

NoCo *works*

A regional talent and workforce ecosystem across Northern Colorado



Inaugural Review 2023



LET'S TALK ABOUT TALENT!

 nocoworks.com

 info@nocoworks.com

 [linkedin.com/company/noco-works](https://www.linkedin.com/company/noco-works)



From the Co-Chairs

On behalf of NoCo Works, we are excited to share our inaugural review! This has been an exciting year for the Northern Colorado region, and we couldn't be prouder of the work that NoCo Works has accomplished to support our talent and workforce ecosystem.

Since our first convening of the steering committee in February of 2023, we have created clear deliverables, project teams, subcommittees, and structures for accomplishing shared goals. We have a working draft of our strategic plan and are crafting shared metrics, reports, and dashboards. All of these efforts will be aligned and allow us to share the results of our working teams! We have received our first influx of grant money from The Weld Trust and have obtained a fiscal agent through the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado! Our Steering Committee and our subcommittees are dedicated and passionate to serving our NoCo community in a myriad of ways.

We also want to thank all of those who have contributed their expertise and passion. This amazing group of smart individuals in Weld and Larimer counties are passionate about the region and the work they have done to move this forward. We would like to extend a special acknowledgment to Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development for providing staffing to shepherd this important initiative along. We'd also like to thank the key stakeholders of Talent 2.0*, who established the groundwork for cross-functional collaboration and best practices that vaulted a localized vision into a regional practice. We are looking forward to an amazing year with great results.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We invite you to stay engaged with our developing efforts and review our continued progress through the years to come!

Sincerely,

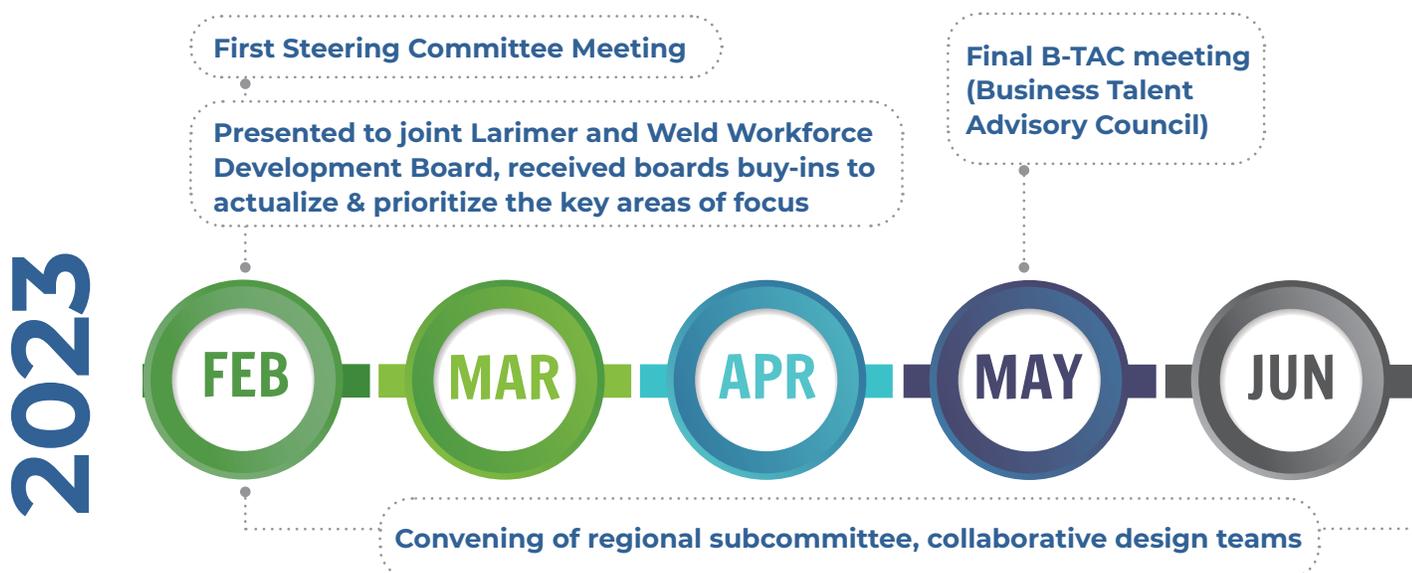
Dr. Nicholas Spezza

Associate Vice President,
AIMS Community College
NoCo Works Co-Chair

Eric Lea

Vice President,
Robert Half
NoCo Works Co-Chair

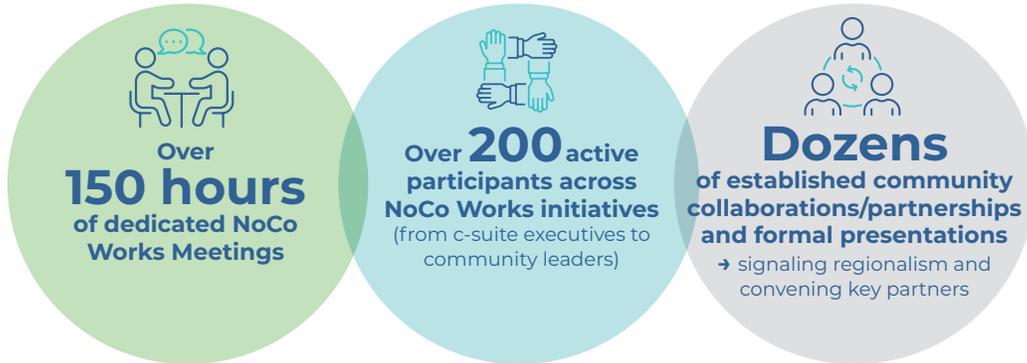
**Talent 2.0 team was assembled in 2016 to address the challenges of workforce development and accessibility to workplaces faced by the Fort Collins-Loveland MSA. The team had representatives from: City of Fort Collins, City of Loveland, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Center, Loveland Chamber of Commerce, Robert Half, and United Way of Larimer County. They hired one of the nation's top economic and workforce development consulting firms, TIP Strategies, to guide the development of a talent plan that is instrumental in NoCo Works deliverables.*



Why Regionalism Matters



How NoCo Works is Responding



Mission, Vision and Structure

Mission

To create an effective, efficient, and aligned talent and workforce ecosystem for NoCo that can show measurable results

Vision

A regional coalition to foster an inclusive and economically healthy community

Commitments

Streamlining access to resources and services

Minimizing duplication of efforts

Elevating best practices and rally support for existing efforts

Guiding Pillars

Support NoCo employers in attracting, retaining and growing their workforce

Support workforce (future and current) in obtaining and retaining Quality Jobs in NoCo*

Support NoCo ecosystem to improve the prosperity of our talent and workforce systems

NoCo Works Steering Committee

Co-chairs - elected by steering committee

Program Manager

Members (26)

Three Cities • Three Chambers of Commerce • Two Counties

Two Workforce Development Boards

Five Sector Partnerships

Seven Educational Institutions (K-12 & Higher Education)

Two Community Foundations • Two United Ways

Subcommittees (Regional Themes)

Co-chairs and/or leadership model selected by committee

Economic Inclusion

Talent Pipeline

Business Resource Info

Training & Development

Work-Based Learning

External Barriers

**Quality Job: as defined by the Colorado Workforce Development Council, quality job means, "offers family sustaining wages, safe and inclusive environments, robust benefits, predictable scheduling, professional development and opportunities to advance, employers can address their skills gaps, increase the number of qualified applicants to open positions, and improve their retention rates. They can also help improve their company's diversity, equity, and inclusion."*

A Collaborative Effort

Across Larimer and Weld counties, Northern Colorado recognizes the importance of regionalism and the power of collaboration, specifically as it pertains to talent and workforce. This is not just an idea or a grand goal: it's reality. Over 80,000 people cross over county lines every day for work. Northern Colorado is one shared labor force.

Growing from the success of the Talent 2.0 initiative, NoCo Works is composed of collaborators from across Weld and Larimer counties with a commitment to co-development and co-ownership of one regional talent and workforce ecosystem.



Working together allows for **GREATER IMPACT** in our community. We are one laborshed, one economy, *one region.*

Formation History

During the winter of 2021 and spring of 2022, Talent 2.0 staff facilitated guided community discussions in various formats. These regional sessions resulted in breaking down complex workforce and talent issues into manageable chunks, so a designated two-county design team could work strategically to implement motivating goals.

In the fall of 2022, a thorough review of strategic plans and annual reports of 50-plus organizations and initiatives that are key contributors to economic and workforce development in the region was completed. The findings reiterated an overwhelming acknowledgment of regionalism, which extends from business to government to nonprofits to education.

In September of 2022, the Larimer and Weld county Boards of County Commissioners signed a Memorandum of Understanding, the "Northern Colorado Regional Workforce Development Partnership." With bipartisan support, the leadership of Northern Colorado signaled an emphasis on the importance of collaboration and alignment with the regional findings identified. Furthermore, throughout the entire design and

research process, a designated group of private sectors representing the NoCo region convened monthly to confirm design alignment and provide real-time feedback, ensuring that the talent and workforce needs in our business community are met. This group was called B-TAC (Business Talent Advisory Council).

Based upon the review of past and present efforts and initiatives, as well as the demonstrated community needs and the commitment to action from key stakeholders, NoCo Works was formed to create a regional talent and workforce ecosystem.

A curated steering committee – selected through organizational content expertise and modeled regional collaboration – provides program oversight and management of six subcommittees. NoCo Works will continue to analyze and reassess key areas of focus and sustainable strategies; the goal is to move work forward that is in alignment with the developing regional talent and workforce of Northern Colorado. The six regional themes and subcommittees are: Business Resources, Economic Inclusion, External Barriers, Talent Pipeline, Training & Development, and Work-based Learning.

Subcommittees

Six subcommittees have engaged over 200 community members across the Northern Colorado region. While each committee meets on a different cadence, all meetings are hybrid and are open to the public. These groups are about building connections, bridging gaps, and taking action to achieve results.

Six Key Themes

Business Resources

Launched: July 2023 • 25 members

Purpose: Provide a one-stop shop with resources, tangible services, and information to help local businesses accomplish necessary goals.

Actions:

1. Facilitated a focus group at the Workforce Symposium in September
2. Partnered with NoCo REDI's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) team to conduct a survey
3. Created taxonomy for user friendly website development

Goals:

1. Identified and scaled best practices
2. Increased access to existing resources and services
3. Identified and addressed gaps in business resources
4. Resourced compilation and sustainable centralized repository
5. Supported launch NoCoWorks.com website

Executive Members: Kelsey Baun, Peter Bostwick, Andrew Chadwick, Colleen DePasquale, Jillian Fresa, Hope Hartman, Jack Hill, Yvonne Myers, Jana Sanchez and Evan Wendland

Economic Inclusion

Launched: August 2023 • 20+ members

Purpose: Build accountability structures for NoCo Works to lead with inclusive practices within this regional effort. Furthermore, the region aligns with the desire to provide all community members with equal access and opportunity to utilize workforce and talent services, digital literacy, bilingual and monolingual Spanish upskilling, and reskilling. These include but are not limited to: under-represented and minority populations.

Actions:

1. Developed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Best Practice Checklists - outreach, tabling, and facilitating meetings
2. Engaged and partnered with regional DEI initiatives

Goals:

1. Supported economic inclusive practices within the entire NoCo Works collaborative
2. Moved the needle with access to the deliverables identified from the regional findings

Goals:

3. Elevated best practices for community engagement
4. Established guiding principles for overall community engagement
5. Developed strategies to integrate inclusive practices and principles across other subcommittees
6. Diverse member recruitment strategies

Executive Members: Kelsey Baun, Adam Crowe, Jose Luis Ramos, Emilie Ring, Lisa Taylor, Berenice Garcia Tellez and Caitlin Wyrick

Consultant hired: October 2023 • TBD members

Purpose: Advocacy and policy reform to address transportation, childcare, and housing, which affect access to job opportunities and limit how people can thrive in the community.

Actions:

1. Cross-functional regional group designed research strategy and scope of work
2. Secured funding to hire consultant
3. Interviewed 14 key stakeholders

Goals:

1. Continuation of stakeholder interviews
2. Regional public policy analysis and activities related to transportation, housing, and childcare in the region
3. Gaps analysis
4. Comprehensive landscape analysis and asset mapping of existing efforts
5. Ecosystem and landscape analysis findings event, with NoCo Works subcommittee action recommendations
6. Launch subcommittee by Summer 2024

Key Stakeholders: Kelsey Baun, Adriana Carillo, Doug Elliott, JoAnn Herkenhoff, Ann Hutchison, Alexis Kennedy, Stefanie Knipple, Lauren Leary, Emily Seems, Lyle SmithGraybeal and Joy Sullivan

Subcommittees *continued*

Talent Pipeline

Launched: September 2023 • 40 members

Purpose: Holistic strategy for attracting and retaining the future workforce, thereby increasing the labor pool and positively contributing to the local economy. The aim is to generate career pathways and sector talent pipeline models.

Actions:

1. Established industry definitions
2. Received funding to create resources and tools for regional sector partnerships

Goals:

1. Developed a toolkit template that can be customized to serve unique businesses
2. Held ad-hoc feedback sessions with sector leaders
3. Hosted roadshows to educate employers on resources and services
4. Convened partners to strengthen connections among employers and key stakeholders, such as education partners
5. Understood gaps and additional needs of businesses

Executive Members: Kelsey Baun, Allison Bohling, Kristina Crain, Lyndsey Crum, Becky Langlois, Deborah Meyer, Nancy Murray and Yvonne Myers

Training & Development

Launched: August 2023 • 43 members

Purpose: Create regional access for businesses to provide training and development opportunities for Northern Colorado's labor force, including both incumbent employees and job seekers. This includes upskilling and reskilling through access to certifications and credentials, as well as customized soft skills and technical skills training.

Actions:

1. Facilitated a focus group at the Workforce Symposium in September
2. Partnered with NoCo REDI's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) team to conduct a survey
3. Major findings: need for internal training structure practices, culture of learning, training as a retention tool, leadership development, access to existing resources
4. Categorize resources based on the established matrix.

Goals:

1. Developed a Strategic Matrix based on business size and affiliated training need/want categories
2. Identified and compiled training resources to establish comprehensive tool highlighting the desired content categories; elevated existing training providers
3. Built a Data-Driven "Culture of Training" presentation and advocated for business leadership buy-in
4. Provided tangible tools and resources to facilitate implementation
5. Hosted/facilitated listening sessions to understand barriers for businesses training programs and overall gaps; understood how we can support business need and incumbent employee and job seekers needs

Executive Members: Karina Amaya-Ragland, Kelsey Baun, Janel Highfill, Mark Johnston, Challice Springfield, Phoebe Stalker and Allison Steiner

Merge/launch date: August 2023 • 50+ members

Purpose: Regional commitment to expanding internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, on-site career learning opportunities, and more.

Actions:

1. Merged with the existing Work-based Learning Alliance (NoCo Inspire)
2. Expanded purpose to increase business engagement, established two meetings per year catered to NoCo Sector Partnership's workforce committee members
3. Established three subcommittees focusing on initiatives proposed by partners
4. NoCo Inspire Apprenticeship Work Group hosted an Apprenticeship Celebration event with 80 attendees
5. NoCo Inspire K12 WBL Collaborative Work Group developed a collective agreement and processes for a shared employer-engagement system
6. NoCo Inspire Higher Ed Work Group hosted Handshake learning sessions to elevate shared employer-engagement platform

Goals:

1. Streamlined Business-Talent Connection through facilitating WBL best practices with local employers
2. Delivered presentations on potential resources or funding opportunities applicable to all regional partners
3. Expanded the shared database to include two Weld County school districts
4. WBL Alliance Group Focus created branded work-based learning presentations
5. Educated the community on diverse work-based learning activities and programs
6. Established ongoing collaborative actions across all four higher education institutions career services teams

Executive Members: Tanya Alcaraz, Kelsey Baun, Sandra Jackam, Mindy McCloughan, Stefanie Merrell, Jeff Noffsinger, John Sage, Michelle Smith, Ben Snow, Kristin Todd and Andy Yost



Steering Committee

As we reflect on the incredible journey, we are immensely grateful for the unwavering support and dedication of our esteemed steering committee organizations. Each of these organizations and their representatives have gifted this regional collaborative with time, expertise, and passion that has led to the successful launch of NoCo Works.

Steering committee organizations were selected to serve NoCo Works based on organizational alignment with the six key regional themes; the organizations have also demonstrated a proven commitment to collaboration and regionalism. These 26 organizations represent a coalition of unique expertise across diverse sectors, from education to government to the private sector to community-serving nonprofits. These members are champions of regionalism for Northern Colorado's talent and workforce development efforts. The steering committee is key to sustainable implementation of the larger NoCo Works initiatives, and is also tasked with supporting actions that fall within the six regional themes and subcommittees. Together, this group has already achieved milestones that have left a lasting imprint on the Northern Colorado region.

To further exemplify collaboration and long-term commitment to this effort, all the steering committee members, along with C-suite executives of their organizations, signed a Declaration of Commitment during September, which is deemed Workforce Development Month. The Declaration of Commitment states, "We, the undersigned, commit our institutions to serving the region through the mission of NoCo Works by developing a holistic and aligned regional talent and workforce network in Northern Colorado. This mission will be actualized through strategic development and task-oriented goals through the following six regional themes: Economic Inclusion, External Barriers, Business Resources, Training and Development, Talent Pipeline, and Work-based Learning."

The steering committee met every six weeks in person, with the mission to design, plan, and launch NoCo Works. During these in-person meetings, partners signal to the region the power of collaboration to create a positive impact on workforce-related regional needs. Key strategic areas of focus for the steering committee are as follows:

1. Ensure long-term solvency and sustainability of NoCo Works

- Funding
- Ongoing governance
- Staffing
- Subcommittee reporting

2. Communication strategy

- Transparent information sharing
- Branding and marketing
- Reporting strategy
- Regional calendar

3. Develop resources and tools

- One-stop shop and website development
- Data collection
- Data-driven metric strategy

** The establishment of clear metrics and timeline for the strategic plan are expected to be finalized in March of 2024**

Special Acknowledgments to Steering Committee Members:

- To the City of Fort Collins, for commissioning the original 2014 Larimer County Labor Market Study, leading to the launch of Talent 2.0, and multiplying the awareness of our local workforce landscape as both a founder and funder of this work.
- To the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, for providing key leadership in the Talent 2.0 initiative and to funding the people power required to grow into a thoughtfully designed regional initiative. Additionally, thank you for sponsoring the initial logo design.
- To Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Center, for providing a full-time program manager to oversee the NoCo Works initiative, along with a generous donation for marketing design and collateral.
- To United Way of Weld County and Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, for collaborating to provide funding for the External Barriers contractor and region ecosystem mapping effort.
- To The Weld Trust, for providing the first injection of program dollars through a substantial grant.
- Meeting sponsors of 2023: City of Fort Collins, Employment Services of Weld County, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, Front Range Community College, Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development, Loveland Chamber of Commerce, The Weld Trust.

Northern Colorado



Northern Colorado, Region 2 is defined by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) as Larimer AND Weld counties:

Situated against the Rocky Mountains to the West and Wyoming to the North, Northern Colorado and its counties of Weld and Larimer are known for a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among a set of diverse industries. Consistently ranked nationally as one of the best places to live, work and pursue lifelong learning, this region is a thriving hub of both commerce and culture. The diverse employment base makes Northern Colorado a prime area for business and industry growth. Northern Colorado’s top industry clusters include: agriculture, bio/life sciences, business services, energy, and manufacturing.

NoCo Works Steering Committee Members

Organization	Representative
City of Fort Collins	Jillian Fresa
City of Greeley	Ben Snow *through May 2023 John Hall
City of Loveland	*Jack Hill through June 2023 Marcie Willard
Community College - AIMS	Nicholas Spezza *elected co-chair
Community College - FRCC	Janel Highfill
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado	Kristin Todd
Fort Collins Area Chamber	Yvonne Myers
Four-Year Education Institution - UNC	Lyndsey Crum
Four-Year Education Institution - CSU	Emily Seems
Greeley Area Chamber	Jaime Henning
K-12 partner Larimer (large)	Tanya Alcaraz
K-12 partner Weld (medium)	Michelle Smith
K-12 partner Weld (rural)	Becky Langlois

Organization	Representative
Larimer County	Mark Johnston
Larimer Workforce Development Rep	Eric Lea *elected co-chair
Loveland Chamber	Mindy McCloughan
Sector Partnership/Construction	Travis Slisher
Sector Partnership/Health Care	*JoAnn Herkenhoff through Nov 2023 Anjanette Mosebar
Sector Partnership/Hospitality	*Jeff Noffsinger through June 2023 Jeff Brown & Randi Johnson
Sector Partnership/Manufacturing	John Sage
Sector Partnership/Nonprofit	Kim Akeley-Charron
The Weld Trust	Doug Elliott
United Way of Larimer County	Joy Sullivan
United Way of Weld County	Lyle SmithGraybeal
Weld County	Karina Amaya-Ragland
Weld Workforce Development Rep	Lisa Taylor



**Thank you to Larimer County Economic &
Workforce Development for sponsoring
the NoCo Works Inaugural Review**

Report compiled and written by
Program Manager, Kelsey Baun