



# PIKES PEAK WORKFORCE CENTER

A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter® network

## 2020 COMMUNITY REPORT

### ROAD TO RECOVERY



#### Traci Marques

Executive Director/CEO  
Pikes Peak Workforce Center

Welcome to the Pikes Peak Workforce Center! We've been serving the region's business community and supporting job seekers since 1998. Over the past year, we have helped over 13,000 people find jobs, assisted nearly 2,500 local businesses, and attracted thousands of job seekers to hiring events and job fairs. We are proud to announce our **ROAD TO RECOVERY** Employer Toolkit – programming and services that support employers in our community. We have the experience, resources, and expertise to connect the Pikes Peak region's vital business community with qualified job seekers.

## WORKFORCE RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

Recruiting • Training • Hiring • Customized Solutions • Incentives • Business Support • Data • Resources

### RECRUIT/HIRE

Job Postings  
Hiring Events  
Job Fairs  
Use of Facilities  
Assessments

### TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT

Train My Employees  
Internships  
On-the-Job Training  
Training Grants  
Apprenticeships

### BUSINESS SUPPORT

Layoff Aversion  
Job Description Education  
Software Platforms  
Marketing for Events

### DATA & RESOURCES

Labor Market Info  
Incentives/Tax Credits  
Sector Partnerships

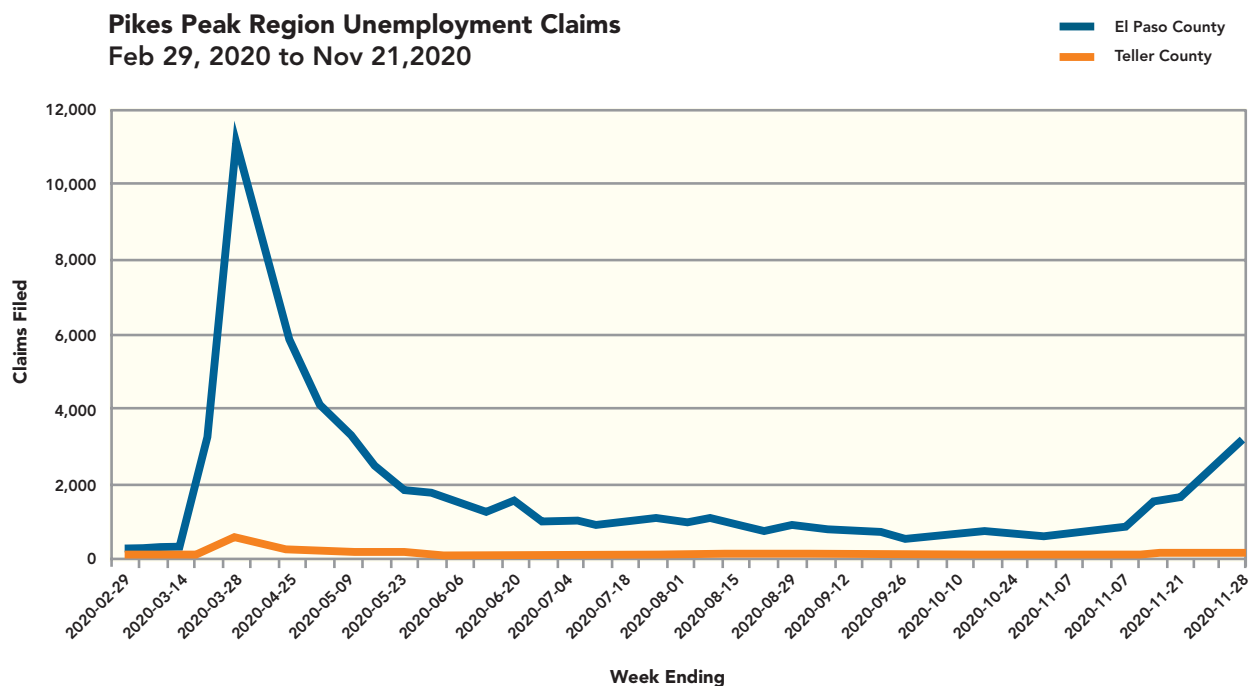
**Road To Recovery Employer Toolkit ~ [ppwfc.org/upskill-pikes-peak-employers](https://ppwfc.org/upskill-pikes-peak-employers)**

## Upskill Your Workforce

1. Virtual Events Platform – PPWFC purchased new software to connect employers and job seekers through a user-friendly website to participate in job fairs via real-time messaging or video chat.
2. Train Your Employees – Leverage the PPWFC's Learning Management System to set up a private classroom to upskill your employees.
3. Paid Internships – PPWFC locates interns and reimburses employers to hire them to receive on-the-job training.
4. Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities – Apprenticeships offer a proven training strategy for workers to learn the skills employers need for businesses to grow and thrive in a competitive environment.

## Impacts of COVID-19 on the Pikes Peak Region

The impact of COVID-19 on the Pikes Peak region was catastrophic, with over **80,000 TOTAL** unemployment claims filed in the Pikes Peak region last year.

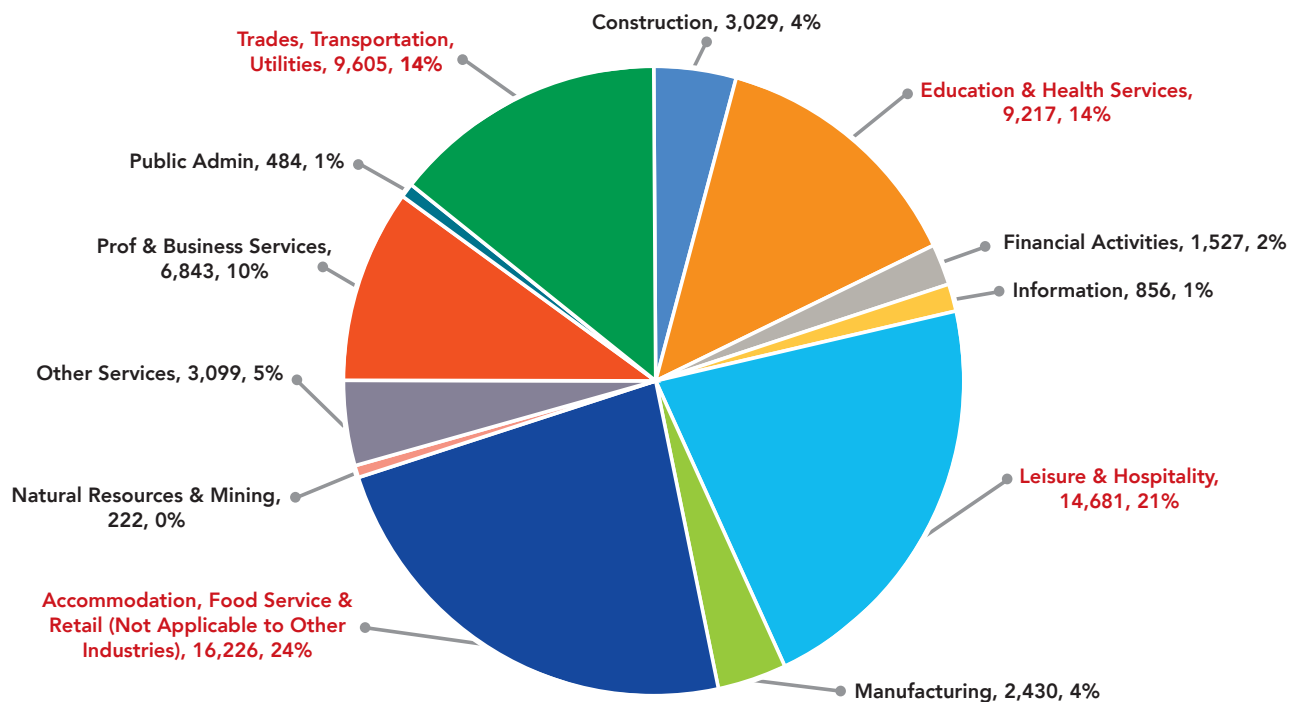


## Highly Impacted Industries

The pandemic's impact on the Pikes Peak region's industry sectors was disproportionately distributed with service-oriented (restaurants, hotels, etc.), transportation, education, and healthcare hit the hardest. Unfortunately, the Pikes Peak region will continue to see shock waves in the restaurant and hospitality industries as businesses struggle for survival with little relief in sight. #UpSkillPikesPeak was created to address long-term unemployment challenges with high-demand skills training.

## Hardest Hit Industries from UI Claims

PPWFC Data taken from Unemployed Individuals' Industry Designation in Mid-July 2020

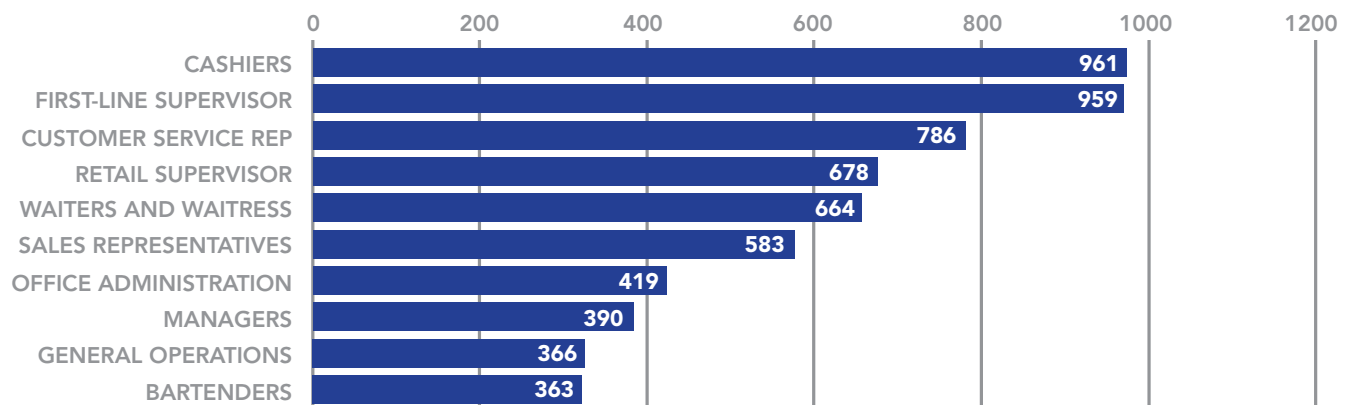


Source: PPWFC from UI Claimants self-identification of previous employment.

## Highly Impacted Occupations (Supply of Workers)

Since most of the region's hardest-hit industries included traditionally unskilled/low-skilled workers, PPWFC elected to implement targeted skills training to meet business needs. PPWFC also partnered with employers to provide skills training for incumbent workers.

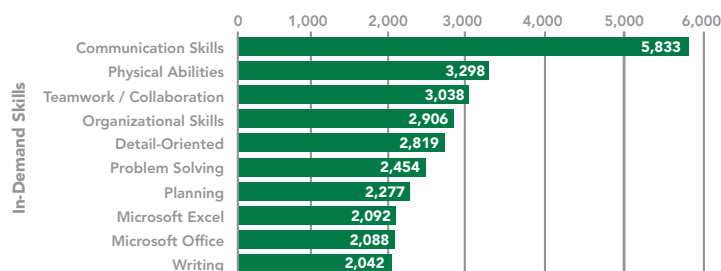
### Top 10 Occupations of Unemployed Workers July 15, 2020



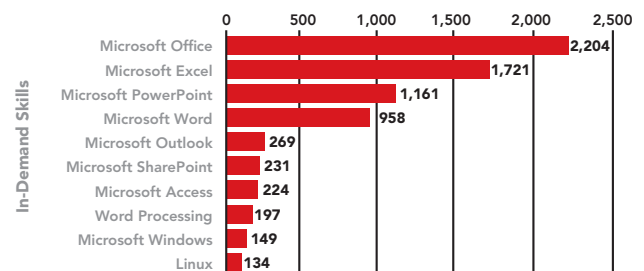
## In-Demand Jobs (Demand for Occupations/Skill Sets)

PPWFC compared job openings of in-demand occupations with occupations of unemployed workers. We determined the best possible support for unemployed workers was to give them the opportunity to gain new skills to meet market demand. In July 2020, the PPWFC began crafting and executing a strategic plan to expend \$4 million of CARES Act funding, with the goal of connecting unemployed workers to retraining, upskilling and accessing the supportive services necessary to reemploy them as quickly as possible. Employment data revealed which in-demand skills were required to fill the region's in-demand occupations.

### Top 10 Soft & Basic Skills in Greatest Demand # of Jobs Openings Requiring Skill



### Top 10 Software Skills in Greatest Demand # of Jobs Openings Requiring Skill



## Bridging the Skills Gap with Training Program Solutions

PPWFC established a virtual training platform with hundreds of no-cost courses to help displaced workers acquire in-demand skills needed by the region's employers. The virtual platform is located at [ppwfc.org/upskill-pikes-peak](https://ppwfc.org/upskill-pikes-peak) and includes:

- 69 Business Skills courses that teach the most popular office software programs to include all Microsoft, Google, and virtual communication programs.
- 23 Career Development courses offering best practices in customer service, problem solving and dealing with conflict, as well as how to cope in a post-COVID employment environment.
- 5 Cybersecurity/IT entry-level courses covering the fundamentals of Cybersecurity and Information Technology.
- Skilled Trades curriculum that teaches in-demand trades in HVAC, plumbing, electrical, facility maintenance and solar array design and installation.
- Retail and Hospitality courses that teach the fundamentals of the retail and customer service industry, as well as COVID-19 related training for retail operations and customer conflict prevention.
- Basic Soft Skills & Workplace Skills required to get and keep a job.
- Aptitude Testing to discover how a worker's natural talents align with in-demand careers.

## Supporting the Region's Healthcare Crisis

The region's healthcare system was devastated by the pandemic and hospital systems suffered from staffing and nursing shortages. To prevent furloughs and workforce reductions, PPWFC supported healthcare retraining programs for UHealth and Children's Hospital that allowed the region's healthcare system to retrain and mobilize frontline workers and staff to fill new areas of need necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding allowed for:

- 1,218 healthcare workers to be retrained and redeployed and/or saved from being furloughed or terminated
  - 438 nurses to be retrained to work in Acute/Critical Care
  - 145 nurses to be retrained to become Respiratory/Rehabilitation Therapists
  - 452 medical staff to be trained in Behavioral Health
  - 183 administrative staff to be trained to manage COVID-19 impacts to the healthcare system



*"At the peak of the crisis, managing the impact of COVID-19 necessitated the learning of new skills and procedures in real-time, on-the-job training. Thanks to the PPWFC, our newly-trained and upskilled workforce is prepared for another potential surge of COVID-19 cases – ensuring the best care and outcomes for our patients."*

Joel Yuhas,  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
UHealth Southern Colorado Region



Children's Hospital Colorado  
Colorado Springs

## Supporting the Region's Childcare Crisis



Education and childcare systems were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. With school districts forced to move to remote learning and childcare programs closed, parents grappled with balancing the needs of their families with the responsibilities of their jobs. Participation in traditional before/after school childcare programs in the Pikes Peak region dropped 33% for children under 5, and 20% for school-age children, while the need for full-time childcare solutions skyrocketed. Meanwhile, unemployment in the early childhood education and childcare sectors increased 23%, disrupting the lives of over 350 childcare workers.

PPWFC partnered with Alliance for Kids and Pikes Peak United Way to assist over 65 of the region's key childcare agencies and programs. This included supporting 376 workers who provided childcare for 1,862 kids, so over 1,333 families/parents could continue to work and support their families. PPWFC intends to continue to support key childcare programs that provide long-term childcare solutions and help employers develop new childcare initiatives. Key takeaways include:

- Childcare providers are concerned about their ability to continue to afford mortgage/rent, utilities, paid sick leave for staff, food for kids, and increased costs for cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment.
- For nearly 70% of children served, program-provided lunches and snacks were the only meals children received during the day.
- Over 60% of families served have an essential worker in the household.
- Most participating families have minimum-wage jobs with no job security during the pandemic; leaving those families who need childcare most unable to pay for even subsidized programs.
- Access to services, technology and digital literacy continues to increase equity gaps during the pandemic.
- Long-term, pandemic-related mental and behavioral health impacts to children remain a concern.



A state-wide survey conducted in November 2020 by Early Milestones notes:

*"Increased public funding is critical for the survival of the industry. To ensure equitable recovery from the pandemic, future funding should prioritize childcare services and programs that serve low-income populations. COVID-19 highlighted problems with the existing childcare business model that require immediate and long-term financial reform. Colorado's early educators are underpaid. Additional investment in professional development opportunities and access to early childhood training programs will reduce the risk of furloughs and lay-offs during times of crisis."*

To learn more, visit: [earlymilestones.org/project/covid-ec-research](https://earlymilestones.org/project/covid-ec-research)



## Supporting the Region's Retail and Hospitality Sector

The pandemic disrupted the region's retail and hospitality industry with unprecedented challenges. Fortunately, the region's industry stakeholders had already begun collaborating in 2019 to establish the Pikes Peak Regional Retail and Hospitality Sector Partnership. This partnership was co-chaired by Cindy Johnson, Vice President of Human Resources, The Broadmoor, and Jeffrey Howell, Director of Sales and Marketing, The Lodge at Flying Horse, who worked tirelessly to overcome business disruptions caused by COVID-19.

This regional partnership received grant funding from Lives Empowered, a \$4.1 million grant initiative funded by Walmart and made possible by the Colorado Workforce Development Council. Grant funds were used to bring retail and hospitality businesses together to address economic mobility for frontline workers across Colorado and strengthen the region's retail and hospitality sector economy. With the onset of COVID-19, the critical necessity of these "essential" workers has been brought to the forefront.

[cwdc.colorado.gov/lives-empowered](http://cwdc.colorado.gov/lives-empowered)

In collaboration with the Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center and other community organizations, the partnership funded various elements of the Bundle Up for Small Business Campaign to create videos supporting the region's small retail and hospitality businesses. Local photographers were hired to profile the diverse compilation of area small businesses.

[pikespeaksbdc.org/what-we-do/programs/bundle-up-for-small-businesses](http://pikespeaksbdc.org/what-we-do/programs/bundle-up-for-small-businesses)



## Supporting the Region's Future Workforce

The PPWFC collaborated with the region's school districts, and two non-profit organizations – Careers in Construction Colorado (CICC), founded by the Housing and Building Association of Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Homebuilding Academy, founded by Oakwood Homes – to support Career Technical Education (CTE) programs for students disrupted by COVID-19. CTE programs help students obtain industry-supported certifications in high-demand industries. This collaboration supported four industry sectors, including Construction, Cybersecurity, Healthcare, and Automotive, to develop talent pipelines that fill future workforce needs by offering critical support and opportunities for students to be part of both the workforce solution and economic recovery due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. Results of this funding for 2020 include:

- Participation by 10 school districts at 12 different academic locations
- 634 students enrolled in CICC programs
- 254 students completed industry-supported construction certifications
- 5 students completed industry-supported cybersecurity certifications
- 114 high school seniors graduated from CTE programs and will be entering the workforce, military or continuing their education
- 61 students participated in Bootcamp Training sessions (Bootcamp sessions allowed students to participate in hands-on learning exercises during remote schooling or closures.)
  - 32 students received industry certification during Summer 2020 Bootcamps
  - 29 students were displaced in Fall 2020 by closures, but completed hands-on exercises
- 4 school districts and Pikes Peak Community College received virtual automotive training software for their automotive technician training programs
- 98 students received post-CTE programming
- 32 students completed internships



HOUSING & BUILDING  
ASSOCIATION  
OF COLORADO SPRINGS

## Post-Pandemic Employer Challenges

The region's employers report a myriad of challenges presented by the pandemic from the increased costs of cleaning and purchase of personal protective equipment to keeping pace with the constantly changing national, state, and local regulations and legislation. Even the strongest local industry sectors and essential businesses have suffered to maintain staffing due to:

- An unwillingness to report to work for fear of getting sick. Many workers now prefer remote work rather than daily, in-person reporting at the office – and this will be an ongoing trend.
- Businesses have yet to understand how to cope with building a corporate culture and monitoring productivity if work continues to be remote.
- Freelance workers and independent contractors are confused about unemployment eligibility and tax implications.
- Many businesses are still waiting to understand when and how Paycheck Protection Program funds will need to be repaid, and what new legislation might follow the CARES Act.
- Access to childcare and early childhood education remains a significant concern regionally and nationally as childcare providers go out of business. PPWFC continues to partner with local organizations to nimbly respond to pandemic-related childcare needs.

The Pikes Peak Workforce Center is prepared and well-positioned to support employers dealing with these challenges and work with employers to hire and retain workforce.

## What is a Sector Partnership?

Sector Partnerships are not simply partnerships with industry, they are partnerships by industry – wherein regional business leaders from a specific industry tackle issues no single company can influence alone. Business leaders set the agenda, define objectives, and drive action teams to address issues impacting the competitiveness of the sector. Sector partnership agendas are driven by businesses and frequently include:

- Initiatives and strategies to attract and/or retain workforce
- Aligning training and education with industry needs
- Improving infrastructure such as transportation or affordable housing
- Addressing regulatory issues and barriers

Rather than individually navigating various educational and government programs, business leaders collaborate with education (K-12 and post-secondary), public partners (workforce development centers, economic development organizations, Chambers of Commerce), and other governmental agencies who assume a listening/business support role to respond to industry needs.



**Tamara Moore**  
Community Workforce Administrator

*"Through industry sector partnerships, we leverage our collective abilities to solve issues innovatively and faster than we could alone. Industry engagement in articulating workforce needs provides the clarity for community, educational, and public partners to co-create solutions."*

The Community Workforce Administrator position made possible through a collaboration between the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC, UCCS, PPCC, and Pikes Peak Workforce Center.



## In-Person Outreach and Assistance during COVID-19

From June through December 2020, PPWFC offered 4,374 services in-person to 2,502 job seekers at our Temporary Location on North Academy Boulevard.



# Support Your Local Workforce Center!

Primary funding for the Pikes Peak Workforce Center comes from the United States Department of Labor through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA is designed to align the workforce system with education and economic development initiatives to create a collective response to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state, and local levels. DOL funding prioritizes veterans and underserved populations with the goal of preparing these individuals to enter or return to the workforce.

Our clients range from entry-level to professional, including youth, adults, individuals returning to the workforce, and the underemployed – with special emphasis on underserved populations.

PPWFC provides no-cost services to job seekers ranging from job preparedness, résumé assistance, business and computer skills and supportive services, to financial aid for a trade or college program. These programs aim to be a hand up, not a handout, with strict participation guidelines.

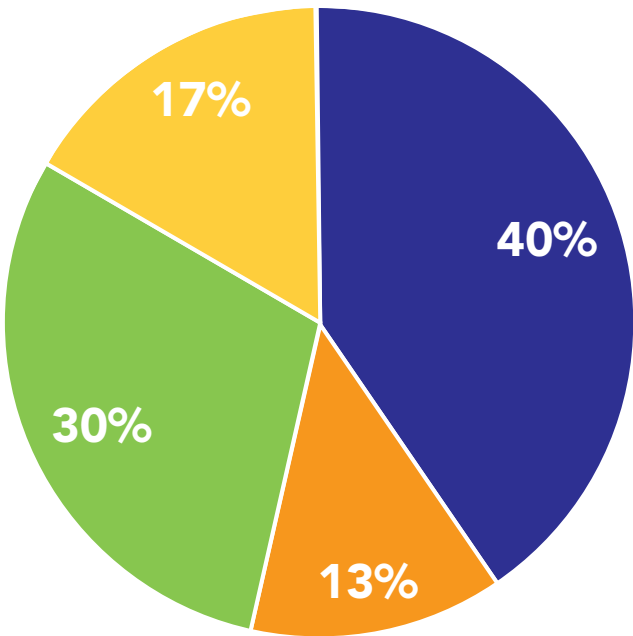
The Workforce Center also supports the region’s employers by hosting job fairs, tailored recruitment efforts, training, and hiring events, including candidate sourcing, pre-employment assessments, as well as a job database of searchable candidate profiles and more. The PPWFC promotes regional economic vitality and remains committed to responding to the emerging needs of our region’s employers.

Federal funding has stringent guidelines, and appropriations fluctuate with annual budget approval.

The Workforce Center relies on private donations to plan and implement regional and community-focused initiatives, partnerships, and special programs. Without sponsorship or donated funds, PPWFC is forced to cut events and initiatives that support the region’s workforce and employers. If sponsorships and donations exceed the need for these special programs, funding goes to technology upgrades that support customer service and expanding services.

Please consider donating at: [newhorizonsfoundation.com/donate](https://newhorizonsfoundation.com/donate)

PIKES PEAK WORKFORCE CENTER FUNDING



40%	WIOA
13%	Disaster Grants
30%	Wagner Peyser and ESF
17%	Discretionary Grants

## 2020 Economic and Social Impact of PPWFC

During 2020, nearly 2,500 employers received no-cost assistance from the Pikes Peak Workforce Center resulting in over 7,500 job seekers placed into new jobs with an average annual wage of \$39,786. On average, the cost to taxpayers was \$500 per worker, and each worker made \$3,510 more than the average annual wage for the region. This equates to more than \$26 million in new worker earnings, which was indirectly reinvested back into the local economy through goods and services, as well as contributions to the tax base.

### By the Numbers:

#### 2020 Business Community Outreach Statistics

- 61 Hiring Events
  - 25% received job offers
- 2,463 businesses served
- 7 Community Job Fairs & 4 Virtual Job Fairs
  - 589 Employers participated
  - 1,837 Job Seekers attended

### Why PPWFC?

- No placement fees
- Access the largest pool of applicants in the State of Colorado
- Obtain critical labor market data on high-need occupations and in-demand skills
- Partner with higher education and technical training providers that support educational programs, which your employees need to succeed
- Align with your industry’s sector partnership to promote industry-led training and real-time workforce solutions

# An Economist's View of COVID-19 Impacts on the Region's Workforce



"Displaced workers could be put into rapid and scaled national training programs for jobs that are in high demand. Many of those jobs require certifications and not four-year degrees. I believe we must think about helping displaced Americans as an investment in the entire country; not as a "handout" that has short-term duration and therefore limited effectiveness. In September 2020, we had 21,305 job openings in Colorado Springs. That is roughly the same as September of last year. A portion of that is due to some businesses re-hiring after the shutdown, but a large portion are the same top 20 positions that are chronically open. Smart communities are actively addressing the skills gap with relevant, high-demand skills training."

- Tatiana Bailey, Ph.D.



## Renee Zentz, PPWFC 2020 Board Chair

*As outgoing Chairwoman of the Pikes Peak Workforce Development Board, I tip my hat to the entire PPWFC team for a job that is still being done well! To start, our frontline employees, for months on end, have provided the most important of services during very dark times for many in our community. Our frontline staff continues to provide professional guidance with empathy and encouragement, while still navigating their own personal health and wellness journeys.*

*And hats off to the leadership team that never lost their way. As a matter of fact, I would say actually found their way. This "newer" PPWFC leadership team led by way of the core values that define this organization, \*Collaboration \*Innovation \*Professionalism \*Respect and \*Vitality. It was a year of building a plane while flying, without a manual. Due to the collaborative and innovative leadership style of the Board of County Commissioners, the PPWFC Board and Traci Marques' leadership team, the Center is emerging from the proverbial ashes of 2020 with a new trajectory that promises to outpace the last 10 years toward meeting our Mission: Connecting vital businesses with work-ready job seekers and employer-driven services.*

Local Labor Force/Employment Colorado Springs MSA Job Openings		
November 2020		
Top Job Titles	# of Job Postings	Market Salary
Registered Nurses	929	\$60,238
Software Developers, Applications	643	\$92,367
Sales Reps, Wholesale & Mfg	549	\$41,620
Retail Salespersons	534	\$26,019
Customer Service Reps	420	\$27,834
Managers	384	\$71,692
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	370	\$34,484
Computer Systems Engineers/Architects	348	\$97,186
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	345	\$53,547
Nursing Assistants	304	\$26,966
<b>TOTAL Job Openings: 21,132</b>		
<b>TOTAL Unemployed: 21,525</b>		
Workers Available per Job Opening: 1.02		
<small>Sources: Burning Glass Technologies; Labor Insights, 2020 via Pikes Peak Workforce Center and CO Dept. of Labor &amp; Employment</small>		

## PPWFC Board Members

**Aikta Marcoulrier**, Executive Director  
**Andy Gilliland**, Training Coordinator  
**Andrew Winders**, Supervisor I  
**Ann Cesare**, Senior Director, Community and Government Affairs  
**Beth Taylor**, VP of Economic Development  
**Bob McLaughlin**, COO  
**Brian Bradley**, Business Manager  
**Chelsy Harris**, VP Strategic Partnerships  
**Dave Jeffrey**, President  
**Debbie Miller**, President  
**Elise Lowe-Vaughn**, Dir. WF Programs, Policy & Strategic Initiatives  
**Francis Vigil**, Training Director  
**Jeff Greene**, Chief of Staff  
**Jim Boland**, Customer Care Sales Site Manager  
**Jonathan Liebert**, CEO/Executive Director  
**Julie Krow**, Executive Director  
**Kenny Hodges**, Assistant County Administrator  
**Kim Mauthe**, Director  
**Lawrence Wagner**, CEO  
**Liesl Schmidt /Jim Harris**, Division President  
**Lisanne McNew**, Business Owner  
**Lynette Crow-Iverson**, President/CEO  
**Marcy Hudson**, General Manager, Human Resources  
**Reanna Werner**, Chief Problem Solver  
**Renee Zentz**, Chief Executive Officer  
**Susan King**, Associate Director  
**Tammy Sayles**, Director of Adult Education  
**Valerie Martin-Conley**, Dean of Education  
**Zach Barker**, Executive Director

Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center  
Colorado Sheet Metal Joint Apprenticeship & Training Institute  
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation  
UCHealth  
Colorado Springs Chamber + EDC  
Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center  
Electricians IBEW Local 113, Colorado Springs Electrical JATC  
Pikes Peak Community College  
JPM Prototype & Mfg., Inc.  
Greater Woodland Park Chamber of Commerce  
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment  
Electricians IBEW Local 113, Colorado Springs Electrical JATC  
City of Colorado Springs  
Progressive Insurance  
Better Business Bureau of Southern Colorado  
El Paso County, Department of Human Resources  
El Paso County  
Teller County, Department of Human Services  
Spark Mindset  
US Bank  
McNew & Associates, Inc.  
Conspire!  
Colorado Springs Utilities  
HR Branches  
Housing & Building Association of Colorado Springs  
National Electrical Contractors Association  
Pikes Peak Library District  
UCCS  
GROWEDO



**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL WORKFORCE CENTER!**

**Pikes Peak Workforce Center**  
1675 Garden of the Gods Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907