



The State of Healthy Business in Colorado  
2017–2018 Health Links™ in Review







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## Director's Note

### A Vision for the Healthy Workplace

Before I began graduate school, I started a small business with my sister. We were both inspired by (and maybe a little naïve about) the idea of inventing something that could connect the hard work of global artisans to people who appreciate responsibly sourced products. We quickly learned that the most important part of running a successful business was caring for others — the mail carrier, the loan officer, the garment makers, and our partners. This meant providing fair wages and stability. It also meant ensuring they worked in a safe and health-promoting environment.

As I learned more about public health and Total Worker Health®, it became obvious to me that organizations like my small business needed to be part of a network of other employers with the same values. Luckily, Lee Newman, the director of the Center for Health, Work & Environment, shared this vision, and Health Links was born.

Today, I have the opportunity to speak with friends, family members, colleagues and even complete strangers about the importance of healthy work. I have the pleasure of sharing what our Healthy Businesses, and the people who help them run successfully, are doing to make healthy and safe workplaces the new norm.

These are real stories of what healthy work looks like, from the experience of Cody Goodson, wellness coordinator for Denver Public Works, whose patient encouragement led an employee to undergo a lifesaving health screening, to the leaders at Children's Hospital of Colorado, who take time out of their busy schedules every week for wellness walks with their teams. These stories inspire us to dream big and remind us that we can start small.

This year, we're building on the inspiration we've found here in Colorado and expanding Health Links nationally.

With the help of partners in academia, private industry, and public health, we're working to help organizations of all types and sizes achieve Total Worker Health. We make it our mission to further your vision of a healthier, safer workplace. But it takes a village to get there. That's why we're asking for your help.

**Spread the word. Share your story. Collaborate with us. Let's work together to build the movement for healthy workplaces in every community.**

Thank you for another great year.

Lili Tenney  
Co-founder and Director



# 190

organizations participated

# 88%

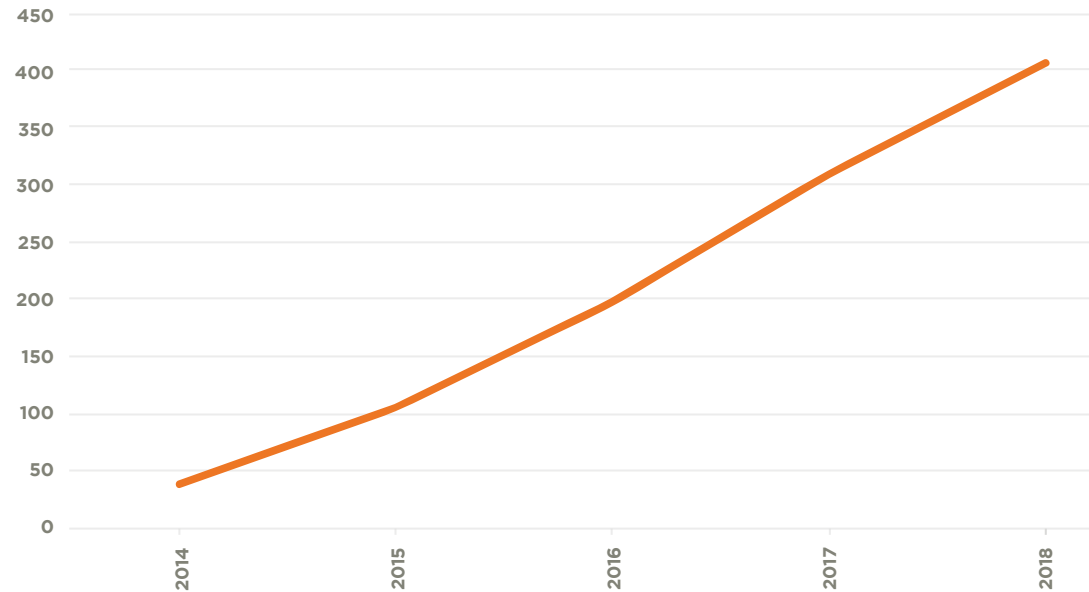
of organizations that recertified maintained or improved their certification level

## Year in Review

Over the past five years, more than 400 organizations have gone through our program. And every year, we reach an average of more than 55,000 workers across the state of Colorado. Thanks to the hard work of the dedicated Healthy Businesses in our network, we're seeing industries ranging from finance to healthcare step up their game when it comes to the health and safety of their teams.

# 130%

increase in the total number of organizations that have participated



A mechanic in a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans is lying on his back on a red hydraulic floor jack, working on the underside of a white vehicle. He is wearing safety glasses and black gloves. The garage is filled with various tools, a green gas cylinder, and other vehicles in the background.

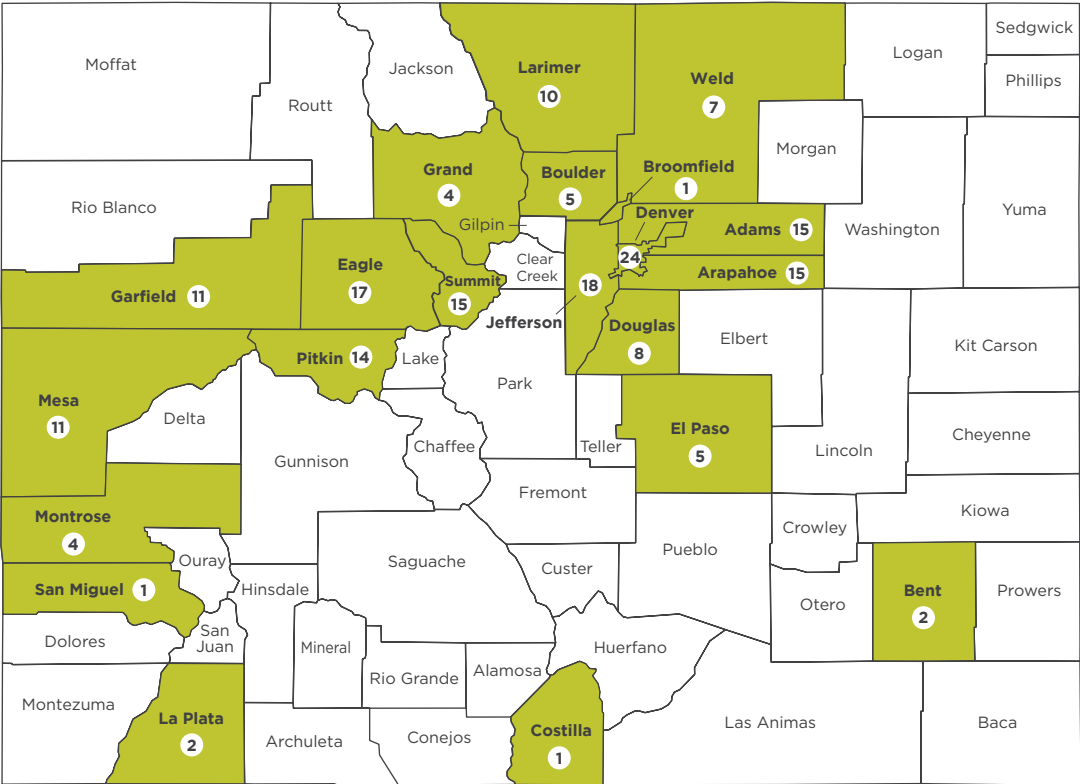
# +91,000

Colorado workers reached

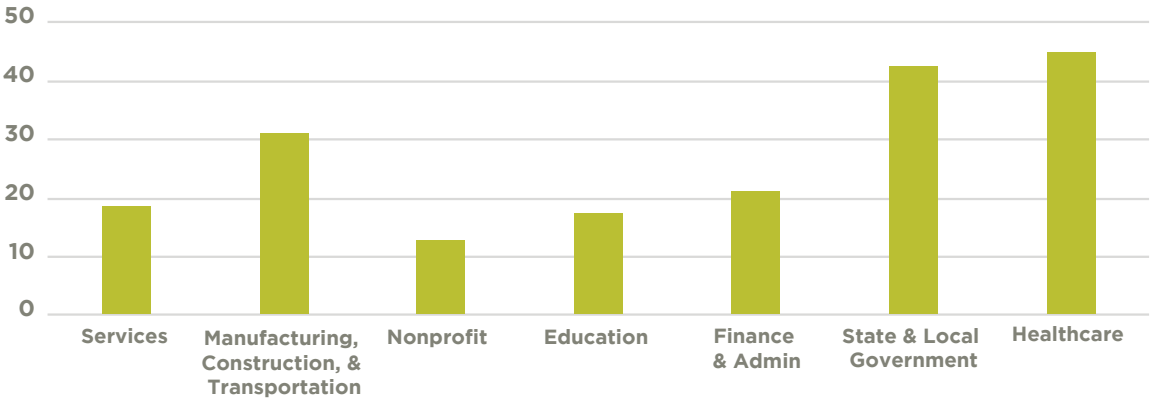
# +\$18,000

awarded to employers to make capital improvements  
that boost health and safety in their workplaces

# Healthy Businesses by County



# Healthy Businesses by Industry







## Expanding Our Reach

We've seen some amazing things happen here in Colorado, and we couldn't be prouder of what we've been able to accomplish. So we figured, why not spread the good work even further? We expanded our reach to Florida two years ago and to Oregon in the past year. Working with partners in other states, we're beginning to broaden our reach and grow our network of Healthy Businesses in Colorado and beyond. Our vision: a healthy, safe workplace for every worker.

With Colorado employers leading the way and setting a great example, we're charting a path forward for healthy work across the country!

## Sharing & Creating Knowledge

Our Healthy Businesses are creating healthier, safer workplaces, and along the way they're learning what strategies will work best for their teams. Small businesses in Colorado are coming up with innovative ways to make the most of their limited time and resources to support the health of their teams.

In 2017, our team, based in the Center for Health, Work & Environment at the Colorado School of Public Health, launched SSWell, the Small + Safe + Well study. We're aiming to get a deeper understanding of how small organizations are promoting health and safety at work and to evaluate the impact they are having.

And already, we're learning a lot about how leaders can shape the health and safety culture of an organization. The more we learn, the more we have to share with researchers and industry leaders through peer-reviewed publications and real-world applications such as leadership trainings.

Mountain Valley Developmental Services,  
Glenwood Springs, CO, Kick-Start Business



## *I credit the city's health screening program with detecting cancer and saving my life.*

**B**rian is the second-shift supervisor and former lead heavy equipment mechanic at Denver Public Works' (DPW) Central Platte shop. With decades of experience under his belt, Brian trains the mechanics on his team, fills in for other supervisors as needed, and jumps in whenever one of his teammates is struggling to repair something.

As a mechanic and a supervisor, solving problems is what Brian does, day in and day out. But when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, he was faced with a problem he couldn't easily solve.

About a year ago, Brian received a free health screening, offered through the City of Denver's employee health program. He was a little reluctant to participate at first. He wasn't sure if the program was right for him. After all, he felt perfectly healthy.

But Cody Goodson, DPW's program coordinator for wellness, encouraged him to do it and talked him through the details of the program. With Cody's reassurance, he decided to participate.

When Brian got the results of his screening, he was shocked. They were abnormal.

His doctor later recommended a biopsy. Then, he got the bad news — he had stage two cancer. A couple of weeks later, he received even more bad news — the cancer was aggressive.

It had already progressed to stage three.

“I was on my way to work when the doctor called. It was pretty sobering,” Brian recalled.

Brian has undergone six surgeries since then. And although the road to recovery has not been easy, he’s extremely grateful that he discovered the cancer when he did. According to Brian, it’s all thanks to the city’s employee health screening program — and to Cody.

“I credit the city’s health screening program with detecting cancer and saving my life,” he said. “I probably would be dead right now if it wasn’t for this program.”

DPW is a Certified Healthy Business Partner and has participated in Health Links for the past two years. The department has worked hard in that time to build a supportive culture, convey the value of health and safety, and offer programs that help their employees stay healthy and safe at work and at home. The employee health program, “Denver Wellness,” is offered to all city employees and includes an incentive to make use of preventive healthcare. Once employees have completed a biometric screening, health assessment, and any necessary blood work, they receive an incentive in the form of a contribution to their health savings account. In addition, DPW also offers another free biometric screening and educational classes for their team.

With advice and support from her Health Links advisor, Cody has started to adjust DPW’s offerings based on data and employee interests.

“Health Links has provided an entire network of health and wellness professionals,” Cody said. “We get advice based on

education, research, and experience. And it makes us feel more confident about what we’re doing.”

Cody makes the rounds to DPW staff at the beginning of every year, encouraging them to take advantage of free biometric screenings and earn credits that count toward the incentive. But that’s not the only way DPW has supported Brian and his well-being.

When he arrived at work minutes after his diagnosis, he walked into his boss’s office to come up with a game plan for how he could get treatment and continue working. Brian knew his boss would be understanding. What he wasn’t expecting was that his boss would go out of his way to make sure Brian had all the right paperwork filled out for FMLA requirements, to check that his shifts would be covered whenever he needed to go to the doctor, and to call him almost every week to see how he was doing.

***According to Brian,  
his teammates are  
more like family  
than co-workers.***

Unfortunately, Brian continues to deal with complications from his surgeries. Being on his feet for extended periods of time or bending over frequently can be a challenge for him. But thanks to the support of his co-workers and his boss, he’s been able to adjust his schedule and his job tasks. According to Brian, his teammates are more like family than co-workers.

“The crew has been really supportive. I’ve always got one of them right there by my side to help, saying, ‘Let me get that for you,’” Brian said.

Today, Brian considers himself one of the biggest advocates for early cancer screenings and for the city’s employee health program. He is constantly championing the health and safety of his team and encouraging them to get involved with the

city's, and his department's, health and safety programs.

He shares his story with as many people as he can. It isn't always easy to talk about. But he says that if he can keep one person from going through what he's been through, it's worth it.

"There's a lot of stigma around prostate cancer. But I keep telling my team, 'Get over it and go get checked; save your life.'"

Working together to spread the word, Cody and Brian are encouraging DPW employees to participate in the program. The support Cody has received from Health Links has helped her communicate the value of DPW's employee health program to other workers who, like Brian, may not be enthusiastic at first.

***...if he can keep one  
person from going  
through what he's been  
through, it's worth it.***

"I understand the importance of Total Worker Health. But the leg work of teaching others how important it is isn't always easy for one person to do," said Cody. "Having a team like Health Links and the Center for Health, Work & Environment help me out makes things ten times better. I don't think our program would be as successful as it is without the support we've received from Health Links."



Denver Public Works, Denver, CO,  
Certified Healthy Business Partner

# ASSESS

## **Taking the Health Links Assessment is the first step**

on the path to becoming a Certified Healthy Business. We evaluate the health and safety culture of organizations based on six evidence-based benchmarks and recognize them based on their scores. With this valuable information, we're helping employers pinpoint their strengths and identify areas for improvement.

Using Assessment scores as guides, we're helping organizations develop actionable, realistic goals.

*Health Links has provided tools and shared best practices that are helping us improve the culture of health here. After taking the Health Links assessment in 2016 and going over recommendations with our advisor, we started our 'Wellness Walks.' Every week, different leaders take a walk with team members around campus. Our leaders model healthy behavior and show their commitment to team member wellness.*

— Cristina Lever, Wellness Administrator, Children's Hospital Colorado

# 190

organizations completed our assessment

# +1 out of 3

were recognized at the highest certification level — Healthy Business Leader

# 3 out of 4

adjust work stations or job tasks to help workers stay safe

# 3 out of 4

address the mental health and well-being of their teams



# ADVISE

**Through personalized advising sessions and ongoing support,** we've helped organizations of all types and sizes set goals, take action, and ultimately foster a healthier, safer culture in their workplace. Advising sessions are not only about outlining objectives and measuring progress; they're also a great opportunity to ask questions and get advice. Whether it's by sharing a valuable resource, offering some much-needed words of encouragement, or making business-to-business connections, we strive to be the best mentors we can be.

Together, we're helping teams meet their health and safety goals.

*For us, the main benefit and value of Health Links is advising. As a smaller organization, sometimes it can feel like we're fumbling in the dark. But thanks to our advisor, we get the background and resources that we need. And it's presented in a way that's feasible for an organization of our size. Our health and safety efforts are more supported and credible now.*

*— Marissa Mills, Human Resources Manager,  
National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)*



# 190

advising sessions

# +400

hours of advisor support logged

# +1,800

people trained in workplace health, safety, and leadership best practices



# WE VE E H C A

## **We have the pleasure of working with employers**

who understand that the health of their organization depends on the health and safety of their team. Tapping into our suite of evidence-based resources, educational webinars, and in-person trainings, businesses in our network have improved their health and safety practices and moved closer to achieving Total Worker Health®. And with their advisor and the entire Healthy Business community coaching them through their successes and challenges, organizations in our network are reaching their goals.

Whether they are developing family-friendly policies, updating their safety equipment, or giving back to the community, our Healthy Businesses are making a difference.

*The Accelerator Award helped us build a respiratory protection program. We used the grant for medical screenings and fit testing so that we can make sure our guys are wearing their respirators correctly. Overall, Health Links has helped us make our company an all-around better place to work and keep our employees safe.*

*— Bryce Campbell, Project Engineer/Safety Officer,  
Shaeffer Hyde Construction*



# +60%

of Kick-Start Businesses improved their health and safety practices, retook the assessment, and became Certified Healthy Businesses

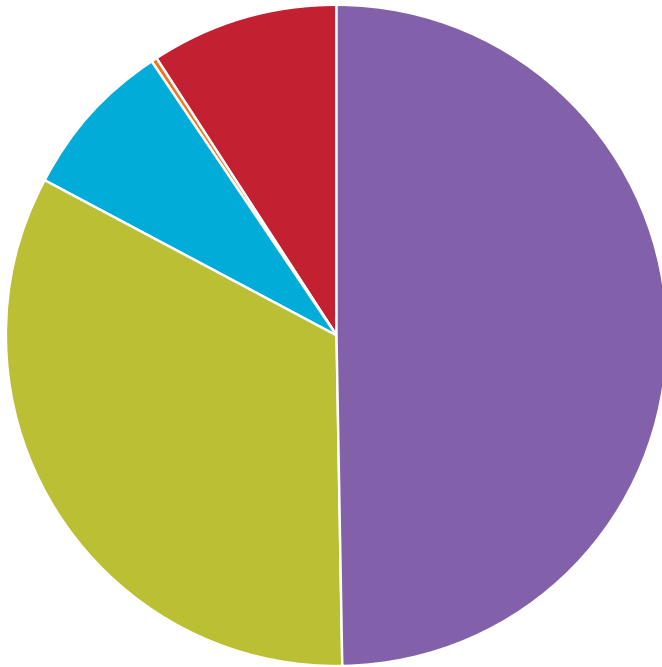
# +91,000

Colorado workers reached

## Supporting Sustainability

This year, we awarded more than \$18,000 to organizations as part of our Accelerator Award program. These awards support capital health and safety improvements to workplaces. Whether they are installing water filtration systems, investing in new safety gear, or creating relaxing spaces for employees to take mental health breaks, employers are using their accelerator funds in creative ways.

# FINANCIALS

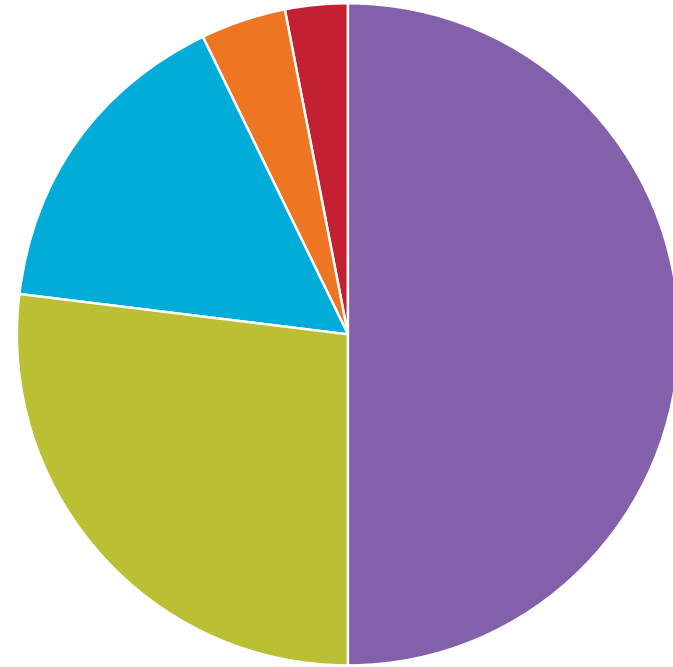


## REVENUE

Contracts	\$257,308	50%
Grants	\$167,175	33%
Other	\$47,908	9%
Institutional Support	\$39,274	8%
Philanthropy	\$1,150	<1%

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**Total** **\$512,815**



## EXPENSES

Personnel	\$222,119	50%
Operations	\$117,448	27%
Community Advisors	\$70,032	16%
Grants Awarded	\$18,077	4%
Events and Training	\$12,605	3%

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**Total** **\$440,280**

*Revenue includes prepaid contracts for work that will be completed in 2018-2019.  
The Center for Health, Work & Environment provides additional support for faculty and staff costs.*



# PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
Aspen Chamber Resort Association  
Basalt Chamber of Commerce  
Blake Medical Center  
Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce  
Colorado Business Group on Health  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
Colorado Small Business Development Center Network  
Delta County Public Health  
Eagle County Public Health  
Essentials for Childhood  
Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)  
Flood and Peterson  
Fruit Revival  
Garfield County  
Governor's Council for Active and Healthy Lifestyles  
Healthy Communities Coalition  
Manatee County Public Health Department  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)  
Office of Economic Development and International Trade  
Otero County Public Health Department  
Region 10 Workplace Wellness Workgroup  
SAIF Corporation  
Summit Chamber of Commerce  
Tri-County Public Health Department  
Vail Valley Partnership  
Valley Health Alliance  
West Central Public Health Partnership  
WorkLife Partnership  
WorkWell Collaborative

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# Here's to you, health & safety champions.

We're making a difference in workplaces  
and communities across the state, and  
it's all thanks to you.



 [@HealthLinksNews](https://twitter.com/HealthLinksNews)  [@HealthLinksCertified](https://www.facebook.com/HealthLinksCertified)  [healthlinkscertified.org](https://healthlinkscertified.org)  [/company/health-links-01](https://www.linkedin.com/company/health-links-01)

*Health Links™ is a signature program of the Center for Health, Work & Environment at the Colorado School of Public Health.*

**Center for Health, Work & Environment**  
colorado school of public health

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