



September 2021

Relief Dollars to Boost “Denver Back to Work”

What is this program?

The City & County of Denver’s work to help restart, rebuild, and stabilize our local job base includes a strong focus on both employers and employees in the restaurant, hospitality, and events industries. Hiring challenges are hindering the recovery of many businesses, and the competition for top, experienced talent is fierce. Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) has designed its “Denver Back to Work” program in three tiers:

City contracts with two associations who are supporting employers during this hiring challenge, which in turn funds

Individual grants available from the associations to qualified employers to attract, hire, retain, and incent workers, limited to \$10,000 per employer; with an end result of

Direct pass-through cash grants made by the employers to their workers, grants sized at the discretion of the employer but estimated to be \$1,500 per worker.

What is notable or unique about this program?



- **Employers with a Denver location** can be granted up to \$10,000 each to use to reward and incent workers.
- **The size of individual grants** to workers is at the discretion of the employer.
- **Employers retain no portion of the grants**, with 100% going directly to workers.
- **Employers do not need to be a member** of one of the two program contractors—the Colorado Restaurant Association or CO Events Alliance—to participate.
- **The city’s administrative fee** to the two associations is limited to 6%, so out of \$1.5M in federal funds, \$1,415,095 is going directly to the workers in the restaurant, hospitality, and events industries.
- **Workers do not need to reside** in the City & County of Denver.
- **The program does not consider the immigration or naturalization status** of the worker.

What is the history/background of this work?

The Colorado Restaurant Association worked with Denver in the successful delivery of the Angel Relief Fund in mid-2020, which was similar in purpose and benefited workers directly.

How are justice/equity/diversity/inclusion factors incorporated into this program?

This program grants relief to the local workers in industries strongly affected by the ongoing pandemic, and reflects the data that lower-wage workers have been disproportionately affected by reduced hours, job losses, and ongoing job insecurity as well as greater health risks due to significantly fewer options for virtual work. Data show that such lower-wage positions are more likely to be held by people of color and especially women.

How will federal/state/city/grant funds be used?

These are federal pandemic relief funds across two contracts, delivering a total of \$1.5M to the community (\$1M to the Colorado Restaurant Association, and \$500,000 to the CO Events Alliance).

How will we measure success?

At an estimated worker grant of \$1,500, the “Denver Back to Work” program will be able to serve 943 workers this fall through the participation of 140 local employers.

What is the employer call to action?

Employers are encouraged to reach out to the Colorado Restaurant Association at www.corestaurant.org or CO Events Alliance at www.coeventalliance.org.



As of August 30, 2021, these two contracts have been submitted to Denver City Council for consideration. We are happy to answer your questions or provide a 1:1 briefing on “Denver Back to Work.” Deborah Cameron, DEDO Chief Business Development Officer, is the program lead. For inquiries or setting appointments, contact Susan Liehe, DEDO City Council liaison, at 720-480-3481 or susan.liehe@denvergov.org.