

Denver Business Journal

[First Lady Jill Biden to Colorado lawmakers: Keep training your workforce](#)

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April 3, 2023

As the nation prepares to take in federal dollars from legislation that she said will create millions of new jobs, Biden said career pathways are more important than ever



First Lady Jill Biden spoke with Colorado policymakers on Monday morning to highlight workforce training needs as new jobs are created through legislation passed during President Joe Biden's presidency. From left: Colorado House Speaker Julie McCluskie, First Lady Jill Biden, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, Lieutenant Gov. Dianne Primavera

First Lady Jill Biden Monday made Denver her first stop in a tour that highlights the president's economic agenda. She called on Colorado policymakers to expand educational pathways as White House initiatives on clean energy, infrastructure and manufacturing unfold.

Biden congratulated lawmakers during her visit to the state Capitol for efforts to make workforce training more accessible, which she said will be crucial in filling the new jobs created by President Joe Biden's agenda.

Biden and other representatives of the White House are visiting over 20 states as communities prepare to take in federal dollars from three large pieces of legislation passed during Biden's presidency: the

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. Together, the administration calls the bills the Investing in America agenda.

Biden said the acts would create new jobs in areas such as manufacturing, high-speed internet, airport safety and clean water. To ensure there are enough qualified people to take the positions, she said the Biden-Harris Administration has made career-connected learning a top priority in the 2024 budget.

“This state is already a model for the country. And today, I want to thank you for that leadership and ask you to keep going,” Biden said during her address. “Keep innovating in how you help high schools and colleges work together so that every young person in your city can take advantage of dual enrollment options and get a jump start on a degree.”

In Colorado, about \$3.2 billion in federal funding has already been announced for 150 infrastructure projects, according to the White House, including \$2.1 billion for roads, bridges and roadway safety and over \$287 million for better access to clean water.

Under the umbrella of clean energy jobs, the White House has tallied more than \$4.5 billion in private sector commitments, including a [\\$725 million investment from biosciences company Agilent Technologies Inc.](#) at its Frederick plant.

The first lady said a four-year diploma might not be necessary for many newly created jobs, which may benefit more from associate degrees, apprenticeship programs or other hands-on instruction. But she said high school students need help navigating how to enter new kinds of careers.

“They may not even know what roles are out there,” Biden said. “And as technology changes so many industries, these kinds of learning paths are more important than ever.”

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, state lawmakers and representatives of the state’s community college system held a roundtable with Biden after her remarks, highlighting two bills moving through the state Legislature that aim to make job training for in-demand fields free or more affordable.

[House Bill 23-1246](#) appropriates a total of more than \$45 million from the state’s general fund to create a free short-term credentials program for in-demand jobs at the state’s community colleges. [Senate Bill 23-205](#) would create a universal scholarship program of \$1,500 for high school students going an “in-demand or high-priority postsecondary pathway.”

“Through effective state investments combined with landmark federal support, we are saving people money on training and education and expanding access to opportunities for Coloradans at every level of learning,” Polis said in a statement.

Biden, a former educator, said the president’s vision for education starts with free, universal preschool and builds into access to two-year programs at community colleges with connections to available jobs, as well as four-year degrees.

“It’s the future of our workforce: how we grow our economy, as Joe likes to say, from the bottom up and the middle out,” Biden said.

The first lady left Colorado for Michigan on Monday afternoon, however her flight was sent back to Denver due to an aircraft issue. Her trip there will be postponed to another date. She is scheduled to head to Maine and Vermont on Wednesday before concluding her part of the administration's Investing in America Tour.