



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CareerWise Colorado to Launch Apprenticeship Program in Eagle County

*Vail Valley Partnerships Spearheads Modern Youth-Apprenticeship Program
to Develop Local Career Pathways*

DENVER – Aug. 9, 2017 – CareerWise Colorado, a nonprofit implementing a statewide modern youth-apprenticeship program, announced it is working with Vail Valley Partnerships to expand into Eagle County beginning in the 2018 – 2019 school year.

CareerWise’s program offers three-year apprenticeships for high-school students in career pathways such as information technology, financial services, business operations and advanced manufacturing. Apprentices develop in-demand workforce skills, a valuable industry credential and approximately 30 hours of debt-free college credit while earning an hourly wage. Businesses reduce turnover, develop a highly-trained workforce and realize a tangible return-on-investment based on the value of the apprentice’s work.

“We’ve received interest from a number of communities about implementing a CareerWise modern youth-apprenticeship program because of the mutual, evident benefits to both young people and industry,” said Ashley Carter, CareerWise Colorado’s chief strategy officer. “Eagle County was selected because Vail Valley Partnerships has done the hard work to get their community down the path of readiness.”

CareerWise held an open application period from February through June of this year, with the selection process based on a framework that demonstrates readiness from the business and education communities as well as a committed community leadership.

“With the increasing cost of living in the Valley, it's important for Eagle County to move beyond seasonal employment opportunities and create pathways to careers that provide a good living wage,” said Erik Williams, Vail Valley Partnership’s director of community development. “We have tremendous community support from our business, education and local government leaders for implementing a successful CareerWise apprenticeship program.”

Vail Valley Partnership represents 850 local businesses, making up over 80 percent of the Eagle County workforce, and will partner with CareerWise in developing the business-led student-centered program. Several Eagle County businesses have already committed to participation in the apprenticeship program, including Alpine Bank, The Gallegos Corporation and Vail Resorts.

Additionally, Eagle County has familiarity with experiential learning-based program through its CareerX internship and career exploration program. Eagle County Schools and Vail Valley Foundation collaborated to secure 46 internships and 150 job shadowing opportunities during the 2016-2017 school year. This support from various community, business, education and government leaders creates a strong foundation on which to build an apprenticeship program.



“Since 2002, Colorado Mountain College Vail Valley in Edwards has supported dual enrollment for hundreds of students each year, empowering them to earn thousands of college credit hours and saving Eagle County families millions of dollars in tuition,” said Dr. Kathryn Regjo, Colorado Mountain College vice president and campus dean in the Vail Valley. “We are honored to be one of the many partners within the first rural site CareerWise has chosen. Working with CareerWise, Vail Valley Partnership, Eagle County Schools, the Edwards Workforce Center and YouthPower365 will allow us to continue to help provide even more students with greater – and earlier – exposure to career pathways and postsecondary educational opportunities. We are thrilled to continue and advance our efforts to serve as a collaborative and integrated educational partner in addressing our community’s workforce needs.”

Each year CareerWise will expand into new communities and new pathways. More information on becoming a CareerWise Colorado community can be found here:
<http://www.careerwisecolorado.org/new-communities/>

“There are a number of communities that are currently working through the readiness framework for 2019 or 2020 launch,” said Carter. “CareerWise is a statewide endeavor, so we encourage every community to explore how a modern youth-apprenticeship could fit into its workforce and education plans.”

About CareerWise Colorado

CareerWise Colorado is building a statewide system of youth apprenticeships that create pathways for students to access high-demand, high-paying careers at leading Colorado companies. Student apprentices also work toward high school graduation and earn postsecondary credit, industry credentials or both in their chosen career path. Established by the Business Experiential-Learning (BEL) Commission created by Gov. John Hickenlooper and chaired by Noel Ginsburg of Intertech Plastics, CareerWise Colorado is launching in school districts in metro Denver, Fort Collins and the Western Slope. 20,000 youth apprentices, or about 10 percent of Colorado students in their last two years of high school, are expected to participate by 2027. More information about CareerWise Colorado is available at <http://www.careerwisecolorado.org/>.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jason Jansky
CareerWise Colorado
303-748-3300
Jason.jansky@careerwisecolorado.org

Erik Williams
Vail Valley Partnerships
erik@visitvailvalley.com