

YOUTH SUCCESS STORIES

Youth Employment and Training Programs



WELD CARES 4 YOUTH WORKERS

Seeing a demand for young individuals wanting employment, ESWC's Youth Team created the Weld CARES 4 Youth Workers opportunity to assist youth impacted by the pandemic with temporary employment.

Meet Shaela

Shaela, whose parents' work hours were cut due to the COVID-19 pandemic, needed income, and many of the places that usually hire youth (food and non-essential retail) were currently closed. Shaela, who was enrolled in the Weld CARES 4 Youth Workers program, had a career goal to become a veterinarian, and Weld CARES was able to assist Shaela on this career path by placing her at the Milliken Animal Clinic. Shaela enjoyed the experience and learned much throughout her temporary employment. Upon completion of her hours, the Milliken Animal Clinic hired Shaela as a permanent employee, where she was able to increase her job duties to working directly with the animals in the clinic.

Employment Services of Weld County

315 N. 11th Avenue
Greeley, CO 80631
(970) 353-3800

Veterans and eligible spouses are entitled to priority access to Department of Labor-funded programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Dial 711 for Relay Services. Employment Services of Weld County is an equal opportunity program and employer. Paid for by WIOA.



Meet Victoria

Victoria, a 16-year-old who lacked a high school diploma or equivalent, determined traditional schooling wasn't working for her and needed to find a program that could help her complete her secondary education. Victoria enrolled in an alternative high school in January 2020 and quickly progressed through the curriculum in the self-paced program. She was doing so well with school, she wanted to find a job. Victoria was placed in a work-experience position at a local business. When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, her classes transitioned online and employment at her initial worksite was put on hold, as it was deemed a non-essential business and had to close. Meanwhile, the Weld County Food Bank was in crisis and needed volunteers to help prepare meals and emergency food boxes for those lacking food security during the Stay-at-Home order. Victoria could not pass up the opportunity to serve! She finished her high school curriculum and graduated in April 2020, which is also the same day she became a local hero and started working at the Weld Food Bank.

Meet Dakota

Dakota, 16 years old, loathed the traditional high school environment. She and her family did not see her making it to graduation as she couldn't even make it to the second class in the day. She needed to explore high school equivalency (HSE) options so she could get on with what life had in store for her, to become a travel nurse. Dakota met with her case manager who quickly noticed that Dakota was intelligent and too mature for the high school social life. The case manager had her take the TABE test, which proved Dakota was indeed intelligent and needed little preparation towards her HSE. Her case manager helped Dakota with get an age waiver approved so she could take the official HSE test. Four short months later, Dakota obtained her HSE! She would have had her HSE sooner, but the COVID-19 pandemic had testing sites only filling half of the seats and the testing site Dakota used, a local community college, closed down for a long winter break.





Meet Dianna

In February 2020, Dianna was advised by her high school counselor that she should meet with a Youth Programs Case Manager at Employment Services of Weld County. She was starting to get behind in the alternative school she was attending, and she had no plans after high school for employment or education. Dianna needed direction, and she needed it quick. Dianna ended up meeting with her case manager who helped her with an exploration of career pathways and employment opportunities. Dianna was going through a difficult time in life as her parents had recently shared that they were separating. They were already low-income, and now the income would be split between two homes. Dianna felt a training program was too much for her to commit to and too much of a burden to ask from her parents. Through interest assessments and research of current labor market information, Dianna decided she would like to become a Dental Assistant and the training program duration fit her schedule, as it is short term. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program was able to support Dianna in attending the Academy of Dental Assisting Careers to obtain the certificate that she needed to further her career. Once Dianna's direction was planned, she was motivated to graduate high school and begin her career. She graduated high school in June 2020. Not even the barriers of COVID could hold her back. Dianna successfully obtained her Dental Assisting Certificate in July 2020 and started an internship at a local pediatric dental office. That office since hired her full-time, and she is still employed there today!

Weld Works 4 Youth

Employment Services of Weld County (ESWC) runs the Summer Youth Employment Program, known as Weld Works 4 Youth (WW4Y), which is unique to Weld County. The program intentionally and primarily serves 14 to 15-year-olds who are currently receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Assistance, Medicaid, placed in foster care, recently returned home from foster care, recently adopted, or working with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Prevention team. The purpose of the program is to promote work ethic through a work-based learning experience throughout the summer months of June and July. In 2020, the bar was set high to serve 80 youth participants to a variety of industry employers in need. The annual timeline to kick off youth recruitment begins in February to start accepting applications in early March. With word of the health crisis starting to explode, leadership had to decide whether to continue as planned or to cancel the program for the year.

ESWC understood the negative effect on participants canceling the program would have for both youth and employers. This led to the bold decision to proceed with the program, despite the worry of youth being discouraged to participate or parents who were cautious for their children to participate in the program due to COVID-19.

ESWC received over 130+ applications – a record-breaking increase from prior years – and placed 83 youth into work experiences. Small businesses needed the county's help more than ever and many new partnerships unfolded through their new financial and workforce needs caused by the pandemic. The importance of WW4Y to the community cannot be understated. Providing younger youth from low socioeconomic households the opportunity to learn work ethic, improve their life skills and educational standing while putting money in their pocket, is an invaluable experience. ESWC considers the 2020 program season a success due to providing youth with their own income, which helped alleviate the financial pressure the parent was under regarding the cost of clothes, entertainment, school supplies, etc. for that child, and can give the youth a feeling of pride and accomplishment upon completing the program.