



# Inclusive Employment Works!



# Inclusive Employment for Individuals with Disabilities



Working alongside peers  
without disabilities in the  
competitive labor market

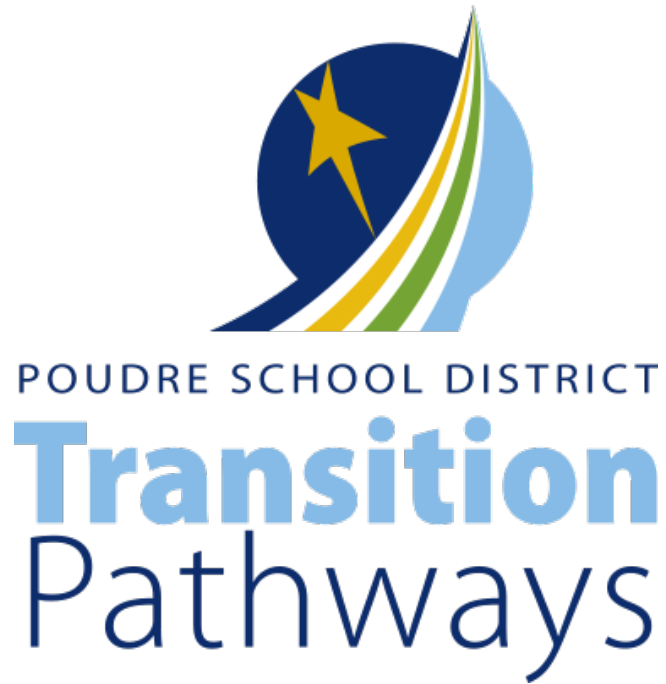
Access to the same work,  
accommodations, and  
benefits as their peers  
without disabilities, with the  
tools they need to succeed

# Colorado is an Employment First State

Effort taken on by states to change systems and create a reality of meaningful work for all people with disabilities.

Forty states adopted legislation and/or an official state policy, stating that employment in the community is the first and preferred service option for people with disabilities.





Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE)

School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP)

Cooper Home

Community Connections

ACE Supported Employment

Project SEARCH



- Business-led collaboration for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities
- Enables young adults to gain and maintain employment through career exploration and training
- Students participate in one hour of daily classroom instruction alongside three 12-week internships that provides technical and employability skills which occur in the community setting.
- The ultimate goal is for students to leave Project SEARCH with paid employment

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# Project SEARCH

## Video

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## INTERNSHIP 1

Columbine Health Systems  
Dietary Aide

## INTERNSHIP 2

Columbine Health Systems  
Administrative Assistant







GOT HIRED

Columbine Health Systems  
The Winslow Independent Living  
Server





## INTERNSHIP 1

Banner Health  
Culinary Dept

## INTERNSHIP 2

Banner Health  
EVS Dept





## INTERNSHIP 3

Columbine Health Systems  
Culinary Dept

## GOT HIRED

Longhorn Steakhouse  
Culinary/Dishwasher



# Customized Employment



The Customized Employment Model involves matching the specific strengths of an individual to an employer's unique needs to create a win-win for both the individual and the business.





Columbine Employee:  
Jessica, Mail Carrier, Employed  
14 years

Return on Investment for  
Columbine:\$15,000

Leadership were spending time  
away from direct business to  
collect their mail daily.





Columbine Employee:

Jeremy, Distribution Associate

Employed 11 years

ROI: \$14,000

Lead Associates were handling  
stocking of vending machines

Not cost effective, could be  
performing tasks for which they  
were trained

# Local Businesses

Columbine Health Systems  
Mug's Coffee  
Men's Wearhouse  
Anytime Fitness  
Famous Footwear  
Larimer County  
I d'Eclair Pastry  
CF&G Public Markethouse  
Poudre School District  
City of Fort Collins

Longhorn Steakhouse  
Walgreens  
Starry Night Cafe  
Colorado State University  
Banner Health  
D-BAT Norco  
Thompson School District  
Petco  
McDonald's  
Houska Automotive



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# Benefits of Recruiting and Hiring People with Disabilities

Over time, surveys of employers continue to demonstrate the perceived benefits of including people with disabilities in the workplace.

## Increased Talent Pool

Attracting more qualified applicants strengthens hiring processes.

## Demonstration of Inclusive Practices

Employers recognize positive perceptions held by customers and employees.

## Heightened Morale

A diverse workplace culture is seen as having a positive impact on morale.





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# Open Your Workplace to Opportunity

Creative job exploration and training strategies provide “real world setting” learning environments for people, including youth, with disabilities.

## On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Initial training costs may be offset when you offer an opportunity to learn occupational skills at the jobsite.

## Paid Work Experience (PWE)

Labor costs may be covered while allowing a person with a disability to assume a short-term employment assignment at your workplace.

## Mentoring and Shadowing

People with disabilities, including youth, can gain exposure and better narrow their career paths with real work setting experiences.

# Financial Benefits

A business that hires and, when needed, provides accommodations to an employee with a disability may realize tax credits or deductions offered to incentivize workplace diversity.

## Work Opportunity Tax Credit

A credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation participants, disabled veterans and others.

## Disabled Access Credit

A non-refundable credit for small businesses that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities.

## Barrier Removal Tax Deduction

A deduction for businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly.



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# Diversify Your Workplace – Where To Start

The Colorado Office of Employment First and its partners are working to change the narrative of what it means to have a disability and be meaningfully employed. We invite employers to the table to understand what they bring to the **Employment First** effort and the gains they can expect in return.

## Resources for Small, Medium and Large Businesses

A wealth of resources exist to bring disability training topics to your workplace, to understand your labor needs, and to match those needs with unique skills and talents of career seekers. In addition to the resources below, we encourage you to check out our [Accommodations page](#) highlighting Americans with Disabilities Act information and resources.

### Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Applicant recruitment assistance, Disability 101 and related training, job posting opportunities, tax credits are key partnership services of the DVR **Business Relations Unit**.



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## Disability:IN

**Disability:IN** is a nonprofit resource for business disability inclusion worldwide offering training, consulting, mentorship coordination, disability inclusion benchmarking tools and more.

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## Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)

**EARN** is a free national resource for employers to tap the benefits of disability diversity through online support, education, and outreach.

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## Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Free, expert, confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues for employers and employees are offered by **JAN**.

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## Rocky Mountain ADA Center

Phone and web-based information and guidance as well as tailored training on the Americans with Disabilities Act are resources of **Rocky Mountain ADA**.

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## Schedule A Hiring Authority

An exception to the traditional hiring process, **Schedule A** is aimed at increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the Federal Government.



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<https://employmentfirstcolorado.org>

# Ways to participate with Poudre School District

## In Person and Virtual Options

Job shadow  
Informational Interview  
Workplace Tour  
Be a Guest Speaker  
Internship  
Employment

## Contact:

Transition Pathways at  
[transitionpathways@  
psdschools.org](mailto:transitionpathways@psdschools.org)

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