



City Council Communication

AGENDA DATE: April 21, 2025

LEGISTAR ITEM #: Res 2025-058

SUBMITTED BY: Garrett Anderson
DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation
<input type="checkbox"/> Admin Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

REQUEST

Approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the Community College of Aurora for workforce development services.

BACKGROUND

As federal grant funds were received from the American Rescue Plan Act (or ARPA), the City Council has directed the city staff to develop a series of programs collectively known as Advancing Commerce City Together (or ACT). As part of this effort, \$500,000 was designated to support workforce development programs.

The US Census reports that 18% of Commerce City residents 18-24, and 15% of the population 25+ have not completed a high school education. Furthermore, the data indicate that 66% of Commerce City residents 18-24, and 47% of the 25+ population have not completed any post-secondary education beyond high school.

The Economic Development team has conducted outreach and interviews with most of our local Workforce Development partners, with the goal of maximizing the impact of the allocated funds through partnerships to impact high school equivalency and initial post-secondary education, leading to better incomes for local families. The ED team recommends moving forward with the following partners who were most enthusiastic about the proposed partnerships and aligned with program objectives.

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION CONTINUED

The proposed work plan for allocating this \$500,000 budget includes the following partnerships:

1. \$100,000 to supplement the efforts of Metropolitan State University (MSU) with their GED programs for Commerce City residents, with a particular focus on Spanish-speaking students. This will be approved through a separate action under the City Manager's authority.
2. \$400,000 to supplement the efforts of Community College of Aurora (CCA) programming for Commerce City residents. The Commerce City Promise program will partner with CCA to provide education leading to short-term credentials aligned with local workforce needs. This includes fields such as IT, construction, logistics, healthcare/nursing, manufacturing, and English as a second language (ESL). Input and consideration of this partnership is the action currently before the Council.

The programming is to be available to all Commerce City residents at no cost to the student. Due to the timing restrictions of the ARPA funds, all of the supplementary educational funds are to be expended before the end of the year 2026.

The engagement of these partnerships and deployment of ARPA funds in this way is enabling a Commerce City workforce pathway program in partnership with the City's Community Wellbeing Team. The workforce pathway program is building resources around a workforce pipeline that meets the workforce need of the present and future Commerce City business community. It works by building high-impact partnerships to eliminate barriers for individuals to access educational opportunities that lead to Tier 2 jobs (living wage for a single adult - \$51,000 annual) in the Commerce City business community.

The Workforce Pathway Program Report attached to this Council Communication provides additional background on the workforce pathway program and how these two key partnerships will work alongside City, economic development, and community wellbeing strategies to support the Commerce City business and resident communities.

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FINANCIAL IMPACT

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION CONTINUED

Contractor	Colorado State Board of Education
Amount of Request/Contract	\$400,000
Amount Not To Exceed	\$400,000
Amount Budgeted	\$400,000
Budget Year	FY2025
Funding Source	Grant funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
Additional Funds Needed	\$N/A
Funding Source (if funds needed)	N/A

PROJECT TIMELINE

Estimated Start Date	Estimated End Date
August 20, 2025	December 31, 2026
Years and Months of Contract	Number of Times Renewable
1 year, 4 months	N/A

JUSTIFICATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Council Goal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal
Citation	<p>Economic Development Strategic Plan 2.1 – Increase access to tools that promote upward mobility, including skills training, education, apprenticeship and mentorship programs, and others, as appropriate.</p> <p>Economic Development Strategic Plan 2.1.1 – Support and/or amplify efforts by prominent local employers and workforce development partners to highlight opportunities for training, mentorship, advising, or similar programs directed toward employees, entrepreneurs, or small businesses, with a focus on historically underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Economic Development Strategic Plan 2.1.2 – Identify and amplify support for programs (e.g., mentorship, career/tech ed) that develop youth and young adult skills to promote workforce readiness.</p>		

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION CONTINUED

	<p>Comprehensive Plan 7-6.1 – Continue to work with major employers and economic development organizations to identify target skills and create targeted workforce training programs.</p> <p>Comprehensive Plan 7-6.3 – Ensure workforce development programs are aligned with Commerce City’s economic development pursuits and aimed at higher-paying industries.</p> <p>Comprehensive Plan 7-7.2 – Work with economic development organizations and partners to increase workforce training programs, business and leadership development opportunities, and civic education in Spanish.</p>
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BOARDS & COMMISSIONS ASSIGNED

Board or Commission	N/A
Recommendation	N/A
Date of Recommendation	N/A

PUBLIC OUTREACH

<p>Program objectives were developed using employment data demand from several sources, including enrollment at Community College of Aurora. No public outreach meetings have been held to date. Program implementation will be promoted through engagement by the Economic Development Department as well as a dedicated Education and Employment Navigator from the Community Well Being division.</p>
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AVAILABLE ACTIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available Action #1. Approve as submitted.• Available Action #2. Maintain status quo. Alternate plans would have to be developed for the expenditure of the dedicated workforce development funds through ARPA, which must be fully expended before December 31, 2026.• • N/A• N/A
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CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION CONTINUED

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Action #1, approve as submitted.