



MARCH 2025

Trinidad State to Lead \$5.75 Million Grant for Southern Colorado

READ TIME: 3 MINUTES



The U.S. Department of Labor announced \$65 million in funding through the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants, with Southern Colorado receiving a transformative \$5.75 million grant. Trinidad State will serve as the fiscal lead for this initiative.



This grant will empower a coalition of colleges, workforce agencies, non-profits, and employers to focus on critical regional workforce and economic needs. This effort will strengthen career pathways in advanced manufacturing.

“We are thrilled to receive this grant, which brings greater strength and visibility to our region,” said Dr. Rhonda Epper, president of Trinidad State College. “This funding will enable a major upgrade to our advanced manufacturing training labs in both Trinidad and Alamosa, ensuring our students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.”

This broad partnership includes:

- Pueblo Community College
- Emergent Campus
- Fremont Economic Development Corporation
- South Central and San Luis Valley BOCES
- Colorado Education Initiative
- Data Driven Economic Strategies
- Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium
- SkillsUSA
- Upper Arkansas Council of Governments
- Employer partners from the manufacturing sector.

Several program areas will be strengthened, including Robotics, Automation, Welding, and Construction. The goal is to align workforce training with emerging industries such as clean and renewable energy, affordable housing, and transportation, as these sectors are experiencing rapid growth due to significant state, regional and national priorities.



Clean Energy Transition

Colorado’s goal to achieve 100% clean electricity generation by 2040 is driving demand for skilled workers in renewable energy systems.

Affordable Housing Innovation

Robotics, automation, and repeatable processes are making construction more affordable.

Transportation Infrastructure Growth

Major projects like the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, a federal initiative to connect the U.S. heartland with Canada and Mexico, positions Southern Colorado as a key logistics and manufacturing hub. The planned I-27 corridor will intersect I-25 just south of Trinidad.



One critical partner is Emergent Campus, a rural business incubator with operations in Trinidad and Florance. By providing students with hands-on opportunities through internships and work-based learning programs, it helps strengthen connections between education and industry.

Several key employers are participating in this initiative, including:

- VeroTouch (housing)
- Innovative Energy (solar)
- Stormant Designs (engineering)
- Barn Owl Precision Agriculture
- 3 Rocks Engineering

This model developed by Emergent Campus has brought high-wage jobs to rural communities, generating over 150 local jobs and additional remote work opportunities since 2019.

The \$5.75 million grant will be distributed over a four-year period, beginning in March 2025, and continuing through February 2029.

Trinidad State is proud to serve as the fiscal lead for this effort. Our students are tomorrow’s workforce.

SHARE THIS STORY

