Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

COLORADO WAGE OUTCOMES RESULTS COALITION

The Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative has partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver to launch the Colorado Wage Outcomes Results Coalition (CO WORC).

CO WORC is a data-sharing initiative created in response to the growing demand from public and private sector stakeholders to access meaningful employment and earnings data. Utilizing the Linked Information Network of Colorado, and connecting data safely and securely through the Governor's Office of Information Technology, CO WORC is unlocking previously unavailable administrative earnings data from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

In 2023, CO WORC launched a first cohort of six training providers, including: ActivateWork, the Center for Employment Opportunities, CrossPurpose, The Master's Apprentice, Mile High WorkShop, and Women's Bean Project. Each one of these providers works with different target populations via different models, though they all aim to help individuals facing barriers to employment and provide services to those trying to maintain or achieve economic stability.

Providers in the first cohort were asked to share specific data elements, including social security numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers to ensure the greatest-probability of identifying a match in the CDLE earnings records. Through this process, we were able to match 95.8% of Mile High WorkShop participants with CDLE earnings records. With this information, CO WORC was able to generate trends in earnings data typically beginning two years prior to beginning a training program and two years post entry into a program.

These data are a first step towards understanding return on investment. CO WORC is committed to building-evidence for Colorado's workforce training programs and expanding the number of programs with verifiable earnings data for their learners on a regular schedule.

About Mile High WorkShop

Social Enterprise
*Job Training/Employer*

The Mile High WorkShop creates employment opportunities and provides job training for members of our community seeking to rebuild from addictions, homelessness, and incarceration, with a vision to empower people through meaningful work. Mile High WorkShop assembles and manufactures products in partnership with collaborating businesses to create work opportunities, and is centered around the belief that the best approach to creating the greatest number of jobs is through focusing on one part of the supply chain – contract production. Mile High WorkShop partners with businesses in the community to support their kitting, assembly, packaging and sewing efforts. As the name suggests, Mile High WorkShop is a locally developed and grown program, and CO WORC is helping them on their evidence-building journey, by assessing pre-and-post wage outcomes and earnings trajectories for their employees.

Average Earnings

Quarterly earnings data come from CDLE W-2 records. Earnings are income from formal employment (e.g., an hourly wage rate times the number of hours worked).[1] Earnings are gross (pre-tax and before any other deductions). All earnings values are inflation adjusted to reflect purchasing power in 2023 dollars using the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood area Consumer Price Index.[2, 3]

The following event-study graph plots the average total quarterly earnings for program participants. Participants include all enrolled learners, whether or not they graduated from the program. Quarter 0 is the quarter when participants started the program. Earnings are tracked starting 8 quarters prior to program enrollment and end 12 quarters after program enrollment. For example, the average total quarterly earnings of participants in their quarter of enrollment (Quarter 0) was $2,458.
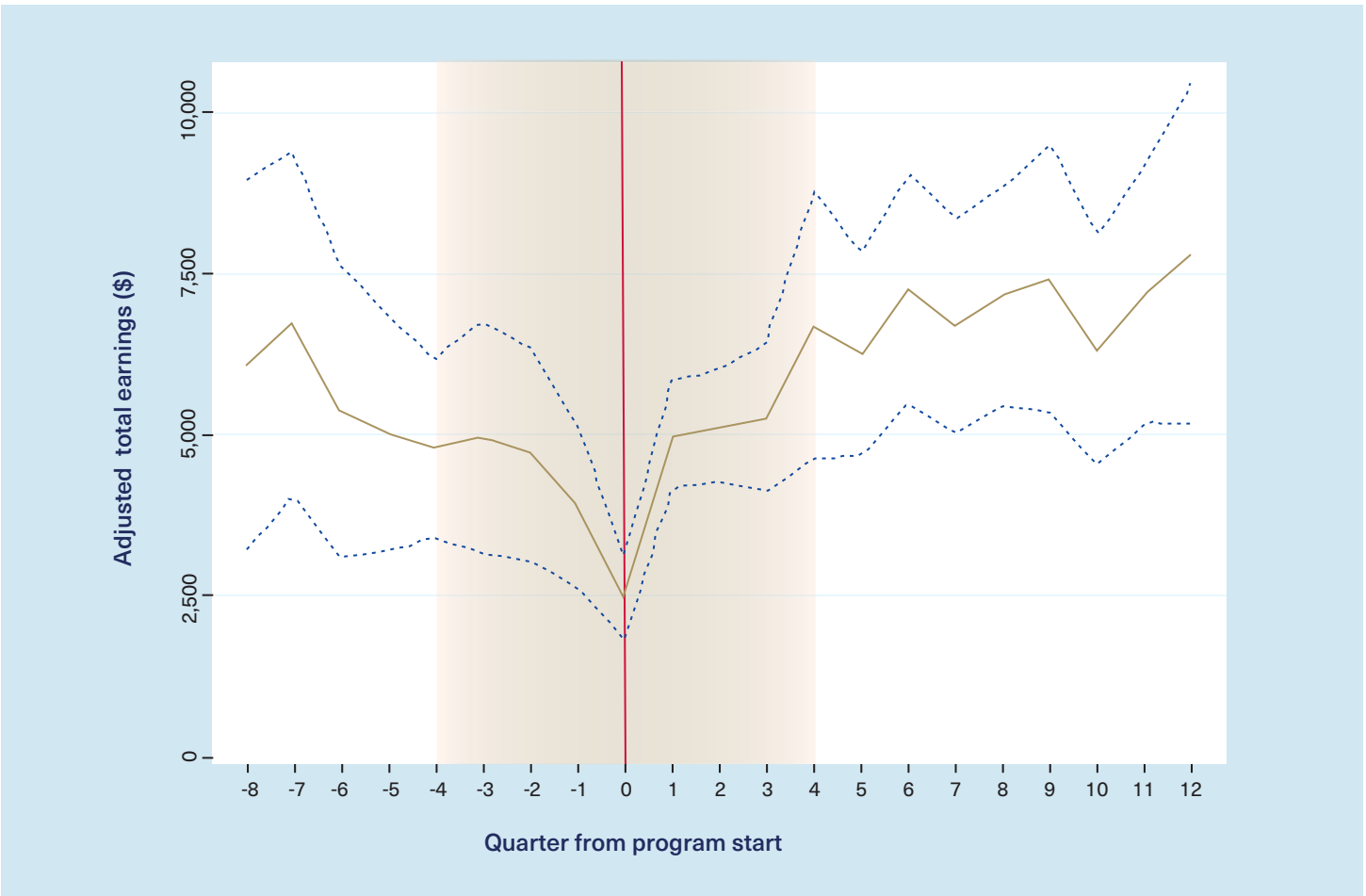
- Inflation adjusted average total quarterly earnings show a decline prior to program enrollment, suggesting a prolonged period of earnings erosion and budget tightening
- The dip in average total quarterly earnings two quarters prior to program enrollment is consistent with program participants experiencing financial distress and diverting time from employment to training and upskilling
- After program completion, average total quarterly earnings recover quickly, surpassing pre-enrollment levels and continuing on a positive trajectory

Earnings Distribution

The following table summarizes of the distribution of earnings at different points in time.
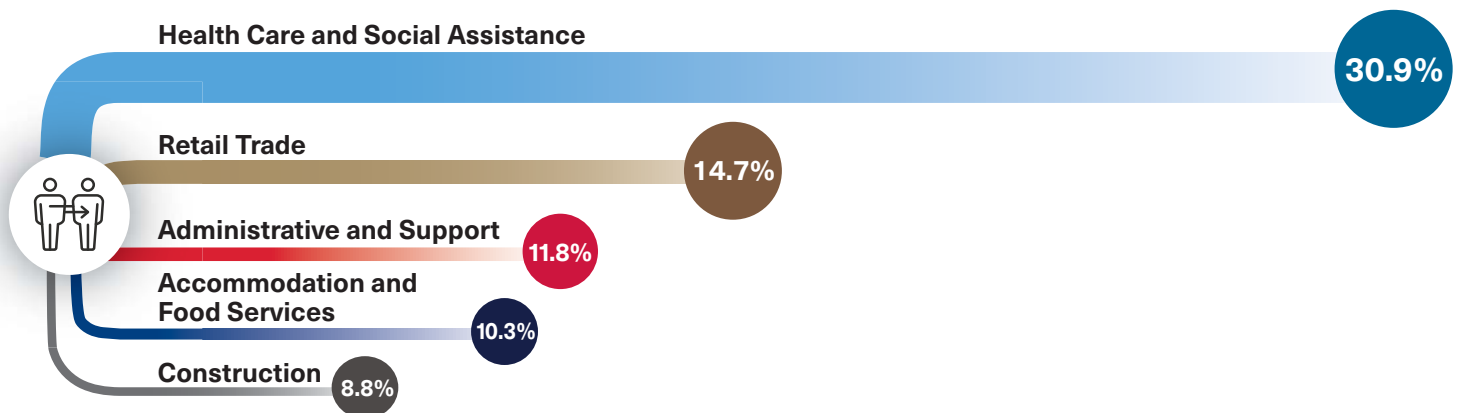
	Quarter -4 (n=41)	Quarter 0 (n=123)	Quarter 4 (n=54)	Quarter 0 to 4 growth	Quarter -4 to 4 growth
Average earnings	4,791	2,458	6,676	171.6%	39.3%
Median earnings	3,710	1,767	5,085	187.8%	37.1%
Standard error of average earnings	682	320	1,033		
Earnings of the 25th percentile participant	1,702	584	1,694	190.1%	-0.5%
Earnings of the 75th percentile participant	6,625	2,923	8,993	207.7%	35.7%

- Average and median total quarterly earnings are 39.3% and 37.1% higher, respectively, four quarters after program enrollment when compared to four quarters prior to program enrollment
- Between Quarter -4 and 4, total quarterly earnings of the 25th percentile participant did not increase, but also suggest that the earnings of participants at the lower end of the distribution have been keeping up with inflation

Industry Composition

CDLE provides North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to categorize participants' place of employment. Knowing what sectors participants are transitioning into one year after program enrollment can inform industry partnerships (n=68).

Health Care and Social Assistance — 30.9%

Retail Trade — 14.7%

Administrative and Support — 11.8%

Accommodation and Food Services — 10.3%

Construction — 8.8%

A majority of participants are working jobs in health care and social assistance, retail, administrative and support services, and accommodation and food services in the fourth quarter after program enrollment; this includes working for employers providing medical, social assistance, and business support services

Program Snapshot

The following table provides a demographic snapshot of participants when they start the program (n = 144). These data are collected by Mile High WorkShop as part of an intake survey.

		Measure at intake
Median Age		41
Gender (%)	Women	47.2%
	Men	51.4%
	Prefer not to answer, other, N/A	1.4%
Race/Ethnicity (%)	Black or African American	20.1%
	White	46.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	20.8%
	Prefer not to answer or other	12.5%

- Mile High WorkShop serves similar numbers of women and men
- 40.9% of participants identify as either Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino

[1] Earnings are not equivalent to compensation or income. Compensation adds employee benefits (e.g., in-kind benefits, employer-financed retirement benefits). Income adds unearned income (e.g., interest, dividends, government transfer payments like food stamps or unemployment compensation).

[2] Earnings prior to 2023 are adjusted to reflect their equivalent purchasing power in 2023. This accounts for the fact that a wage of $20 per hour in 2019 could buy more than $20 in 2023.

[3] Includes Adams, Arapahoe, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park counties.

This work would not be possible without anonymized data provided by the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC). The findings do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology or the organizations contributing data.

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