



Rocky Mountain Partnership 2021 Legislative Priorities

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Who We Are:

[Rocky Mountain Partnership \(RMP\)](#) is a coalition of cross-sector leaders and network partners from Adams and Broomfield Counties in Colorado who believe they can accomplish more by working together than apart, with representation from the following sectors:

- Municipal and County Government
- School Districts and Higher Education Institutions
- Hospitals and Public Health Centers
- Regional Businesses and Nonprofits
- Law Enforcement

The legislative priorities outlined in this document are representative of the policy priorities for each of the organizations represented in our partnership. To see a full list of partnership representation, visit <https://rmpartnership.org/who-we-are/community-leaders-council/>.

Our Priorities:

The following is an outline of Rocky Mountain Partnership's priorities for the 2021 legislative session around our network's target of increasing postsecondary credential attainment:

By 2025, 50% (est. n= 193,000) of adults in Adams and Broomfield Counties will earn a post-high school certificate or degree (an estimated increase of 45,800 people in 5 years.)

[Click here to learn more](#) about this target and the data behind it. Rocky Mountain Partnership network members and Backbone staff will be active in any legislation introduced in these areas. We ask for our legislator's support for these critical matters to our work and essential for our community's success.

Legislative Priorities At-A-Glance:

1. [Increasing Credentialing Opportunities](#)
2. [Supporting Businesses to Expand Credentialing Opportunities](#)
3. [Supporting and Expanding Online Credentialing and Location-Neutral Jobs](#)

Policy Opportunities At-A-Glance:

1. [Expand Colorado state financial aid eligibility to credentialing programs](#)
2. [Create a tax incentive for Colorado businesses providing credentialing opportunities and paid training.](#)
3. [Include funding for technology and internet in COVID-19 relief packages.](#)

[Click here](#) for a full look at the research behind our legislative proposals.

Legislative Priorities

1. Increasing Credentialing Opportunities

We seek to advance policies that will increase the attainment of both degree and non-degree postsecondary credentials for Coloradans.

2021 Policy Opportunity for Priority #1:

Expand state financial aid eligibility to include short-term, for-credit certificate programs requiring at least 150 hours, and explore alternative funding streams for students.

Other Strategies We Support:

- **Create Additional Work-Based Learning Opportunities:**
 - **Expand existing models** like the State Apprenticeship Expansion, Colorado Collegiate Apprenticeship Program, and accelerating related grants and incentives
 - **Place low-income job seekers who struggle with barriers** into paid internships, apprenticeships, externships, transitional jobs, and on the job training experiences, including concurrent training and essential work supports, by refunding Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP) or using models like Lives Empowered
 - **Reduce education completion gaps for those most impacted by existing systems** (including students of color, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, etc.) using the recommendations of the Equity Champions Coalition (ECC)
 - **Ensure upskill and reskill efforts do not result in a loss of assistance or benefits** for the employee (sometimes referred to as the "Cliff Effect")
- **Increase Accessibility of Existing Credentialing Opportunities:**

- **Expand awareness and use of credentialing opportunities** like My Colorado Journey to support job seekers and students in pursuit of careers
 - **Commit to affordability, innovation, and equity** in the provision of postsecondary credentials to increase completion, ease equity gaps, and improve student success
 - **Expand eligibility for Colorado state financial aid** including short-term, for-credit certificate and credential programs and exploration of additional funding streams for students
 - **Support existing programs that increase the availability of high-quality child care** for parents pursuing postsecondary credentials
 - **Expand dual enrollment programs** like Concurrent Enrollment, P-TECH, and ASCENT to merge education and industry and fast-track credential completion for high schoolers at no cost to parents or guardians
- **Implement and Expand Measurement and Tracking Mechanisms:**
 - **Implement a cohesive, statewide data system** to track access to and completion of all postsecondary credentials, including certifications, degrees, and other accredited credentials.

2. Supporting Businesses to Expand Credential Attainment Opportunities

We seek to advance policies that will help local businesses develop education and training programs and hiring practices to increase postsecondary credential attainment.

2021 Policy Opportunity for Priority #2:

Create a tax incentive for businesses providing paid, accredited internal credentialing opportunities for their employees, or providing paid apprenticeship, internship, or externship programs that prioritize individuals in identified priority groups.

Other Strategies We Support:

- **Expand existing funds and credits to support and incentivize businesses** to hire individuals in identified priority groups, use work-based learning efforts, and boost businesses that fall in alignment with Colorado Top Jobs (such as the Energize Colorado Gap Fund, Colorado Enterprise Zone Program, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and refunding the Innovative Industries Internships (III) Program)
- **Incentivize local businesses** to create internal upskill and reskill opportunities

3. Supporting and Expanding Online Credentialing and Location-Neutral Jobs

We seek to advance policies that expand online credentialing, remote work opportunities and equip workers with the ability to succeed in a remote environment.

2021 Policy Opportunity for Priority #3:

Include funding assistance for individuals to purchase web-enabled technology and high-speed internet access in state COVID-19 relief packages.

Other Strategies We Support:

- **Incentivize location-neutral employment** for businesses across the state, using models like the Location Neutral Employment Incentive (LONE)

- **Equip workers with needed skills** for remote work environments, using models like the Remote Work Initiative
- **Increase access to needed technology for online learning** like affordable, high-speed internet and web-enabled technology
- **Ensure a focus on mobile-friendly web design** so individuals primarily accessing the internet via mobile devices can successfully access needed information and resources online.

These Policy Priorities are Endorsed by the Following Members of the Rocky Mountain Partnership:

- 17th Judicial District - District Attorney's Office
- 27J Schools
- Adams 12 Five Star Schools
- Adams County Education Consortium
- Adams County Government
- Adams County School District 14
- Adams County Sheriff's Department
- Adams County Regional Economic Partnership
- Anythink Libraries
- Arvada Chamber of Commerce
- City of Commerce City
- City of Federal Heights
- City of Northglenn
- City of Thornton
- City of Westminster
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Crossroads Church
- Daniels Fund
- Dentons
- Front Range Community College
- Kids First Health Care
- Maiker Housing Partners
- Neon Rain Interactive
- North Suburban Medical Center
- Westminster Public Schools

These Policy Priorities are in Alignment with Recommendations from the Following Coalitions and Entities:

- [2020 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report, TalentFOUND](#)
- [StriveTogether](#)
- [Lumina Foundation](#)
- [Brookings Institute](#)

- [Bell Policy Center](#)
- [Urban Institute](#)
- [Pew Research Center](#)
- [Report on Educational Equity, Colorado Equity Champion's Coalition](#)