

CHAPTER 43

GOVERNMENT - STATE

HOUSE BILL 26-1136

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Lukens and Martinez, Duran, Hamrick, Lieder, Lindsay, Nguyen, Paschal, Phillips, Rutinel, Stewart K., Story, McCluskie;
also SENATOR(S) Lindstedt and Wallace, Amabile, Cutter, Exum, Gonzales J., Hinrichsen, Kipp, Kolker, Roberts, Snyder, Sullivan, Weissman, Coleman.

AN ACT**CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. The general assembly finds and declares that the state government, as Colorado's largest employer and in furtherance of its skills-based hiring program, would benefit from creating a work-based pathways to public service program to encourage public service among graduates of Colorado's secondary and postsecondary schools. The general assembly further finds and declares that the department of personnel is the appropriate state agency to establish these partnerships and to facilitate the transformation of educational and workforce readiness experiences into opportunities for state employment.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** part 24 to article 30 of title 24 as follows:

PART 24
PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM

24-30-2401. Definitions.

AS USED IN THIS PART 24, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

- (1) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL.
- (2) "POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION" MEANS:

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

- (a) AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-18-102 (7);
 - (b) A BRANCH CAMPUS OF AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION;
 - (c) A LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-71-102 (1); OR
 - (d) AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-60-103 (1).
- (3) "SECONDARY SCHOOL" MEANS ANY SCHOOL IN THE STATE THAT INCLUDES GRADE NINE, TEN, ELEVEN, OR TWELVE.
- (4) "SKILLS-BASED HIRING" HAS THE MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 8-83-601 (12).
- (5) "WORK-BASED LEARNING" HAS THE MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 8-83-601 (15).

24-30-2402. Pathways to public service program - creation - purpose - duties of the department.

(1) THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM IS CREATED IN THE DEPARTMENT. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM USING EXISTING RESOURCES. SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS MAY ELECT, BUT ARE NOT REQUIRED, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM.

(2) THE PURPOSES OF THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM ARE TO:

(a) DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF A WORK-BASED GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY LEARNING EXPERIENCE ESTABLISHED THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN STATE GOVERNMENT AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS, AND WORKFORCE CENTERS THAT CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM, BY ALIGNING SKILLS-BASED HIRING CRITERIA WITH CURRICULA AND AGENCY-DEFINED WORK-BASED NEEDS, AND OFFERING EDUCATIONAL CREDIT FOR WORK PROJECTS PERFORMED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT WITHIN COLORADO STATE GOVERNMENT;

(b) ENCOURAGE STATE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES TO WORK WITH SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY COURSES AND CREDENTIALS THAT MAY QUALIFY SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS FOR SPECIFIC ENTRY-LEVEL PUBLIC SERVICE ROLES THAT ARE PERFORMED BY EMPLOYEES IN THE STATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM;

(c) ENCOURAGE STATE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES TO WORK WITH COLORADO CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN THE COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY A PATHWAY TO STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT WITH SPECIFIC COURSES THAT MAY QUALIFY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVICE ROLES THAT ARE PERFORMED BY EMPLOYEES IN THE STATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM;

(d) CREATE POSITIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE CONNECTIONS THAT FOSTER UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST BETWEEN COLORADO RESIDENTS AND STATE AGENCIES; AND

(e) REDUCE VACANCIES AND IMPROVE RETENTION IN STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT BY ESTABLISHING A RELIABLE RECRUITMENT POOL OF CANDIDATES AS WELL AS A CLEAR, ACCESSIBLE, AND DESIRABLE CAREER PATH IN PUBLIC SERVICE.

(3) IN FURTHERANCE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

(a) WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM, COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND COLORADO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO FACILITATE ALIGNMENT OF STATEWIDE WORK-BASED LEARNING STRATEGIES;

(b) IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP TARGETED POSITIONS WITHIN STATE AGENCIES AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM, ENSURING THAT GRADUATES WHO MEET CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED THROUGH FORMAL INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS ARE PREPARED FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ROLES THAT ARE PERFORMED BY EMPLOYEES IN THE STATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM;

(c) ADOPT HIRING POLICIES THAT RECOGNIZE WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES AS VALID QUALIFICATIONS; AND

(d) COLLECT DATA ON INDIVIDUALS HIRED INTO STATE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS THROUGH PATHWAYS IDENTIFIED AND SUPPORTED BY THE PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM, INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, THE EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING PATHWAY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HIRE, AND RETENTION DATA. THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOT REQUIRED TO COLLECT ADDITIONAL DATA RELATED TO THIS SECTION. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SUBMIT THE DATA COLLECTED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (3)(d) TO THE COLORADO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL BY JUNE 30, 2027, AND BY JUNE 30 EACH YEAR THEREAFTER TO SUPPORT INCLUSION IN THE COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT.

SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 12, 2026, if adjournment sine die is on May 13, 2026); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: April 13, 2026