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NEWS

Targeting jobs

Programs would find jobs for youths, create gender balance

By **PETER MARCUS**
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The federal government is behind two programs that aims at infusing workers into the market.

President Barack Obama's \$787 billion economic stimulus package has provided \$1.9 million to target youth employment and training in Denver. City officials announced yesterday that they have awarded three contracts — worth \$753,070 — to community groups charged with the task of overseeing the city's summer Youth Employment Program.

Gender balance

And thanks to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, Colorado will receive \$60,000 annually to launch programs that aim at increasing the gender balance of oc-

cupations in Colorado that are currently dominated by one sex or the other.

"Despite the current unemployment level, Colorado is facing a chronic shortage of skilled workers for critical workforce needs," said Dr. Geri Anderson, vice president of the Colorado Community College System. "These jobs can be filled, in part, with men and women who have not traditionally entered a career due to gender stereotypes."

Anderson points to several fields, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics, which are typically dominated by men. On the flipside, women dominate child education, paralegal and occupations assisting doctors and dentists.

Women also earn only 25 percent of all information technology degrees in America.

'Community Action Plans'

Nineteen state colleges are charged with the task of establishing so-called "Community Action Plans." This fall,

CCCS will award grants up to \$20,000 to institutions that "formulate feasible plans for increasing the balance in their gender-disproportionate CTE programs," states CCCS.

Finding jobs for at-risk kids

Meanwhile, Denver officials are hoping to place 600 at-risk kids with summer jobs. The program will be administered by the Denver Housing Authority, Goodwill Industries of Denver and Servicios de La Raza.

"The program provides an important resource for businesses to fill jobs while helping youth gain workforce knowledge, skills and abilities that will lead to rewarding, successful and sustainable employment," said André Pettigrew, executive director of the Office of Economic Development.

The program is designed to provide kids ages 14 to 24 with up to 160 hours of employment, ranging in fields from health care to construction. Some kids will even be placed with "green collar" jobs, performing residential energy audits and weatherization.

All of the positions have already been filled, but contractors are maintaining wait lists.

For more information, call 303-607-9216; 303-430-5319; 303-953-5950; or visit Denvergov.org/Stimulus.