



**COLORADO**

Department of  
Higher Education

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Julie Poppen, Communications Manager

Office: 303-866-3662, Mobile: 303-941-9367 [julie.poppen@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:julie.poppen@dhe.state.co.us)

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## **2015 Job Skills Report hones in on Colorado's "Top Jobs"**

**DENVER — Feb. 9, 2015** — The third annual legislatively mandated Job Skills Report, released Monday, delves into labor and postsecondary education data to discover areas where an adequate number of degrees and certificates are being generated to meet future workforce needs, along with gaps in the workforce pipeline.

This year's report includes a list of Colorado's 116 "Top Jobs." This list examines jobs with above average projected growth, projected high job openings and a median hourly wage of \$17.88 or greater. Jobs that have high projected growth and openings, while offering a sustainable living wage, are concentrated in construction/extraction, healthcare, finance and IT occupation clusters.

While not exhaustive of all skills gaps, notable areas where there may be an undersupply of postsecondary program completers as related to projected job openings include: installation/maintenance, computer science and graduate level healthcare credentials.

The report shows that while some jobs may not actually require a degree, a degree is increasingly needed for a job seeker to be competitive.

"Seventy-four percent of all jobs will demand some level of postsecondary education or training by 2020," said Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia, who serves as executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. "This report helps connect the dots between our institutions of higher education and future workforce needs to ensure an aligned system that benefits the entire state."

Other 2015 highlights include:

- Colorado has a highly educated workforce and experts project that more jobs will continue to demand some level of postsecondary education (Carnevale, Smith & Strohl, 2013). The state unemployment rate is also lower for people who have a postsecondary credential than for those who have a high school degree or less.
- In 2013, public institutions in Colorado awarded 52,715 certificates and degrees, a 6 percent increase from the year prior. Over five years, postsecondary completions have seen an average annual growth rate of 5.8 percent. Looking at completion figures from both public and private postsecondary institutions, if the number of credentials awarded continues to increase, we are on a trajectory to meet the [Colorado Commission on Higher Education master plan](#) targets for awards granted in Colorado.
- A sample of fields that data depict a potential undersupply of completions includes various mid-level skilled trades credentials, mid-level and bachelor's level computer

science credentials, bachelor's level finance degrees, and graduate/professional level healthcare practitioners.

Colorado is among a handful of states connecting workforce and labor data to higher education data in order to inform broader discussions about degree programs and offerings at the state's public and private institutions, and student decisions on courses of study.

The report also includes several policy recommendations, including: the importance of using and improving state data sets and data alignment across agencies so as to better understand aggregate trends and use data to address policy questions; developing effective career pathways; examining and addressing the supply-demand relationships in key areas, such as healthcare, IT and skilled trades; and continuing to build strong industry-institution partnerships.

Read the full report at

<http://highered.colorado.gov/Data/Workforce/JobSkillsPage.html>