



2024 Water Workforce Summit Report Executive Summary

The Colorado Water Center held the first ever Colorado Water Workforce Summit April 2-3, 2024, in Denver. The goal of the Summit was to bring water industry professionals, students, and educators together to discuss and address water workforce needs in the state. The first day of the Summit was a conference-style event co-hosted with Metro State University of Denver at Auraria Campus featuring panel discussions and focused breakout room discussions. Day two of the Summit, hosted at CSU Spur in Denver, was a Water Career and Education Fair designed to connect students with water-related employment and training opportunities. Information on panel presentations, water fair exhibitors and more can be found on the [Water Workforce Summit website](#).

Discussions and feedback from the Summit provided several action items for addressing water workforce issues.

Overall Themes and Action Items:

- Create centralized information hubs focused on:
 - Water-related curriculum and education resources connected to K-12 standards
 - List of school programs & related contacts that offer water-related courses at various education levels: high school, community college, trade school and university
 - Job/internship/apprenticeship opportunities
 - Contact list for professional organizations and industries in water
- Increase youth water education & professional development opportunities
 - Hold the Water Education & Career Fair annually
 - Increase exposure of high school students and higher education students to water careers through outreach at events, conferences, and classes
 - Hold skill and resume workshops for students
 - Create mentorship opportunities between students and professionals
- Continue dialogue around water workforce and build relationships:
 - Hold follow up focus group meetings to facilitate more in-depth conversations with water professionals, educators, and students
 - Hold Water Workforce Summit every other year to convene diverse groups involved in water workforce
 - Conduct more outreach with Colorado school districts to learn how to best engage teachers & students in water programming; facilitate K-12 partnerships with industry
- Identify and secure funding to support water workforce development
 - Scale up programs with professional certifications (concurrent enrollment in High School, Community Colleges) that can build into degrees (4-year programs)
 - Expand paid internship and apprenticeship opportunities for students

Thank you for your support and collaboration! The Colorado Water Center looks forward to working with you on the next phase of advancing water workforce initiatives in Colorado.