document linked from the CDE Graduation Guidelines webpage for more information.</p>	
E.	Describe the ability to provide remedial course work in literacy and numeracy, such as the strategies used to accommodate individuals at a variety of academic levels and other remediation strategies.	2
F.	Describe the research-validated academic resiliency assessment and intervention provided, including the type of resiliency assessment used to evaluate students and how it will inform the provider's programming.	2
G.	<p>Describe the ability to provide employability skills development aligned to employer needs in Colorado, including what the provider defines as an employability skill and link/reference to the employability skills framework that will be used for the provider's student population.</p> <p>If the applicant wishes to be reimbursed for student employability skills certificate attainment equal to at least one Carnegie Unit, list all of the employability skills certificates that the provider plans to offer along with evidence of how these certificates are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the state of Colorado.</p> <p>Consider using data from the Colorado Labor Market Information Gateway and/or the Colorado Talent Pipeline report to inform this response.</p>	2
H.	Describe the ability to provide career pathways coursework, such as a description of how the provider aligns academic instruction with career-focused instruction for specific in-demand industry sectors, occupations and/or occupational clusters in the state of Colorado. Consider using data from the Colorado Labor Market Information Gateway and/or the Colorado Talent Pipeline report to inform this response.	2
I.	Describe the ability to prepare students for industry-recognized credentials, including a list of all industry-recognized credentials that the provider plans to offer along with evidence of how these credentials are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the state of Colorado. The applicant must also identify the number of hours of training required for each of the proposed industry-recognized credentials. Consider using data from the Colorado Labor Market Information Gateway and/or the Colorado Talent Pipeline report to inform this response.	3
J.	Describe the ability to provide career placement services, including the type of services offered and the timeline for when students will review career opportunities available to them.	1

K.	<p>Describe the ability to issue diplomas accredited by a recognized regional accrediting body or by the Colorado State Board of Education, including the identification of the provider’s accrediting body/bodies as one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AdvancED • Colorado State Board of Education • Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSACESS) • New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) • North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) • Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) • Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) • Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) <p>Address how your organization plans to permanently retain school services records (such as transcripts and diplomas) in alignment with the guidance from the Colorado State Archives. The records management manual for schools can be found here.</p>	1
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Note that a provider’s application materials may be posted on the CDE website.