

2025 IMPACT REPORT



REGIONAL MICROCREDENTIALS — FOR INDUSTRY, BY INDUSTRY

Project Rural Upskill Network (RUN) Project Rural Upskill Network (RUN) offers unique workforce training programs based on the needs identified by regional employer partners.

Unlike standardized training, Project RUN employs a distinct rural cohort model. This allows learners to meet locally, fostering professional connections, while technology links them to the instructor and other cohort locations. This approach expands the program's reach, delivering free, high-quality training across Southwest Colorado's five-county region.

A key feature of RUN training is the mentoring component, which connects learners with local industry leaders. This provides valuable opportunities for participants to grow their professional network and upskill existing staff.

ADVISORY BOARD

Leaders from our target industries Finance, Healthcare, Energy, Utilities, Nonprofit, Education, Manufacturing, and Small Business serve on the Advisory Board. Their essential feedback and contributions have been key to advancing the program.

Eric Eicher, CEO, Alpine Bank
Jemal Mihalik, Strategic HR Business Partner, CommonSpirit Health
Bonnie Kling, HR Director, City of Durango
Meredith Maple, CEO, Durango Coca-Cola
Heather Hawk, Executive Director, Early Childhood Council of La Plata County

Sherry Waner, Chief Development Officer, First Southwest Bank
Elizabeth Howe, Owner, Howe & Associates
Rob Bondurant, VP of Marketing, Osprey
Heather Otter, Executive Director, SCAPE
Shanna Jensen, VP of People & Culture, StoneAge, Inc.

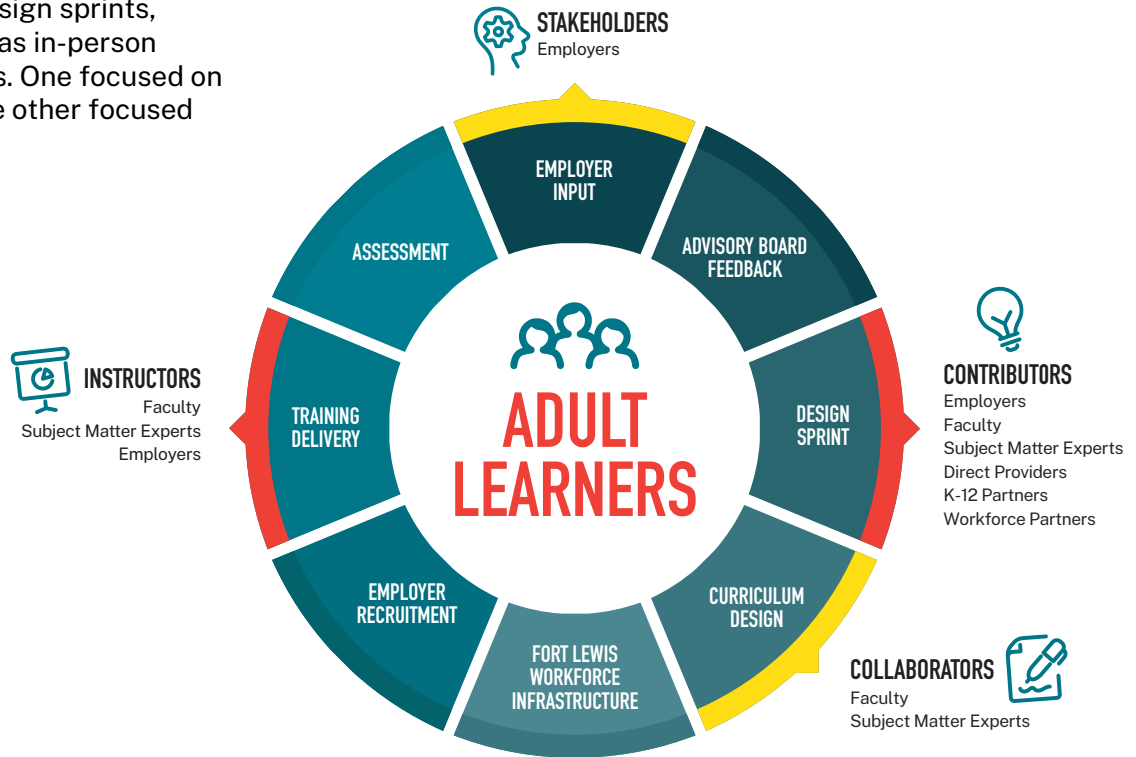


EMERGING RURAL WORKFORCE NEEDS

Through targeted research and ongoing conversations with municipal and rural public works partners, Project RUN identified a growing need for water operator certification across the region. This effort included extensive stakeholder engagement, facility tours, and industry analysis to better understand workforce gaps. In response, a new micro-credential training is in development with the partnership of City of Durango Public Works, Four Corners Water Center of Fort Lewis College, and FLC@Work to create a clear and accessible pathway into a critical, high-demand field.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL DESIGN PROCESS

In 2025, we led two design sprints, which were formatted as in-person brainstorming sessions. One focused on digital literacy, and the other focused on water operation.



YEAR 2 MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Fundamentals of Leadership & Management I: People

A 6 week training designed to build the leadership capacity that a strong regional workforce depends on. Led by professional leadership coaches, the training helps participants clarify their leadership style, communicate with intention, support team accountability, and navigate workplace dynamics. This popular class has been delivered 4 different times across 4 rural cohorts.

Fundamentals of Leadership & Management II: Strategy

This 8 week training is designed for those currently in leadership roles. Learners reflect on their role as a strategic leader, connecting it to organizational planning (mission, vision, values, culture), master strategic management tools like budgets, feedback, goals, and communication, and apply them in the workplace. Also taught by professional leadership coaches, this class was delivered 3 different times and reached 3 rural cohorts.





Essential Tech and Workplace Skills

This 6-week digital literacy course was designed to cover crucial professional skills: communication, online safety, Google Workspace proficiency, and time management.

While industry feedback strongly indicated the necessity for this program, potential participants did not recognize the value of the skills addressed. Research suggests that more effective strategies involve integrating these digital literacy skills directly into existing training or educational programs where the target audience is already engaged.

Productivity & AI

This class covered essential skills for the modern workplace: productivity tools, data literacy, AI prompting & safety, automation, & data visualization. Enrollment for this class was minimal. Furthermore, the rapid pace of change in AI technology quickly rendered the training obsolete. Given that a local partner, Fort Lewis College, is now addressing local AI training needs through their AI Institute, this course is no longer required.

IN DEVELOPMENT

Fundamentals of Water Operations

A hands-on training on building the foundation necessary to launch a career as a water operator. With daily field trips to water facilities, participants will learn directly from licensed operators and receive mentorship and career support.

Business & Leadership for Early Childcare Educators

This training program is designed for Early Childcare Providers and focuses on four core competencies essential for managing a successful center:

1. Managing Budgets and Financial Statements
2. Marketing and Fundraising
3. Human Resources
4. Developing Center Culture and Health

YEAR 2 OUTCOMES

144 Total graduates



8 Trainings executed

4 Rural Communities Reached



4 New microcredentials developed

INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYER PARTNERS

Alpine Bank

Marketing Concepts Squared LLC

Animas Surgical Hospital

Phoenix Recycling

Axis Health System

Pagosa Public Library

Bayfield High School

Sage Fresh Eats

Big Brothers Big Sisters SW Colorado

Shaw Solar

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

Soundtraxx

Crossfire Aggregate Services

Southwest Health Systems

Durango Coca Cola

StoneAge, Inc.

Durango Machining Innovations

Studs Lumber Company

Fort Lewis College

Tailwind Nutrition

HomesFund

Zia Taqueria

Jaynes Corporation

Zia Tortilla Co

La Plata Electric Association



LEARN MORE ABOUT PROJECT RUN

Visit the Project RUN website, projectrunco.work, to learn about our current micro-credential offerings, provide input as an employer, and reserve a spot in an upcoming training.

