

Larimer County Workforce Center

2015

ANNUAL REPORT

BEYOND
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

A Catalyst for Change



“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing.”

~Pele

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Presented by the Larimer County Workforce Center executive leadership to educate our community on our important mission and remarkable 2015 community-wide achievements.





Letter from the Director

At the Larimer County Workforce Center, success goes beyond the measurable (although we do measure!) to include for our customers and staff, the pride in finding employment and the excitement of new projects. We also focus on creating a culture of innovation and strategic alignment with the private sector and our various community partners to create a top tier workforce that meets the demands of today's economy.

Our tailored training solutions and work based learning programs enabled us to provide customized solutions for critical industries in our region. In 2015, we partnered with numerous businesses to provide workforce training that elevated their employee skill sets and made the employee and the company more competitive.

While the activities described in this report have positioned the Larimer County Workforce Center to successfully implement the recently enacted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, we will continue to strengthen the integration of education, workforce, and economic development into a collaborative system that not only responds to the demands of our current system, but innovates around the needs of the future.

None of our success would have been possible without the hard work, support and dedication of the many partners and supporters including the Workforce Development Board, the Board of County Commissioners, the committed staff and our numerous public and private collaborators. I sincerely appreciate all that they contribute to make Larimer County an exceptional place.

To me, hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, partnerships and love of what we do are the characteristics that make the Larimer County Workforce Center an amazing organization. We are proud of what we have accomplished and we acknowledge the need for continuous adaptability to the rapidly changing needs of the business community and workforce in Larimer County.

Sincerely,

Joni Friedman | *Director, Larimer County Workforce Center*

WORKFORCE
CENTER
EMPLOYEES
OF THE MONTH
CONGRATS!

Larimer County Employees of the Month



Andrew Minor
WIOA Technical Consultant
Larimer County **CareerRise**
January 2015



Anita Miller
Senior Career Coach
Larimer County **Works**
April 2015



Katie Merrill
Senior Career Coach
Larimer County **Works**
September 2015

The Larimer County Employee of the Month award is presented each month to an employee nominated by peers in recognition of providing service above and beyond the call of duty. **In 2015, three Workforce Center employees** were chosen for the countywide award.



200
WEST VAL

Offices, Teams and Locations

Serving the cities of Estes Park, Berthoud, Fort Collins, Loveland, Timnath and Wellington plus surrounding unincorporated areas and mountain communities stretching north to the Wyoming border and west to the continental divide, members of the Larimer County Workforce team are positioned to help our community members and businesses in the following office locations:

Fort Collins:

200 W. Oak Street, Suite 5000
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521
(970) 498-6600

Loveland:

418 East 4th Street
Loveland, Colorado 80537
(970) 619-4650

Estes Park:

1601 Brodie Avenue
Estes Park, CO 80522
(970) 577-2100

Larimer County Employment First (EF) Program

The Larimer County Employment First (EF) program **provides employment support** for residents receiving food assistance benefits. In 2015, the Larimer County EF program had an average caseload of **742 for two case managers.**

Larimer County **was recognized seven times** in 2015 for having the highest entered employment rate for large counties in Colorado*.

Larimer County EF program's **average** entered employment rate **for the year was 51%**. The Colorado average was just under 40%.

*Among large counties that do not automatically co-enroll EF participants in other programs.

Create the culture.

Great managers build great companies.

Leaders must be good at developing others.

This takes a fair amount of training and not all organizations can afford to provide that level of training to staff being promoted or mentored for management. Paulette Hansen is on a mission to help **lead others to be more successful leaders.**

There is nothing more important than the way people treat each other.

Staff should be treated as important as customers. For unpracticed managers, this can be hard to do in the face of stress. It happens all the time. A person earns early success because they are good at what they do, then they are promoted to supervise others under the false assumption that they are also good at leading and mentoring others. Without training, there is frustration, dissatisfaction and failed careers.

Paulette Hansen, Director of Career Development with The Neenan Company, performs professional development consulting for companies and organizations, including the Larimer County Workforce Center. With a focus on building trust, handling challenging conversations, and a variety of human related management issues, Paulette brings a wealth of knowledge and everyday experience to her workshops at the Larimer County Workforce Center.

“I give step-by-step tools participants use to be better managers. It’s a continuous, interactive effort.”

~ Paulette Hansen

Director of Career Development
with The Neenan Company

"My training isn't a TED talk. It's about teaching to lead in a different way," said Paulette. "I give step-by-step tools participants use to be better managers. It's a continuous, interactive effort."

The workshops allow participants to identify real work problems and unpack them in collaboration with peer professionals. The brainstorming is practical and tool-oriented. "You don't learn to ski or play tennis without starting small," said Paulette. "The same applies with leadership. I give people learning plans and content to support the continuity of effort – they take them back to the office and work their plans."





“

”

elevate business training.

Get “In on it.”

Blessed with decades of professional experience in communications and stakeholder engagement, Mike Kohler sees a huge opportunity to strengthen the cultural core of northern Colorado’s workforce. Armed with professional development curriculum delivered by world-class consultants and teachers, Mike leads the newly branded **elevate** Business Development and Training Program for the Larimer County Workforce Center.

Mike and his fellow “faculty members” teach individuals to think like leaders. Through his mentorship and the programs he oversees, Mike is focused on the art and science of employee recognition.

He feels the highest form of employee recognition is an investment of trust – being included in the organization’s game plan. Mike sums up his definition of employee recognition in three small but powerful words “in on it.” Employees want to be “in on” the organization’s game plan so they know their contributions make a difference.

> continued on pg 10

“People leave when they are not appreciated. Bosses want to get it right, and employees really want the boss to get it right.”

~ Mike Kohler

Larimer County Workforce Center
Business Services

Since launching the **elevate** program less than two years ago

167

unique employers have enrolled leaders in training.

The **elevate** program has attracted

379

northern Colorado professionals to its training workshops.

718

youth went on career tours with regional businesses.

By connecting with local employers and thousands of Larimer County job seekers, our team responded to the community's workforce needs by providing over

\$1.3 million dollars

for internship and training opportunities for over

435 individuals.

Leadership from the middle is the most effective way to move a company to growth.

The **elevate** curriculum is focused to provide essential people skills instruction for managers and supervisors at companies seeking affordable leadership training solutions.

Mike and his team share the vision that, through affordable, high quality essential skills education and training, regional employers can reduce turnover, improve productivity and strengthen employee satisfaction scores. "Our teaching team has a fantastic blend of experience and passion," said Mike. "I'm honored to be part of it."

Mike Kohler also teaches online classes for West Virginia University (WVU). In 2015, Mike was awarded the 2015 Recipient of the Alexia Vanides Integrated Marketing Communications Teaching Award.

New to the United States of America.

Breaking down barriers.

Monika Ostrowska and her husband relocated to Fort Collins from Poland as a result of her husband's job transfer with Woodward in 2015.

With remarkable guts and determination, Monika wanted to put her master's degree in microbiology to work in Fort Collins. At first she went about a job search like most people, searching LinkedIn and job boards. New to the country and new to everything about finding a job here, Monika was lost and unproductive in her search for a place in the workforce.

Although highly skilled and educated in her profession in Poland, Monika had to overcome many barriers to find work in microbiology. Like many young mothers, Monika took herself out of the job market to stay at home for the first three years of her child's life. Jumping back into the workforce after a three-year hiatus was intimidating enough, let alone doing so in a different country.

The Human Resources (HR) team at Woodward referred Monika to the Larimer County Workforce Center for support. What Monika experienced was a support system beyond her wildest expectations. "In Poland, job services is simply a list of jobs on a board outside a placement office," she said. > continued on pg 12

“I need to be a woman who is working.”

~ **Monika Ostrowska**

Microbiology Department
at UC Health Systems

Nervous, but determined, Monika made her first call for help to the Career Transition Team (CTT) at the Workforce Center.

“It was the you-can-do-this attitude that made the difference,” Monika recalls. During the first nerve-racking phone call to the Larimer County Workforce Center, she connected with someone who believed in her. Monika sensed that the connection would give her the support, strength and confidence she needed to transfer her skills and find a career in Fort Collins.

Once she became eligible to work in the United States, Monika made the journey from Poland to employment as a Medical Laboratory Scientist in just over a year. During that time, Monika leaned on her Workforce Center contacts for much more than career guidance. There were transportation challenges, an intensive and costly re-certification test to study for, a resume to redevelop in the English language, interview skills and language barriers to get comfortable with and an unknown employer base to figure out. > continued on pg 14



Monika Ostrowska
Microbiology Department
at UC Health Systems

Job Postings/Job Orders:

2012 - 4,752
2013 - 9,238
2014 - 17,136
2015 - 18,462

Assessments (by year):

2012 - 231
2013 - 1,133
2014 - 1,787
2015 - 2,786

Job Seekers Served:

15,966

Employers Served:

1,916



Fierce determination yields results.

The CTT encouraged her every step of the way, helping her redevelop her resume and coaching her on improving her LinkedIn presence. Together they navigated employer possibilities and prepared her to be strong and confident for her first interview. They were also there to calm her nerves before her first live interview and to celebrate with her after it was over. The extraordinary effort and endurance between Monika and the CTT lead to many successes.

Because she was given the encouragement, funding and guidance she needed to focus and excel, Monika passed a critical exam on the first try – an exam that normally takes people three times to pass. This was the most significant key to future employment in the United States, and Monika nailed it. Within days after the exam, and with the help of her coaches at the Workforce Center, Monika applied for a position for UC Health, made it through the interview process with flying colors and was hired weeks later.

Her hard work, tenacity and commitment paid-off. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of a strong woman ready to put her talents to work and a team that could see her dream becoming reality, Monika is more than appreciative for this life-changing partnership that prepared her to land the job she wanted.

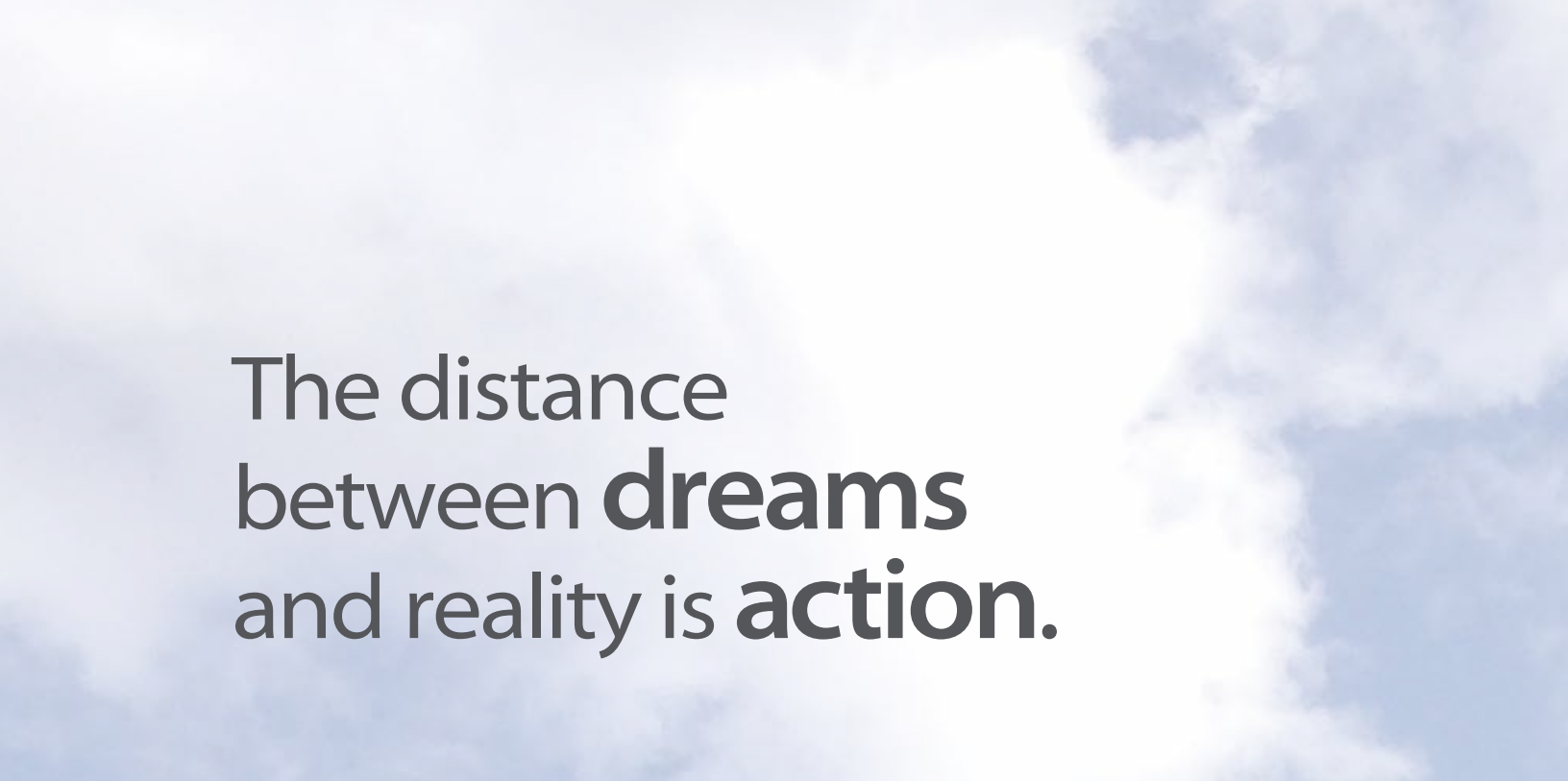
Monika is now working full time in the Microbiology Department with UC Health Systems, where she performs diagnostic/analytic laboratory testing of patient specimens and interprets, documents, and reports test results for members of her new Larimer County community. ■

Hiring events

61 hiring events with **89 participating employers**

(some events had more than one employer participating in the same event).

7 job fairs with an average of **40 employers** at each (**271 participating employers** total).



The distance
between **dreams**
and reality is **action.**

The Larimer County **Career Transition Team (CTT)** retains **two “super” counselors** that mentor new employees in the **Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)** program throughout the state of Colorado. Super counselors are **recognized for their superior knowledge and successful strategies** for managing the complexities of TAA rules and regulations.

The Larimer County CTT **met or exceeded all six federally-derived performance measures for 2015.** The performance measures focus on entered employment, wage obtainment and employment retention.



Road trips into the real world.

Immersing students in possibilities. Several times each year, together with the Poudre School District, the Larimer County Workforce Center CareerRise team loads up students in buses for a “behind the scenes” exploration into careers. A variety of experiences await the students, many of whom will be seeing work environments for the first time. Within each tour, multiple levels of careers are explored. From those that require little education and training to positions requiring a college or advanced degree. Students imagine what they can aspire to do. For some, simply learning what they don’t want to do is a big step in their career development.

“Students engaging with these hands on career experiences have exposure to a variety of interesting opportunities they can take action on now.”

~ **Cindy Berg**
PaCE Coordinator from
Fort Collins High School



OtterBox has been a Career Road Trip partner for two years. Andy Jensen, who runs the 2.5 hour tours at Otterbox, makes sure the students have access to hands on experiences in supply chain, manufacturing and the business management side of a large corporation.

The students have run the packaging line to see what entry level positions look like compared to management positions. This helps them decide how far they want to push themselves in their career development. "The benefit for us is to work with young kids and help the community we grew up in. It is part of our corporate mission to educate them and bring up the next batch of innovators."

For Yvonne Myers of Columbine Health Systems, being a Career Road Trip destination is a bridge to the school district. With 1500 employees, careers tours at Columbine Health Systems include an event center, pharmacy, health club, assisted living facility and healthcare management. Students meet people who could be their boss and get a sense for the first time if a career in healthcare would work for them. ■



“Connecting students to a variety of levels in the healthcare system helps breakdown the stereotypes of senior care.”

~ Yvonne Myers
Columbine Health Systems

I am confident.

Earning her GED was the first stepping-stone toward Nicole Martinez's ultimate goal of employment. Overcoming many hurdles along the way including family health issues, single parenting and anxiety around interviewing, Nicole found the motivation to push forward and to not let anything hold her back. With the encouragement of Workforce Center staff, strategic internship placements and Nicole's willingness to take a chance, she was able to land a job with the City of Fort Collins. Nicole states "The (Workforce Center) staff was amazing and not only encouraged me, but pushed me to my full potential." Nicole now thrives with her new-found confidence and self advocacy and continues to push forward in her career.

Nicole Martinez
City of Fort Collins



“We impact the spirit and confidence of youth and young adults to find their fit in the world.”

~ Mark Johnston

Manager of the CareerRise team
at the Larimer County Workforce Center



Inspiring early careers.

For Mark Johnston, manager of the CareerRise team at the Larimer County Workforce Center, leadership is about inspiring talented people to strive for greatness.

Mark believes in experiential learning, mentorship, and a management style that supports his team to make significant contributions in creating and improving services for youth and young adults.

The CareerRise team shows how they can make a difference through a wide variety of workforce preparation opportunities accessible to young adults in Larimer County. Some of these services include:

- **Discovery** of work purpose and the career pathways tied to this purpose.
 - **Exploration** of these pathways and how they fit into our future job market.
 - **Hands-on experiential learning** to better understand these pathways.
 - Introduction to **entrepreneurial** activities to make business ideas a reality.
 - Competency building for executing an **effective job search**.
 - **Connection** to the academic and occupational skills required by industry partners seeking to fill their current and future hiring needs.
- > continued on pg 22

“An engaged team that has ownership in their services has the ability to create greatness and achieve incredibly rich and meaningful solutions.”

~ **Mark Johnston**

Manager of the CareerRise team at the Larimer County Workforce Center

Mark believes there's not much greater satisfaction to be found than helping a young adult understand how they fit in the world of work and how their contributions matter. Mark and the CareerRise team believe their work with young men and women sets the foundation for a future filled with workplace meaning, purpose and satisfaction.

Most of us can reflect on our first employment experiences and how those experiences shaped our future decisions, preferences and lasting values. Keeping those beliefs and experiences in mind, the CareerRise team never strays too far from their customers. CareerRise is comprised of unique staff from all walks of life who are inspired to cultivate young people in their pursuit of finding purpose as they begin their career journeys. ■



Success has no age limits.

The **CareerRise team** delivers programs that teach the power of making personal and social choices that matter for independence.

Through forward thinking training, employment skills, paid internship opportunities, entrepreneurial workshops and educational assistance, the CareerRise team prepares young action-takers to work and thrive in our community.

In 2015, the **CareerRise** team provided services to over **2,800 young adults, ages 14-21**, throughout Larimer County.

The **CareerRise** team fulfilled **95 requests** from schools in the local school districts (Fort Collins, Loveland and Estes Park) and non-profits to provide career planning and job search workshops to the youth of our communities.

The **CareerRise** team provided job search information to **325 students** in the Estes Park School District R-3.

CareerRise received the **2015 Think Big Promising Practice for Career Road Trips**. This was distributed by the Colorado State Youth Council and Colorado Workforce Development Council.

718 youth and **23 teachers** participated in Career Road Trips in 2015.





LARIMER COUNTY
**CONSERVATION
CORPS**

The Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) received its **16th straight state accreditation** through the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) that documents consistent levels of high-quality programming, services to youth participants and project sponsors. The LCCC, a fee for service program, also received its **first national accreditation** through The Corps Network and was awarded the **Wild & Scenic Film Festival** for 2015.



Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC)

For ages 14-24, corpsmembers gain valuable experience working in teams, developing personal and professional skills, and learning about our natural resources. The LCCC offers multiple seasonal corps programs every year.

95% corpsmember retention rate across all programs.

88% of Water & Energy corpsmembers found employment **within three months** of completing their term with the LCCC.

58% of corpsmembers were **ages 14-17**.

35% of corpsmembers were **female**.

51 corpsmembers participated in **corps programs** in 2015.



Thanks to the LCCC, the following was achieved during **80 weeks** of crews in operation:



4,004 trees felled for fire mitigation and invasive species removal.

709 homes assessed and retrofitted for improved energy and water efficiency.



26 miles of trail repaired/maintained.

23 acres of noxious weeds removed.

Alternative staffing.

Unlikely pair rallies together for entrepreneurial growth.

Loveland-based AllProWebTools is on a run – a marathon to realize growth and to satisfy small business customers with smart software designed to improve their efficiency.

In 2015, AllProWebTools founder Dave Kramer reached a point where he recalls, “We had so many customers, we couldn’t grow without more staff and we weren’t ready with the funds to hire.”

Upon referral from another local entrepreneur, Dave contacted the Larimer County Workforce Center to see what they could do to help solve his problem. Dave was surprised to learn about ReHire Colorado, a program that places workers in temporary jobs with participating businesses and covers hourly wages, workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance. ReHire candidates typically come from difficult situations with limited hope of starting a thriving career.

“Dave’s open attitude was ideal for participation in the ReHire Colorado program,” recalls Adam Crowe, Business Services Manager with the Larimer County Workforce Center.

And that’s when Dave Kramer met Cherie Strauser. It was a pivotal point for both Dave and Cherie.

“We simply needed someone to answer the phone. What happened was remarkable.”

~ **Dave Kramer**

AllProWebTools founder

Prior to her ReHire Colorado temporary job, Cherie had been out of the workforce for ten years. She had been dealing with the law, she was homeless, and she hardly dared to hope for a 9-to-5 job, much less an opportunity that would set her on a path to a rewarding career.

According to Dave Kramer, "Cherie picked us." Dressed to impress, she came in for an interview and started just a few days later. Her soft skills needed work, and her typing skills were sub-par – but what Dave saw was the attitude and potential. "We opted to teach her," he said, "and we've enjoyed seeing the countenance on her face going from no smile to smiling and now a very high level of comfort – and part of the team." A tech-savvy team with strong computer skills patiently worked with Cherie on basic training. "It was a struggle," said Dave, **"but it was cool to see what it did to the team culture to help another rise up."**

Because of her attitude and with the team's support, Cherie achieved more than she thought she could. Cherie was hired full time in February of 2016. Dave Kramer predicts her skills will continue to expand where she could move into sales and software presentations, maybe even hitting the road to speak in front of large groups of people.

And it's certainly been a win for Cherie, who said, **"It has saved my life, literally. This gave me an opportunity to get back on my feet and start a whole new lifestyle I wasn't used to. I'm so blessed that this has happened."**

AllWebProTools has had four people from the Larimer County Workforce Center complete ReHire Colorado internships. ■

“One of the most rewarding things we do is to help a fellow human being grow in their skills and become more hireable.”

~ Dave Kramer

AllProWebTools founder



Dave Kramer and Cherie Strauser

AllWebProTools

Helping people start over.

Facilitating life-impacting connections between employers and skilled candidates.

“They” are the people seeking new careers and people retraining and re-tooling to increase their value as job candidates in a changing employment marketplace.

And Andréa? She plays a crucial role in linking job candidates with area employers seeking specialized skill sets.

As a member of the Larimer County Workforce Center’s Training Resources Team (TRT), Andréa works directly with employers to place interns with local employers. The subsidized positions allow both the job candidates and the employers to see if they are well-matched.

“It’s amazing to see employers embrace our interns who come to them with a need for skill-building and who can help the business at the same time,” says Andréa.

Internships are a great way for employers to test-drive and grow candidate skills while positively impacting the business culture. Everyone benefits.

“It’s exciting to see when they start to believe they have a dream again.”

~ **Andréa Hoffman**

Larimer County Workforce Center’s Training Resources Team



Andréa Hoffman

Larimer County Workforce Centers
Training Resources Team

TRT coordinators, like Andréa, understand and support both sides of the employment equation, from budget-conscious businesses to candidates seeking life-changing opportunities and new career pathways. The result is win-win.

TRT, through their internship placements, supports the agency's philosophy of assisting people in getting the skills they need for **the career they want** instead of simply placing people in jobs. That is why TRT coordinators ask their interns, "What is your dream job?"

Currently partnered with more than 260 area employers, Andréa and her teammates are uniquely positioned to help people find those dream jobs and strengthen our regional workforce. ■

55%

of customers in an internship were employed after leaving the program.



Serving the proud.

Connecting veterans to essential programs and life-changing services.

Jon (Tyler) Jacobson understands what it's like for veterans to return to society and try to make a go of normal life. **He's lived it.**

Tyler served two tours of duty in the Navy between 2007 and 2011, deployed once to the Persian Gulf and then to the coast of Somalia. He then left the Navy to go to school. That path prepared him well to work with fellow veterans.

Connecting veterans of all ages with services that help them meet financial obligations and transition into civilian careers is not always an easy job. However, you wouldn't know it by listening to Tyler work with his fellow veterans on the phone or in person.

Working with the government can be daunting at times and often complex. Tyler and the Veterans Services Office, part of the Larimer County Workforce Center, are there to help navigate the complexities of the system. > continued on pg 32

“Vets are proud. They've been trained to be tough and to not ask for help.”

~ Tyler Jacobson

Larimer County Workforce Centers
Veterans Services Office

Veterans with severe PTSD and other complex situations often wait until they are on the verge of total financial collapse before they reach out. When they do reach out, their connection spurs Tyler to go the extra mile to bring support and relief to them. And, says Tyler, it's even more exhilarating when he sees them approved for funds or involvement in programs. "When you see how much it helps, it makes me feel like I have an impact – and it bolsters my sense of purpose," Tyler said.

One young vet proudly held off asking for help. Tyler discovered that the young man was recently awarded individual unemployability benefits so he could live, survive and begin to thrive. "I got to tell him he would receive a substantial retroactive payment, plus a monthly benefit – and he started to cry on the phone," said Tyler. "It was emotional for both of us realizing that this was this man's turning point – emotionally and financially."

Debbie Pierson, Tyler's supervisor, knows that feeling. The daughter of a marine, widow of a marine, and the mother of a soldier who served in Iraq – it's in her family – it's in her blood. Debbie speaks of Tyler's contributions with pride: "Tyler likes to ask questions. He likes to know the "reason behind" the answer. He is compassionate and cares about his fellow veterans. He is a great asset to our office." *Bravo Zulu, Tyler!*

We see a lot of pride that gets in the way of reaching out for help. ■

“A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor.”

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Veterans Services Office advice to military veterans:

If you think you need anything – you have help available.

Until you make it known you are a veteran, we don't know we are missing an opportunity to serve you.

From fed-up to a perfect fit.

By the time Bryan connected with the Larimer County Workforce Center, he was frustrated and fed-up with his job search. He had been honorably discharged from the military and had hoped to be employed long before he came to the Workforce Center. He recently finished his Bachelor's degree in IT and felt that he was very marketable.

Pro-Sphere Tek is a government contract employer, located in Loveland, Colorado. Pro-Sphere Tek had posted a position for a Network Support position. This position had been posted for several months but most of the applications they received did not meet the minimum qualifications.

With the support and guidance from the Larimer County Workforce Center, Bryan was well-prepared for his phone interview, followed by an in-person interview. The employer extended an offer and Bryan is now working at Pro-Sphere Tek.

Bryan and his new employer are very pleased with one another. Bryan has indicated that he hopes to be promoted within the company. His employer is very happy with his work ethic and the relationship that has been established with the Workforce Center.

The Veterans Services Office,

administered by the Larimer County Workforce Center, serves as the liaison between veterans and their earned benefits and assists in educating veterans about their entitlements.

The office served **4,880** veterans via telephone or walk-ins in 2015.

The office served **1,527** veterans with benefit claims in 2015; **904** of those veterans were new to the office.

In 2014, **\$133,928,000 in Veterans Administration funds** were brought into Larimer County*. The Veterans Services Office was a key contributor in securing benefits for veterans in Larimer County.

**Data for 2015 not available.*

Turning innovation into reality.

A message from Linda Hoffman County Manager

Larimer County is a recognized center for supporting business. We plan for improvement by encouraging smart business growth, more and better jobs.

As a community, we are all members of Larimer County, which reaches from the rural areas to urban centers. Every Larimer County resident has access to the diverse array of County Services, like the Larimer County Workforce Center.

The daily contributions the Workforce Center makes toward our County's economic well-being and quality of life supports innovation, influences business retention, and fosters opportunities that increase the wealth and health of our community and its residents.

The involvement of the Workforce Center as a critical partner in program development and research involving nationally renowned research experts is a remarkable achievement. When it would be easy to deliver basic services and meet standard reporting regulations, our county leadership at the Workforce Center goes above and beyond to boost our workforce.



~ Linda Hoffman
Larimer County Manager

Working hard to create a thriving community.

Improving the well-being of people and the health of business is at the heart of the Larimer County Workforce Center.

- ▶ In 2015, **over \$665,814.00** was returned to the local economy through wages earned in subsidized employment (internships).
- ▶ During 2015, contributions to **26 non-profit organizations** through the Enterprise Zone (EZ) program **totaled \$4,995,027**.
- ▶ In 2015, the Works teams **helped over 517 families** enter employment in career paths that made sense for their individual circumstances.
- ▶ The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) caseload, served by each career coach, averaged **85+** per month with a total of **1,514 individuals** served in 2015.

A healthy Larimer County economy depends on sophisticated workforce development practices.

The innovative achievements of our Workforce Center are lowering the cost of providing services, driving new business growth and creating long-term (life-changing) employment for our community members.



Welcome to the idea center.

Addressing the future of Workforce Development.

Because of the proactive, innovative action taken by Larimer County Workforce Center staff, our impact may influence social policy at a national level. In 2015, the Workforce Center was selected to participate in three very important initiatives impacting all levels of workforce development.

1 Skillful.

Changing middle-skill employment strategy and the way that America works.

Skillful, a Markle Initiative, selected the Larimer County Workforce Center to help create and test a pilot program designed to improve the quality and advancement of middle-skill employment.

The Markle Foundation is dedicated to changing social policy at a national level. With the Skillful program, the Larimer County Workforce Center is participating to work with employers and the local community to help middle-skill career seekers better understand the skills employers seek and to connect them to the right education and training opportunities. > continued on pg 38

“We couldn’t have asked for a more engaged partner than what we have in Larimer County.”

~ Katy Belot

Senior Manager with the
Markle Foundation



Using integrated technology to focus on skills rather than a four-year college degree, Skillful needed a partner to test and explore new methods in match-making for career seekers, educators and employers.

Katy Belot, Senior Manager with the Markle Foundation, explains why Larimer County was chosen: "We chose the Larimer County Workforce Center for their willingness to take a leap of faith, to be a willing partner on a pilot program and to learn as we go. We couldn't have asked for a more engaged partner than what we have in Larimer County."

Together with the Larimer County Workforce Center, the State of Colorado and the city of Phoenix, Arizona, Skillful has launched a pilot, which includes:

- An engaging digital platform offering tools and resources for middle-skill career seekers.
- An employer toolkit for skills-based hiring that employers can use to better signal what they need from career seekers and educators.
- A dashboard of data from LinkedIn for employers and educators to help inform skills-based hiring decisions.
- A team of Skillful Career Coach among the staff at the Workforce Center who assist middle-skill individuals explore and pursue career paths, as well as build a professional identity.
- Colorado-based Skillful/LinkedIn teams to work with employers and the local community to help career seekers better understand the skills employers seek and to connect them to the right training options.

please visit: www.skillful.com

“I see this initiative providing hope and opportunity for all - with a focus on building a stronger workforce. I'm eager to see how we can grow it, and make significant impacts across the nation.”

~ **Christa Menning**

Skillful Career Coach,
Larimer County Workforce Center

Three audits/financial reviews (federal, county and state) were conducted in 2015 and resulted in

**NO
compliance
issues.**

2 ReHire Colorado.

Bridging the gap between employers and talent.

Getting people back to work who haven't been working is a complex social problem. Many face a variety of challenging obstacles such as a lack of recent work history, criminal records, mental illness, limited skills and homelessness. Some are supporting grandkids, unable to retire, and some find themselves under skilled or in an unexpected layoff situation. They all benefit from an opportunity to shine and showcase what they can offer to an employer.

ReHire Colorado is a program designed to place these individuals in paid internship positions in order to gain the work-based skills and experience needed to create a successful employment path. Researchers at the University of Colorado are studying the long-term program impacts for the unemployed who meet ReHire Colorado guidelines.

Upon conclusion, the study will help determine the continuation or expansion of the ReHire program and position Colorado as a possible model for national social change. > continued on pg 41



“We chose the Larimer County Workforce Center because they are constantly searching for ways to improve their programs to allow the focus to be on helping the client and help people overcome big obstacles – they are truly committed to excellence.”

~ Irma Perez-Johnson

Associate Director of
Research at Mathematica
Policy Research



Left to Right: Dena Jardine, Ella Gifford-Hawkins
Larimer County Workforce Center, R. Mark Fauth-TuaPath,
Michelle Derr - Mathematica Policy Research,
Michael Suchowski -TuaPath and Valerie Uccellani
Global Learning Partners.

Special appreciation to project director, Jonathan McCay with Mathematica, for his unwavering support, dedication and superb organizational skills. Sincere gratitude to the Larimer County Works Team for their perseverance, patience and resiliency as the TuaPath adventure unfolds and becomes reality.



Global Learning Partners



MATHEMATICA
Policy Research



3 TuaPath.

Involvement in national policy.

Empowering Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) participants to regain sight of their dreams has historically been limited by pressure to place people in any job. Controlled by the demands of tremendous paperwork and complex regulations, TANF coaches are often unable to give the time needed to support TANF participants toward a productive path that meets their unique situation.

Small changes lead to big gains.

For the Larimer County Workforce Center, this has meant constant creativity in welcoming change and improvements while adhering to complex regulations and meeting burdensome reporting requirements and paperwork. The innovation Ella Gifford-Hawkins and her team inspire on a daily basis attracted a nationally recognized policy research organization, Mathematica Policy Research, to tap them on the shoulder for participation in co-creating and testing a bigger solution – one that has the power to impact TANF systems across the United States.

In a monumental effort, Mathematica Policy Research and Global Learning Partners are partnering with the Larimer County Workforce Center, and a local technology startup, TuaPath, to create a national solution for improving employment-related and quality of life outcomes of TANF participants. > continued on pg 42

Getting the best ideas from academic research.

TuaPath has a major role in customizing their career pathway software, which takes the idea of action steps to reach a goal and puts it into an interactive coach/client system for creating a pathway to career success.

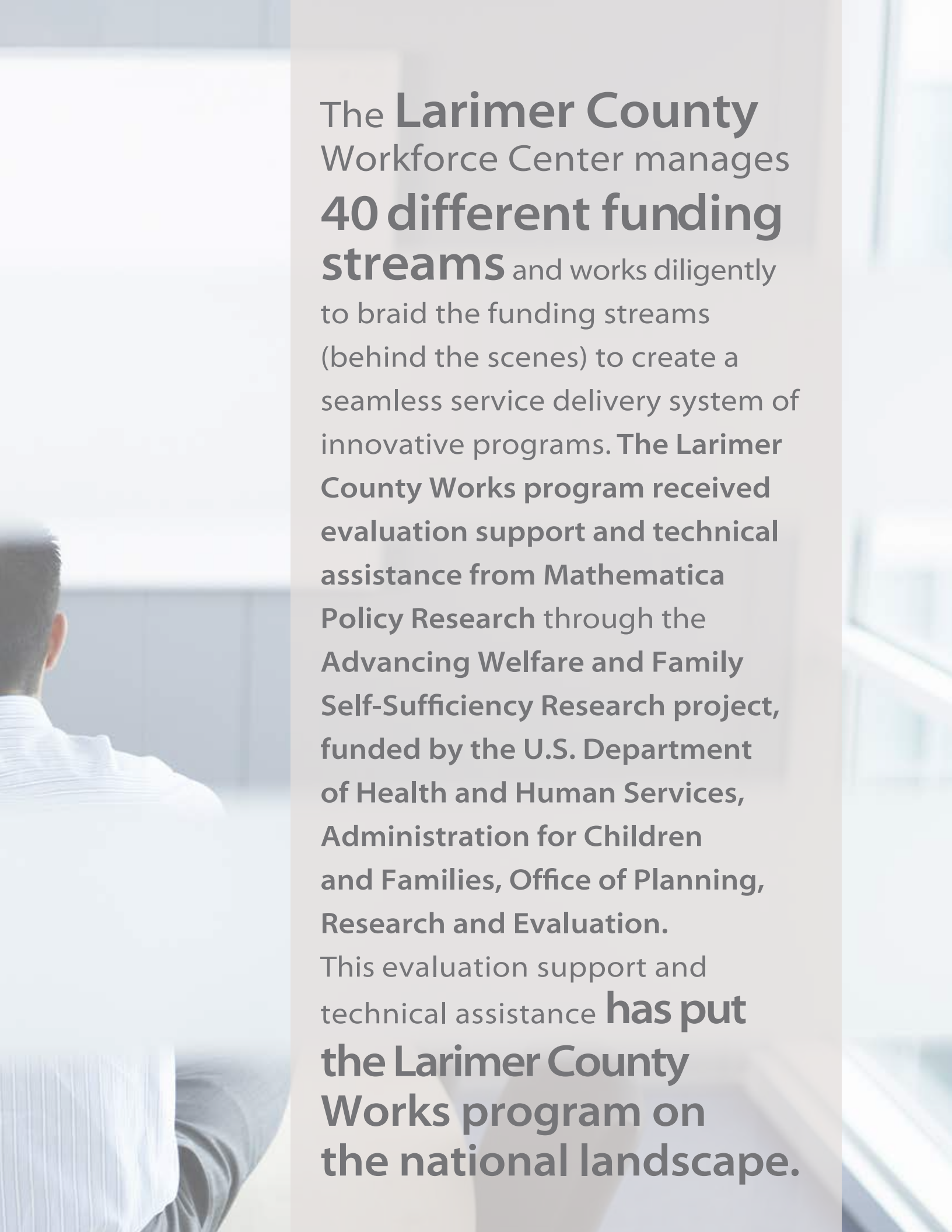
What is being created has three primary components:

- Develop and test a coaching methodology for coaching a participant in setting goals and creating a career pathway.
- Develop and test software and tools that house and complement the methodology of the coaching.
- Evaluation of real data to evaluate the effectiveness of the welfare system by learning what stops participants from making progress and what keeps them from engaging in the process.

According to Michelle Derr, Ph.D., Senior Researcher at Mathematica, "Science and evidence-based learning is a significant part of finding out what will work. It may take years to refine, but this is the only way to make big national reform – to learn what works that leads to stable employment."

Michael Suchowski, CEO of TuaPath, is excited by the potential of what this collaboration can achieve. "We hope to drastically reduce the amount of paperwork required by a coach so they can spend their time coaching. The concentration on using live data will support agile learning, software and development to allow our collaborative team to take the new system around the country by the end of 2016." ■

Engagement in these efforts illustrates the value of a research/practitioner partnership at all levels of social policy to pursue projects that allow policy makers to make headway on persistent challenges. These efforts can be very productive, developed at a low cost and yield high impact.

A person in a white shirt is seen from the back, looking out a window. The background is a bright, slightly blurred view of a building or landscape. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent grey box on the right side of the image.

The **Larimer County** Workforce Center manages **40 different funding streams** and works diligently to braid the funding streams (behind the scenes) to create a seamless service delivery system of innovative programs. The **Larimer County Works** program received evaluation support and technical assistance from Mathematica Policy Research through the Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research project, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. This evaluation support and technical assistance **has put the Larimer County Works** program on the national landscape.

A vital role.

A message from the Commissioners Office

Serving our community.

Civil society is made possible by dedicated public servants who manage our parks, process claims for veterans, provide career-training programs for businesses and individuals and protect our fragile environment. The individuals who make up the Larimer County Workforce Center form the human infrastructure that underpins a great deal of what is good and necessary for a healthy economy and vibrant community.

The work our Workforce Center team does strengthens the social capital of the community and pays off in so many ways.

When an individual finds a path for long-term employment and upward mobility, their family thrives. When a small business owner or entrepreneur gains access to paid interns, their business changes for the better. When students in our high schools are provided the opportunity to tour our leading employers, they gain awareness of their potential place in our community.

From helping young people to start their own business, to supporting local employers with what they need to be successful, matching others with community resources for training, preparing them with skills for moving forward toward a healthy and stable life, our County's Workforce Center staff is supremely dedicated to changing lives and impacting the health of our community.

In 2015, almost 16,000 career seekers connected with the Workforce Center. Every day, Workforce Center staff guide people of all ages, experience levels, and walks of life to get on the road to where they want to be.



Constantly innovating to make certain every effort is made to help people find their dream.

Because of the dedication to innovation, our public servants at the Larimer County Workforce Center have been selected from among a handful of Workforce Centers around the United States to participate in partnerships with national agencies to research contemporary strategies that could lead to national impact in the years to come.

Caring for one another, taking on great challenges, achieving great things for our fellow citizens.

Looking to the future, we look forward to the continuous stories of individual successes that make us all proud to live and work in a community that will always be better for the programs and people that give our neighbors a place and purpose.

On behalf of the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Larimer County, thank you for taking the time to review our annual report.

We are proud to share information on the diverse services offered through the Larimer County Workforce Center that enhance our community and support our economy. Although we serve many thousands of people and businesses every year, there is still a large portion of our community who are not familiar with the WDB and what we do. We are aiming to change that - and what better place to do so than in the pages of this annual report.

The WDB is designed to connect community, government, business, and education to help shape a robust, talented and sustainable workforce. We are business-led, but have a broad membership base that represents a wide variety of interests within the region, making the WDB a unique partnership of cross-sector individuals that strive to positively impact the world of work in Larimer County.

Over the course of 2014, we engaged with numerous private and public sector leaders regarding their workforce challenges and, from those conversations, the WDB identified three areas of focus for 2015:

- The growing skilled labor gap in middle-skill occupations such as advanced manufacturing.
- The opportunities for training new leaders, supervisors and managers.
- The importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) education in creating a talented pipeline of skilled workers.

As a result of addressing these important topics, the WDB made meaningful connections and had a positive impact on many people, businesses and organizations within Larimer County.

The WDB will build on the success we experienced in 2015 as we look to 2016 and beyond. Workforce development continues to be one the most pressing socio-economic issues of our time and we are prepared to take on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

That said, we know that we cannot do this in a vacuum and we need your help. If you or someone you know has an interest in helping to shape the future of Larimer County's workforce development programming, we extend an open invitation to attend our monthly meetings and work sessions.

Sincerely,
Nancy Patton, Co-Chair, WDB



Jerry Thurber, Co-Chair, WDB



Bringing all stakeholders out from silos to bridge the dialog around Workforce issues.

The role of the Workforce Development Board is to ensure responsibility over County and Federal dollars and the priorities of Larimer County as a whole are given an audience and a platform for discussion.

Comprised of business and community leaders, CEOs and influential industry experts, WDB members are passionate about gaining results in all areas of Workforce Development.

Together, we are working very hard to break down barriers of understanding of what is needed for a qualified and thriving Workforce and how to prioritize funding and programs to get results.

Vision of change – new targets of who should be served.

Jerry Thurber, Innotreive CEO and Co-Chair WDB explains, "With a renewed focus on trades and career pathways, we realize that our workforce has to be broad ranging, not everyone needs a Master's degree –but we need everybody!"

2015 Workforce Development Board Members:

 **Jerry Thurber** - Co-Chair, WDB
Innotreive

 **Nancy Patton** - Co-Chair, WDB
Public Service Credit Union

 **Michele Christensen**
Fort Collins Housing Authority

 **William Dowling**
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

 **Robin Fallon**
Qualfon

 **Lew Gaiter III**
Larimer County Board of Commissioners

 **Kathy Hanson**
Poudre School District

 **Ann Hutchison**
Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce

 **SeonAh Kendall**
City of Fort Collins

 **Eric Lea**
Robert Half

 **Eric Leftwich**
jobZology

 **Heather Lelchook**
Aims Community College

Richard Martinez
Retired Public Power

Cynthia Christie
Manufacturer's Edge

Alan Cohen
State of Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Mike Reiff
New Century Software

Center Funders and Contributors



Tracy Mead
Project Self-Sufficiency



Julie Zinn
Spirae, LLC



Anjanette Mosebar
UCHealth

Jim Neubecker
Retired Building Trades



Mistene Nugent
Workspace Innovations



Mike O'Connell
Larimer Small Business
Development Center



Gen Ponce-Pore
CSU Office of Engagement



Miki Roth
The Group, Inc.



Ed Rutherford
Larimer County Department
of Human Services



Rusty Shawley
Adecco Engineering
& Technology

Deb Spotts
CSU Center for Community
Partnerships



Traci Summers
Kaiser Permanente



Lynn Vosler
Front Range
Community College



Kathi Wright
Boys & Girls Clubs of
Larimer County



Varo Maldonado
SER Jobs for Progress

Additional funding provided by:

- Aloterra Restoration Services
- BizWest
- Blue Ocean Enterprises, Inc.
- Bob Trout
- Breeze Through Car Wash
- City of Fort Collins
 - Economic Health Office
 - Parks and Planning Department
 - Utilities
- City of Loveland
 - Parks and Recreation Department
 - Water and Power
- Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
- Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
- Colorado Department of Human Services
- Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
- Colorado Workforce Development Council
- Colorado Youth Corps Association
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Corporation for National and Community Service
- Emrick Saw Project
- Energy Outreach Colorado
- Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce
- Global Learning Partners
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- High Plains Environmental Center
- Jax Mercantile
- KEEN Footwear
- KRFC Community Radio
- Larimer County Board of Commissioners
- Larimer County Department of Human Services
- Larimer County Foundation
- Larimer County Natural Resources
- Leila Graves
- Mathematic Policy Research
- Mountain Khakis
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Park Service
- Rocky Mountain National Park
- Odell Brewing Company
- OtterCares Foundation
- Outdoor ProLink
- Patagonia Grant – Wild & Scenic Film Festival
- Poudre Wilderness Volunteers
- Poudre School District
- Public Service Credit Union
- Recreational Equipment Inc.
- Rose Marie Studer
- SummitStone Health Partners
- The Coloradan
- The Corps Network
- The Markle Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Transpro Burgener Trucking
- TuaPath
- U.S. Forest Service
- Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests
- Warner College of Natural Resources, Colorado State University
- Warren Federal Credit Union
- Wells Fargo
- Wilderness Restoration Volunteers
- Whole Foods
- Your True Nature



“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

~ Walt Disney



The Larimer County Workforce Center

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Larimer County Workforce Center is an equal opportunity agency and supports Veterans priority of service. Accommodations for persons with disabilities provided upon request.