



## **Rural Collaboration & Career-Connected Learning Expand to 50+ Districts**

*Homegrown Talent Initiative Growing with Rural Coaction*

DENVER, CO – August 10, 2022 – [Homegrown Talent Initiative](#) (HTI) works alongside schools, businesses, and local communities across rural Colorado to generate career-connected learning for students, encourage collaboration, and economic growth. In 2019, eight communities started this work, focused on bringing education and economic development together in a local “educonomy” that is grounded in community aspiration and vision. Now, more than 50 districts will be co-creating and co-designing career exploration and community partnerships to best fit their local contexts.

“Homegrown Talent Initiative has set the standard for career-connected learning and community partnership in rural Colorado. Across our communities in south central Colorado, whether Trinidad or Huerfano, we know we need to bring communities together to build a brighter future. We are thrilled to join this network and ensure we’re offering opportunities that students are interested in, are relevant to our community, and meet the goals of our local economy.” – Denille LePlatt, Executive Director, Southcentral BOCES

This expansion is made possible through the Colorado Department of Education’s [Rural Coaction](#) grant and investment from other funders. Community design teams made up of superintendents, business leaders, educators, students, and community members will come together to build unique plans to provide real-world experiences and skill development for their students, based on the strengths and needs of local communities. The full HTI network can be found [here](#).

“Through HTI, we are preparing kids to see a place for themselves in our community, who see their skills, strengths, and passions connected to what's happening in our local economy. It has changed how our community has viewed the schools, and school district. It has significantly increased this trajectory of our partnerships.” – Karen Quanbeck, Superintendent, Clear Creek School District

HTI districts will continue working with coaches from Colorado Succeeds and Colorado Education Initiative to build on school and community momentum for career-connected learning. In addition to this coaching, districts will continue to work with and learn from one another, benefiting from the knowledge and resource sharing of an expanding network of other communities leading similar, but unique, initiatives. The expansion through Rural Coaction is also increasing partnership with projects that are already underway and seeing success across the state, such as the Fremont Multi-District Initiative and the Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative.

“Through these efforts, we are seeing district leaders, students, staff, and community members moving beyond traditional roles to ensure relevant, career-connected learning for every student is a meaningful part of the high school experience in Colorado. This depth of authentic partnership and cross-district collaboration sets HTI apart from other career-connected and work-based learning efforts, creating conditions for sustainable infrastructure that stand to outlast individual grant programs.” – Rebecca Holmes, President & CEO, Colorado Education Initiative

“We are thrilled with the state’s investment in career-connected learning. Current HTI districts have developed more than 500 business partnerships, resulting in nearly 600 internships and industry credentials. We’ve never seen rural career-connected learning on this scale until now. The growth and continuation of this work will increase opportunities for students, jumpstart local economic growth, and uncover new possibilities for Colorado’s communities, learners, and businesses.”  
– Scott Laband, President, Colorado Succeeds

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### **About Homegrown Talent Initiative**

The [Homegrown Talent Initiative](#) (HTI) is a statewide effort to develop career-connected learning experiences for K-12 students in rural communities across the state. To better prepare for life after graduation, schools and communities strategically come together to imagine their future with focus on skill development, career-connected learning experiences, and flexible opportunities that align to student interests and local industry needs.

Homegrown Talent Initiative is facilitated by [Colorado Succeeds](#) and [Colorado Education Initiative](#) (CEI), and supported by the Daniels Fund, Walton Family Foundation, Gill Foundation, Adolph Coors Foundation and El Pomar Foundation.

## HTI 2.0 Network

### Mountain Region

- Clear Creek School District
- East Grand School District
- West Grand School District

**Southwest Partners** *includes Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative and San Juan BOCES*

- Archuleta
- Bayfield
- Dolores
- Dove Creek
- Durango
- Ignacio
- Mancos
- Montezuma-Cortez
- Silverton
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

### Fremont Multi-District Initiative

- Canon City RE-1
- Fremont RE-2
- Cotopaxi RE-3

### Pikes Peak BOCES partners

- Big Sandy-100J
- Calhan-RJ1
- Edison-54TJ, Ellicott-11
- Hanover-28
- Miami Yoder-60JT
- Peyton-23JT

### Northeast BOCES partners

- Akron
- Buffalo
- Frenchman
- Haxtun
- Holyoke
- Julesburg
- Lone Star
- Otis
- Plateau
- Revere
- Wray
- Yuma

### South Central BOCES partners

- Aguilar
- Branson
- Crowley County
- Custer
- Fowler
- Hoehne
- Huerfano
- La Veta
- Lamar
- Manzanola
- Primero
- Trinidad