



CAREERWISE COLORADO



TOMORROW'S TALENT
TODAY

MODERN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP *could change everything*

ABOUT CAREERWISE COLORADO

CareerWise Colorado is building a statewide system of youth apprenticeships that create pathways for students to access high-demand, high-paying careers at leading Colorado companies. Student apprentices work toward high school graduation and earn postsecondary credit, industry credentials or both in their chosen career path. Established by the Business Experiential-Learning (BEL) Commission created by Gov. John Hickenlooper and chaired by Noel Ginsburg of Intertech Plastics, CareerWise Colorado launched in school districts in metro Denver, Fort Collins and the Western Slope and is adding more each year.

CURRENT CAREER PATHWAYS

CareerWise Colorado offers apprenticeships in five primary pathways. These starter pathways lead to a variety of occupations.

- Information Technology
- Business Operations
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Financial Services

CONTACT & LEARN MORE

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COLORADO
Gov. John Hickenlooper

Dear Colorado Business Leaders,

If you're like me, you remember the first time work inspired you. And the first time you learned, maybe the hard way, how critical it is to have the right team driving your business.

What if we could make the magic of career inspiration available to high school students, and empower them to "earn while they learn?" What if we could turn hiring from a guessing game into a process that matches the skills your business needs to win with the people who have demonstrated those skills?

In Colorado, these aren't just "what ifs." They're becoming the way we do business. We're becoming a model for the nation, turning problems into opportunities.

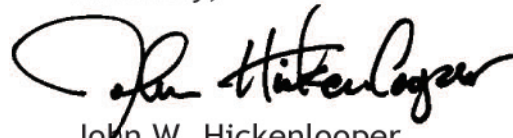
Here are three problems that add up to an opportunity. First, most Colorado ninth graders will not experience the American ideal of graduating from high school, graduating from college (two- or four-year), and then finding work. Second, artificial intelligence and the gig economy will change and eliminate many traditional full-time jobs, especially for folks without college degrees. Third, businesses around Colorado are having a hard time finding enough people to fill lots of very rewarding and fulfilling modern-economy jobs.

Here's how these problems add up to an opportunity. CareerWise Colorado is the nation's first modern youth apprenticeship system. Apprenticeships have an honored place in our country — people learning valuable skills at work from master craftspeople, earning while they learn, and obtaining valuable credentials. CareerWise translates that tradition into modern youth apprenticeships in fields like IT, financial services, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare.

CareerWise just completed its Year One pilot with great employers like HomeAdvisor and Pinnacle Assurance. Every participating employer has returned for Year Two, and 60 percent of those employers have recruited a second cohort of apprentices this year. That's because CareerWise yields a positive return on investment while inspiring young people to careers. At the same time another Colorado organization, Skillful, empowers employers in our state to hire and promote on the basis of demonstrated skills rather than degrees as proxies for skills. Colorado is doing well by doing right...and solving our workforce problems.

By 2027 CareerWise will have 20,000 youth apprentices applying their classroom lessons in modern career pathways. Be part of the solution! I strongly encourage you to contact CareerWise to see if modern youth apprenticeship is a fit for your business.

Sincerely,



John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

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WHAT MAKES AN APPRENTICESHIP MODERN?

Apprenticeship isn't a new idea. In fact, it's a really old idea. When it comes to helping people understand what a CareerWise apprenticeship means, it may be useful to point to more traditional definitions of apprenticeship, then highlight what the experience looks like in today's world.

On one hand, "apprenticeship" is commonly understood to be an on-the-job training program that ultimately results in a skilled worker, and oftentimes a job. In the past, such jobs have been in skilled trades such as plumbing or woodworking, and apprentices (usually adult men) who developed their craft in these jobs and may not have had intentions of attending college.

Descriptions such as these, while illustrating common perceptions of apprenticeship, are antiquated. They don't depict the reality of today's apprenticeship, the myriad apprentice opportunities across a variety of modern industries, and what apprenticeship can look like for both students and businesses.

A modern youth apprenticeship is characterized by several significant differences compared to more traditional definitions. First are the people. CareerWise youth apprentices are current high school students who engage in a three-year experience that typically begins in the student's junior year. They're both male and female apprentices, and include honor-roll students, students that have a focused interest in a career path or simply students who want to employ their classroom studies to an applied-learning environment.

Second are the professions. A modern apprenticeship features opportunities in 21st-Century fields that businesses and industries have identified as areas of high growth, high demand and high pay. CareerWise apprentices are working in career pathways such as Information Technology, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Financial Services and Business Operations.

Even above and beyond the credit they earn, apprentices become better equipped for college. Because they are able to build their skills in their specific area of interest during apprenticeship, they enter college with better clarity and greater understanding of that field of study, and come to college with a better perspective on how higher education can further their career goals. Finally, students who participate in apprenticeship prior to attending college gain the maturity and discipline that comes with spending some time in a professional environment—leading them to be more focused in their studies.

The logistical model of a modern youth apprenticeship—the practical nuts and bolts of making sure it works for both students and businesses—also sets it apart from traditional apprenticeship. In the past, apprenticeships have been designed, implemented and managed by schools, individual businesses, trade associations, labor unions or, sometimes, the government. By contrast, CareerWise is a nonprofit intermediary that works across the state of Colorado to connect the complex structures of education and industry.

As a private-public partnership, CareerWise designed its apprenticeship program to span across state geography and industry, while providing tangible benefits to the businesses that hire apprentices and the students who work as apprentices. There are no government incentives or subsidies; each player is motivated to participate by the inherent, natural incentives the system has to offer.

With a new and expanded understanding of what "apprenticeship" means, Colorado businesses may do well to challenge themselves to picture students working in a variety of business settings and industries. Apprenticeship as a talent strategy pays dividends in competitive advantage and long-term workforce development.



Apprentices at Pinnacol Assurance work with their supervisor.

INTERNSHIP VS. APPRENTICESHIP

Many people use the words "internship" and "apprenticeship" interchangeably. This is understandable, since both terms relate to career-oriented experiences, and there is some overlap. Businesses invest time and energy into such programs to achieve talent goals and competitive advantages, and participating students get a chance to make themselves more marketable while gaining valuable professional experience.

The truth is, there are distinct, nuanced differences between internship and apprenticeship—and unique rewards, too. For many Colorado businesses, the apprenticeship model makes the most sense as a talent acquisition strategy because it can draw a straight line to skilled full-time employees.

At its most basic distinction, internship supports career readiness through brief interaction with professionals in a work environment, while apprenticeship prepares people with the skills they need to step directly into a career.

Internships expose students to an industry and work environment for a shorter period of time, typically 12 weeks to one year, and students may or may not earn an hourly wage. Internships also give employers a chance to evaluate interns for the potential of a longer-term role at the company.

On the other hand, apprenticeship provides a paid job training experience designed to prepare the apprentice for a career in a specific field. CareerWise apprenticeships combine rigorous, structured classroom- and work-based learning that maps to a set of well-defined core competencies.

As a strategy for developing an organization's talent pipeline, apprenticeship is attractive. Because CareerWise's program requires a three-year commitment, there is ample time for a business to fully integrate and train apprentices in its unique operations, create opportunities for apprentices to be productive, and prepare them to immediately step into a position once the program completes—creating returns on investment in both the near and long term.

CareerWise apprenticeships go a few steps further. In addition to the meaningful work experience, the modern approach enables youth apprentices to earn up to a year's worth of college credit and a nationally recognized industry certification while establishing an invaluable professional network. Likewise, businesses benefit from valuable mentorship training for their supervisors and coaches, access to tools and resources for their human resource departments, and thoughtful management of key relationships among industry, schools, school districts and apprentices.

All in all, apprenticeship offers many advantages for Colorado businesses seeking creative strategies to cost-effectively boost their operations, realize financial returns and build their future workforce.

How can this innovative look at talent acquisition help your business?

LEARN MORE
by visiting
careerwisecolorado.org/business



A MODERN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

Talent-Acquisition Strategy

Makes Ce

CAPABLE

Loyal, adaptable, diverse and digital-native talent pool

MOTIVATED

88% of employers believe that apprenticeship leads to a more motivated and satisfied workplace

ARDUOUS

6-12 months of industry training and soft-skills necessary to be successful in today's 21st Century workforce

UNCERTAIN

Career uncertainty, leading to employer disloyalty

GRADUAL

Training over 3 years to align with company standards and culture

INEXPENSIVE

Appx. \$10K per year during apprenticeship; \$35-45K if hired

FOOLS' GOLD?

Salaries are based on degrees as proxies for job skills

DISSATISFI

65% of mill will leave th company w years

CareerWise Hires

College-Only Hires

APPRENTICESHIP Strategy Benefits

Today, the burden of preparing the newest members of Colorado's workforce for success falls directly on our schools. But, the skills necessary to thrive in a 21st-century economy are evolving rapidly, and businesses are having difficulty finding employees with the appropriate competencies to effectively fill in-demand, high-paying jobs. Modern youth apprenticeship works with schools and businesses to create rigorous applied-learning environments and an effective, positive ROI talent-acquisition.



AGED
Millennials
leave their
within 5

EXTENSIVE

Additional training is often needed, and 1/3 of employees leave in the first year



EXORBITANT

All-in \$50-100k per year depending on industry with 20-30% of base salary going to the agency



SQUARE PEGS

Candidates often don't need training around industry skills, but lack understanding of company culture and loyalty

UNCERTAINTY

Potential bidding wars and potentially low retention rate

APATHETIC
High turnover and morale issues with temp workers working alongside permanent employees



OVERPRICED

Salaries range 10-20% above market average



Modern youth apprenticeship fits into your talent acquisition strategies at CareerWiseColorado.org

THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT TALENT

Pinnacol Assurance had been actively seeking ways to reinvigorate its talent acquisition strategy. During a trip to Switzerland to see first-hand the country's youth apprentice model, Pinnacol's CEO was challenged to think differently about his hiring approaches. Soon after, Pinnacol was the first to join CareerWise Colorado, a new statewide modern youth-apprenticeship system that borrows key elements from the Swiss. Today, Pinnacol hosts CareerWise's largest cohort of high-school apprentices, considers its investment a competitive advantage—and is in it for the long haul.

In 2015 Pinnacol had evaluated its workforce demographics as part of a reorganization. One outcome was the realization that by 2019, the company would be facing a retirement boom as one-third of its more experienced staff members would begin to exit the workforce.

Coupled with those forecasts were lower numbers of individuals graduating with risk management degrees, only a fraction of students indicating a high interest in insurance careers—and an ever-present need to train even college graduates from the ground up.

Pinnacol's CEO, Phil Kalin, found striking gaps between what the education system produced and what businesses need.

CareerWise intrigued Kalin as an innovative approach to developing Pinnacol's talent pipeline. He was willing to dive headfirst into the uncharted program.

As a result, in 2017 Pinnacol welcomed a cohort of 20 apprentices, the largest in CareerWise's portfolio. "We are taking a risk," Kalin acknowledged, "but in order to see the kind of payoff we want, we need to do it at scale."

Pinnacol's apprentices support 23 work teams—primarily in claims, underwriting, customer service and information technology—and the company already sees a return on its investment through the apprentices' support of daily operations.

"They are taking on roles and responsibilities that free up full-time, salaried staff to focus on the more technical aspects of their jobs," said Mark Tapy, Pinnacol's apprenticeship program manager. He estimates that from a strictly hourly standpoint, the company recoups about 80 percent of wages paid for the work produced. And that's just one year into its three-year program.

While the apprentices' work does not yet directly offset the overhead costs of training and mentoring, CEO Kalin predicts that, "By halfway through the program, the benefit to Pinnacol will outweigh the costs. At the end of three years we should be break-even."

“It dramatically broadens the notion of what an apprenticeship is. It becomes not only a pathway to a great middle-class job, but is a launching pad that can take young people in any number of directions, whether it's a job or higher education.”

In the meantime, the company sees other hard-to-measure returns, such as leadership and mentoring opportunities for staff, and the infusion of young energy that has some teams interested in the apprentices as future full-time employees. "The program is sprouting some arms in our organization that we were not anticipating. Their added value to the company is undeniable," said Tapy.

Tapy predicts a value-add outside the company's walls as the apprentice model grows to scale: "There will be a much better-prepared workforce in the state. As more companies produce high-caliber talent, the whole industry benefits."

Executive buy-in isn't a problem. Kalin, an outspoken advocate for CareerWise's modern apprenticeship model, says he is "very bullish on the program."

"It dramatically broadens the notion of what an apprenticeship is. It becomes not only a pathway to a great middle-class job, but is a launching pad that can take young people in any number of directions, whether it's a job or higher education," said Kalin.

Nonetheless, Kalin carefully notes that Pinnacol's involvement is not altruistic. He admires the apprentices for being smart, motivated, curious and energetic—and enthusiastically supports them. But at the end of the day, "This is a business decision that is the right format, at the right time."

PINNACOL ASSURANCE



Axyl Shores
Underwriting Apprentice
Pinnacol Assurance

Axyl says he has always struggled how school delivers knowledge. He's a good student, but he finds greater benefits in lessons he learns outside of the classroom. As a CareerWise modern youth apprentice, he's found the right balance of classroom and work-based learning to motivate him. Highly energetic and driven to succeed, his apprenticeship goal is to develop in-demand career skills that he can apply to any profession.

Axyl is a junior at the Denver School of Innovation and Sustainable Design. As a learner, he excels when he's able to observe someone else solving a problem and reproduce his own version of it. But Axyl feels that scenario is not the norm.

"There is not a lot of observing at school," he said.

Because so much emphasis at school is placed on simply completing the work and submitting it to teachers, Axyl does not feel motivated to do his best. "It's easy to type fast, get work done at a general-quality level, and get feedback." To Axyl, this system does not offer much satisfaction.

Hearing about CareerWise's modern youth-apprenticeship program, Axyl signed up because it would offer a new environment, and because he was eager to jumpstart his career.

Pinnacol Assurance hired Axyl as an apprentice serving on one of the company's client service underwriting teams, where he processes workers' compensation insurance policy renewals and assists policyholders as they register for web portal access, and the Special Investigations Unit, where he researches traffic accident reports.

In these roles, Axyl is gaining the skills he needs to be an entrepreneur while applying the core-competencies of math and English he learns in school to a meaningful assignment. After his apprenticeship, he wants to obtain a Master of Business Administration and eventually manage his own business. He is "very technology-savvy" and will likely do work involving computers—and is very clear about the fact that his experience now is propelling him toward his future.

Axyl is receiving valuable training that will make him a highly sought-after employee. In addition to building knowledge about the insurance industry, apprenticeship at Pinnacol has deeply focused on developing skills in leadership, public speaking and communication. Being part of a Toastmasters program has been Axyl's most memorable experience so far.

"It's fun to see how much I have grown. I'm learning to be more professional in my body language, put out the right energy when talking to people and be the best that I can in the business environment," he said.

Apprenticeship has also opened Axyl's eyes to an area in which he needs improvement: focusing on quality over quantity. Being a naturally "fast worker," he is learning to slow down. "With legal documents about people's lives, it's not an option to make big mistakes. I'm trying to be more careful with what I'm putting out."

While Axyl was a straight-A student in school last year, top grades have never been his goal. He doesn't feel that a 4.0 would benefit him. "It's not something that's necessary to build skills, be professional, be intelligent, and have the drive to work."

In fact, Axyl's transcripts indicate he is exactly in the middle of his class in terms of grade point average. He says this "speaks volumes about how capable people are. There is nothing special about me. I wanted to do something, I got what I wanted and now I am doing my best."

When Axyl started his apprenticeship, he was anxious about not fully knowing what was involved and wondered if he could perform in a job normally reserved for college-educated people. But being in the experience boosts his confidence. "Every day teaches you to not have fears," he said.

Axyl's biggest surprise has been the chance to do things he never imagined before. "There have been more opportunities for me in the past nine months than I've ever had in my life," he said.

MORE THAN AN IDEA: A PRAGMATIC BUSINESS APPROACH



“ We were six weeks ahead of our plans and had to find other things for them to do. We definitely underestimated them. ”

Colin Dean
Quality Assurance Apprentice
HomeAdvisor

The CEO of HomeAdvisor has long felt America’s obsession with “college for all” is myopic — believing there should be multiple paths for developing well-rounded, educated adults who have skills that will let them achieve the American Dream. He was initially skeptical of an apprentice program—pioneered in Switzerland—serving high schoolers, but seeing the innovative approach in action, became convinced it was a highly effective and pragmatic solution. Today, HomeAdvisor employs several modern youth apprentices and is helping CareerWise Colorado write the playbook for this unique model. Chris Terrill, HomeAdvisor’s CEO, subscribes to the notion that college may not be the right path for all students, and that some will benefit from college only after experiencing the workforce.

As a society, Terrill said, “we went too far in the sixties and seventies, believing that college and only college could make students well prepared for the world, improve their skills, and be prepared for a modern work environment.” Businesses need employees who can work in groups effectively, learn unique skills in real time and have flexible thinking capabilities—but, given the pace of change today, college can’t always provide that type of dynamic, real-world environment as readily as businesses can. In Terrill’s experience, “at times, the education system can be a bit divorced from the pace and reality of how business works.”

Terrill initially took a skeptical view of youth apprenticeship, fearing that the education gaps were too complex to be solved by what he considered merely an idea. He needed evidence that a youth apprentice program would work.

In 2016, Terrill was invited by Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper to explore Switzerland’s successful apprenticeship model. He was eager to see what was so special about the Swiss approach—a collaborative effort of education, government and business—and how it might benefit Colorado businesses.

In the Swiss model, he found the evidence he needed. “It was a pragmatic, smart program with proven results,” he said. And he witnessed apprentices who were equally smart, mature and productive—combating his own tendency to underestimate what young people are capable of accomplishing.

As a pilot partner in July 2017 HomeAdvisor hired four CareerWise apprentices. These college-bound students will be joined by six additional apprentices in July 2018.

They fill roles on the human resources, IT and software development teams, building transferable skills they can take to the marketplace. Modern youth apprenticeship, said Tanya Jones, HomeAdvisor’s recruiting director, accomplishes goals for the new generation of students and for private industry. “It takes an old, well-known, work-based learning model and applies it to today’s new career options,” she said.

“ They are sponges and want to learn. They give me hope for what’s next for the group ultimately taking over my job. ”

HomeAdvisor’s apprentices benefit the company in multiple ways by bringing in a new set of eyes and perspectives. For example, the apprentice supporting Jones’s team has suggested small changes that bring efficiencies to her team’s processes.

Because the younger generation are “technology natives,” they are more adaptable and able to learn in modern environments quickly. This is something Jones’s team hadn’t accounted for in the first 12 weeks of training. “We were six weeks ahead of our plans and had to find other things for them to do. We definitely underestimated them.”

Finally, Jones is impressed with the apprentices’ passion and willingness to work hard. “They are sponges and want to learn. They give me hope for what’s next for the group ultimately taking over my job.”

HomeAdvisor’s modern youth apprentices are helping the company work better and faster, and gain a distinct competitive edge. But CEO Terrill takes the long view in considering the return on investment. Because the company is tapping into a new generation of workers before its competitors, and potentially filling its own future employee pipeline, Terrill justifies the time and resource commitment.

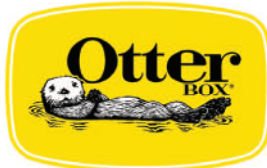
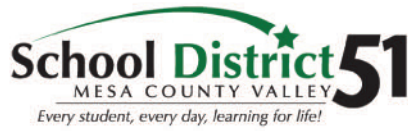
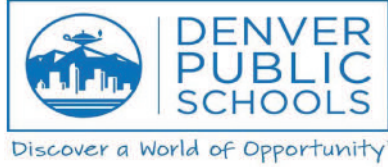
He also sees greater value for the entire industry in building and expanding the modern youth-apprentice model, regardless of where the apprentices end up in the long term. “The ecosystem is better for everybody. There is a net gain of talent that every company can dip into,” he said.

Compared to traditional, three-month internship programs, CareerWise’s apprenticeship structure actively involves the students in their learning—offering hard and soft skills they can use while holding them to the same expectations as adults. This new treatment of kids’ abilities and potential influenced Terrill’s thinking.

“You have these inherently smart kids who weren’t connecting with high school and weren’t thinking about college before. Now they’re connecting the dots; they are being productive,” he said. “We do a disservice to kids in thinking they can’t do more.”

Developing an effective apprentice model and taking it to scale will be a lot of work, but that is Terrill’s vision. He is eager to play a role in helping CareerWise build, test, modify and make the model work. And he wants to prove to other businesses that it’s a model worth investing in.

CURRENT YOUTH APPRENTICE EMPLOYERS



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MODERN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP VISIT

www.careerwisecolorado.org/business

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