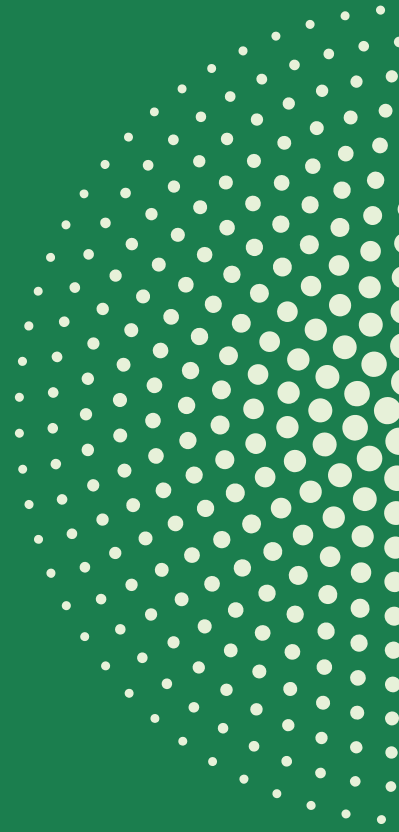
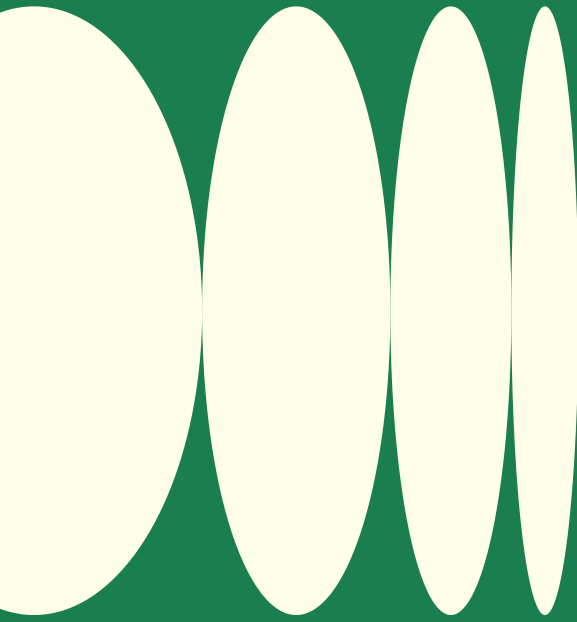


EMERGENT CAMPUS



Annual Report

2025

Reporting Period

Y1• July 2024 - July 2025

Prepared by
Makenzie Ford
Program Manager



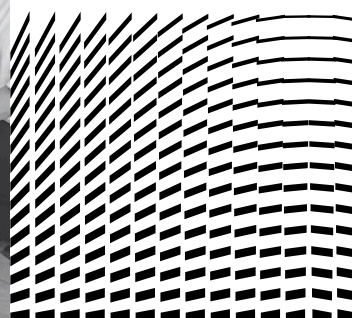


Table of Contents

02	Table of Contents	07	Program Participation
03	About Emergent Campus	08	Programs in Numbers
04	Executive Summary	09	Partners
05	Achievements	14	Goals for Year 2

About Emergent Campus

At Emergent Campus, we're building the future of rural workforce—laying the foundation for thriving economies, connected communities, and lasting opportunity.



Founded with a deep commitment to revitalizing rural Colorado, Emergent Campus exists to unlock the full potential of rural communities by creating pathways for innovation, meaningful work, and sustainable economic growth. With vibrant campuses in Florence and Trinidad, we serve as a catalyst for local opportunity—supporting entrepreneurs, remote workers, startups, and established businesses alike.

Our mission is to foster a collaborative ecosystem where talent, technology, and community converge. We do this by:

- Creating spaces that empower innovation — offering flexible coworking environments, tech-enabled workspaces, and business incubation resources tailored to rural professionals.
- Driving workforce development — through internships, job readiness programs, hands-on experiences, and strategic partnerships that prepare students and adults for in-demand tech and business roles.
- Supporting local entrepreneurs and startups — with access to mentorship, capital connections, and a strong peer network.
- Attracting and connecting tech employers — with the incredible untapped potential that exists in rural communities like ours.

What sets Emergent Campus apart is our roots. We're not just a physical space—we're embedded in the communities we serve. From launching local events like Tech Night Out to supporting regional talent pipelines, we are deeply invested in helping the places we call home thrive.

We're proud of what we've accomplished so far—and even more excited for what's next. Together with our stakeholders, partners, and neighbors, we're proving that rural doesn't mean behind. It means resilient. It means ready.

Let's build the future—right where we are.

Executive Summary

In Year One of the Opportunity Now grant, Emergent Campus made significant strides in transforming rural workforce development through bold partnerships, targeted programming, and community-driven innovation.

With a focus on connecting rural talent to meaningful tech and business opportunities, we successfully launched a regional ecosystem that supports both learners and employers. Our work prioritized real-world experience, employer engagement, and inclusive access to opportunity—particularly for youth, underrepresented populations, and jobseekers in Southern Colorado.

Key Highlights:

- **Launched Rural Talent Pipelines**
 - We piloted hands-on workforce experiences across sectors like software, cybersecurity, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship—offering job shadowing, internships, mentorship, and tech career exposure to students and adults in Fremont and Las Animas counties.
- **Activated Employer and Community Partnerships**
 - Through collaboration with local governments, school districts, chambers of commerce, and rural employers, we bridged the gap between education and employment, bringing industry-aligned programming to rural learners.
- **Built Infrastructure for Long-Term Impact**
 - We strengthened the backbone of our rural ecosystem with dedicated space, staff, and programming at both our Florence and Trinidad campuses—ensuring sustainability beyond the Opportunity Now grant period.
- **Awarded U.S. Department of Labor Grant**
 - A major milestone this year was receiving a \$5.75 million dollar Department of Labor Grant through the Strengthening Community Colleges Training program in partnership with key local stakeholders. This new federal investment expands our reach into high-demand advanced manufacturing careers while reinforcing our commitment to equitable access and regional impact.

Year One has laid a strong foundation. From building local capacity to national recognition, our progress reflects the growing belief that rural communities are not only capable—but critical—to Colorado’s economic future. With continued momentum, we are well-positioned to scale our model, deepen partnerships, and deliver even greater impact in Year Two and beyond.

Achievements

Year 1
Opportunity Now



In Year One of the Opportunity Now grant, Emergent Campus achieved meaningful, measurable impact across both our Florence and Trinidad locations. Through the creation of jobs, the launch of new programs, expanded coworking and tenant networks, and robust internship and apprenticeship opportunities, we laid the groundwork for a thriving rural workforce ecosystem. The figures below highlight the collective outcomes of our efforts to connect talent with opportunity and drive sustainable economic growth in Southern Colorado.



Jobs Created
44



Interns
46



Co-Workers
20



New Tenants
10



Programs Created
10



Program Participants
72

Achievements

Emergent Campus to Date (2019-2025)



Since launching in 2019, Emergent Campus has steadily grown into a hub of innovation, collaboration, and economic opportunity for rural Colorado. From expanding coworking memberships and supporting a diverse range of tenant businesses to creating hands-on workforce programs and placing interns in meaningful roles, our impact continues to scale across both Florence and our new location in Trinidad. The data below reflects our collective progress over the past several years—and the momentum we’re building to shape the future of rural work.



Jobs Created

150



Interns

100



Co-Workers*

20



Tenants

25



Programs Created*

10



Program Participants

75

**Please note that these programs were established as a direct result of the grant funding and did not exist prior to its support.*

Program Participation Highlights



SAGE GOODWIN

Digital Marketing Specialist



TASHA UPCHURCH

Founder of Hopping Mad Games



ILYSSA MONROE

Cybersecurity Apprentice

EC Professional Development

Success Syndicate Cohort

Idea Factory Participant

EC Professional Development

Women in Tech Network

Idea Factory Participant

EC Professional Development

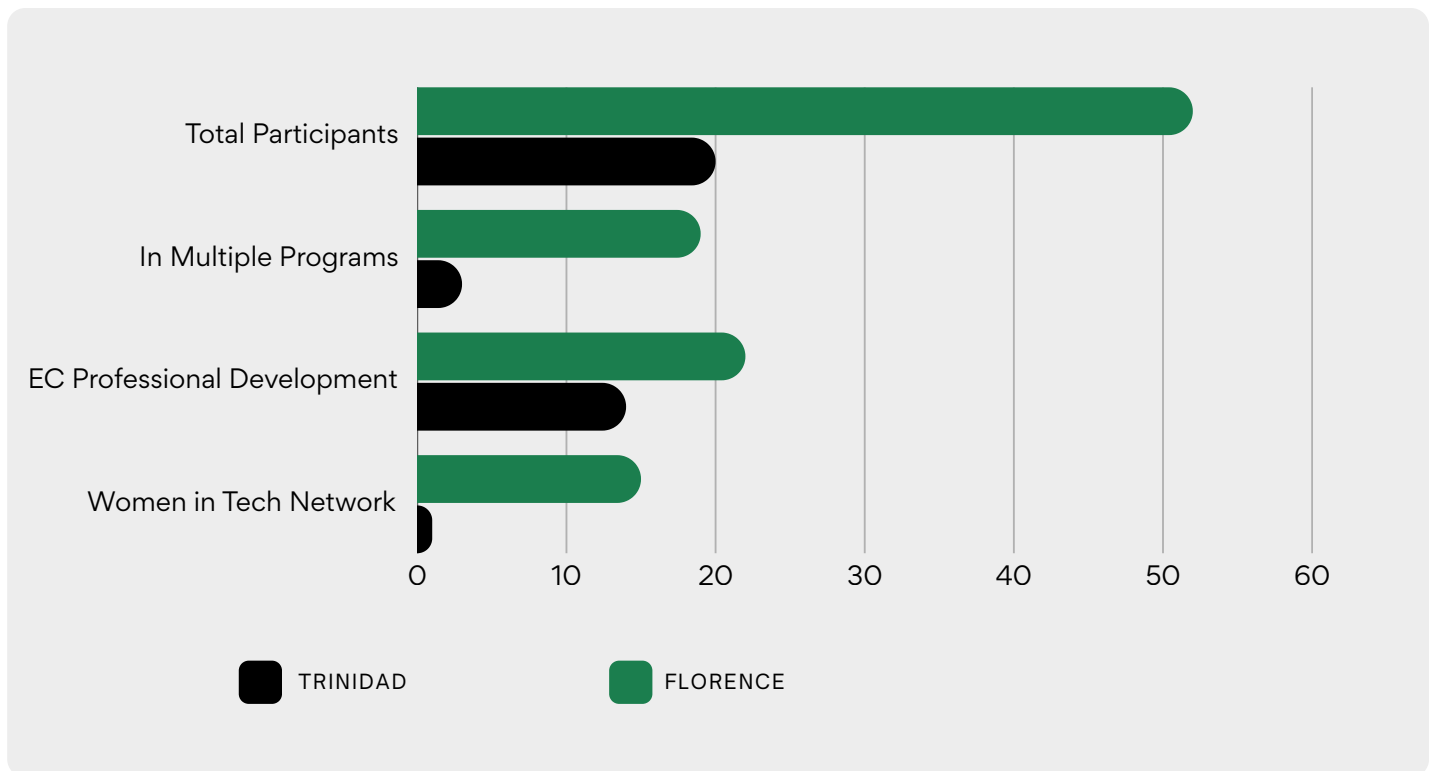
Women in Tech Network

ACI Training Cohort

Emergent Campus offers a powerful lineup of programs designed to support workforce development, entrepreneurship, and career growth in rural communities. The Emergent Campus Professional Development Program provides comprehensive support for individuals at any stage of their career—whether just starting out or seeking a new direction. Through a personalized blend of resume coaching, job coaching, mentoring, interview preparation, and direct networking, participants receive targeted guidance to build confidence, sharpen job search skills, and expand their professional networks. Additional programs include the Women in Tech Network, which fosters connection and mentorship among women in technology, and the South Central Success Syndicate, a peer-driven cohort that empowers emerging entrepreneurs. The ACI Learning Cohort prepares participants for A+ IT certification, while certificate and skills-based training programs equip learners with industry-recognized credentials.

Programs in Numbers

In the past year, Emergent Campus launched 10 brand-new programs aimed at empowering individuals through education, career development, and entrepreneurship. These programs have already engaged 75 participants, reflecting strong community interest and a growing impact across the region.



These numbers reflect the growing momentum of our mission—building meaningful pathways for rural talent. From first-time learners to seasoned professionals, participants are not only engaging, but many are returning for multiple programs. With the Emergent Campus Professional Development Program leading in enrollment, it's clear that our well-rounded, hands-on approach is meeting real community needs and inspiring continued participation.

Regional Partners



The strength of Emergent Campus lies in its deep collaboration with a wide network of regional partners committed to transforming rural communities through education, innovation, and workforce development. Partners such as Canon City Schools, Fremont RE-1, Fremont RE-2, Trinidad School District #1, and the South Central BOCES play a critical role in shaping student pathways and career-connected learning. Institutions like Pueblo Community College and Trinidad State College align their offerings to meet workforce demands, creating a direct bridge from training to employment. Organizations like FEDC, Second-61, Empower Schools, South Central Tech Sector Partnership, and Data-Driven Economic Strategies provide strategic insight and access to industry opportunities, while initiatives like the Colorado Education Initiative and the Fremont Multidistrict Initiative support scalable models for educational innovation. Together, these partners form a powerful ecosystem united by a shared mission—to close the opportunity gap across the I-25 tech corridor and create sustainable, community-driven economic growth.

K-12 Education Partners



Emergent Campus is proud to partner with Canon City Schools Fremont RE-1, Fremont School District RE-2, and Trinidad School District #1 to expand access to meaningful, future-focused learning opportunities for students across southern Colorado. Through these collaborations, we support career-connected learning, technical skill development, and exposure to high-demand industries. From after-school STEM programs to internships and industry certifications, these partnerships are helping prepare the next generation of talent while deepening the connection between education and local workforce pathways. Together, we're creating stronger bridges from classroom to career.



Post Secondary Partners



**PUEBLO COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**



**TRINIDAD STATE
COLLEGE**

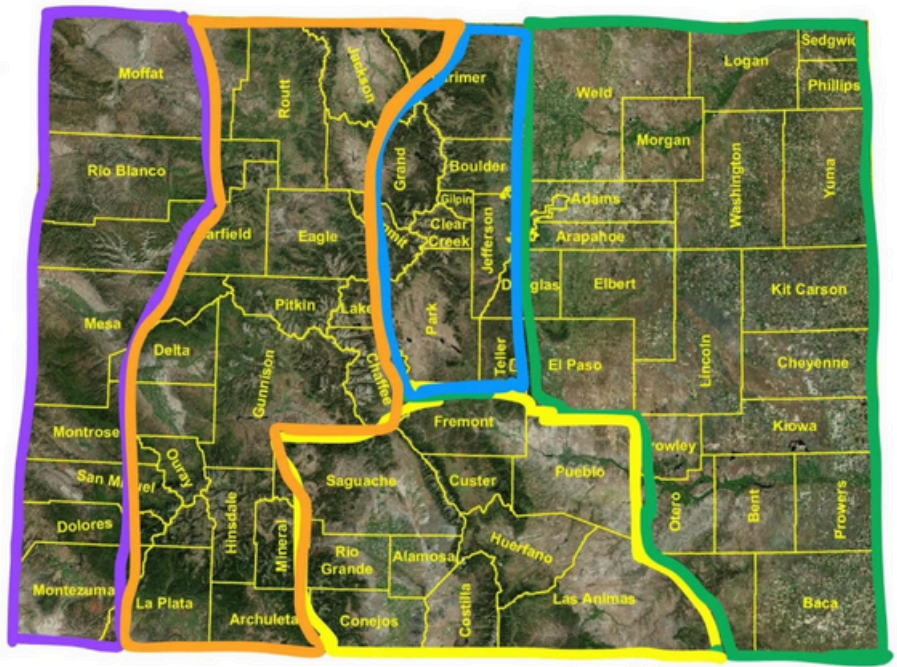


Pueblo Community College and Trinidad State College serve as key regional partners to Emergent Campus, working collaboratively to align educational offerings with real-time workforce needs. Through ongoing coordination with local employers and workforce partners, both colleges tailor their programs to ensure students gain the skills most in demand across southern Colorado. This partnership creates a direct pipeline from education to employment, helping students transition seamlessly into high-quality local jobs while supporting the region's economic growth and talent retention.

South Central Impact

Our south central regional approach has proven to be a powerful strategy, allowing us to align efforts, resources, and opportunities across multiple rural communities. By building strong partnerships with regional colleges, school districts, workforce programs, and employers, we've created a more connected ecosystem that supports talent development and job creation beyond any single location.

This approach amplifies impact by reducing duplication, sharing best practices, and enabling participants to access programs and opportunities regardless of their home community. It also strengthens rural competitiveness by positioning the region as a unified front in attracting funding, industry partnerships, and innovative programming tailored to our local workforce needs.



COLORADO
Governor Jared Polis



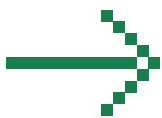
Stay Tuned

South Central Tech Sector Partnership in person convening coming soon!

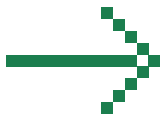
Internships

We're wrapping up Year One of our new internship program in Trinidad, built using the successful blueprint developed at Cañon City High School. This first year has laid a strong foundation for connecting students with meaningful, career-aligned opportunities—and it's just the beginning. At the same time, we've continued expanding our internship efforts in Fremont County, deepening partnerships with local schools to grow a rural workforce pipeline that gives our students the chance to stay, thrive, and access high-paying, valuable careers right here at home. We're proud of the progress and excited for what's ahead.

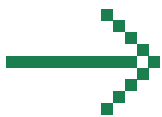
Emergent Campus Trinidad Internships in Numbers



15 Students



**38 local businesses signed up to
take an intern**



**45 open spots for internship
opportunities**

Goals for Year 2

In Year 2 of the Opportunity Now grant, we will build on the strong foundation established in our first year by expanding partnerships, scaling programs, and increasing our overall impact on the local workforce. Our focus will be on strengthening the connection between education and employment, ensuring that more residents, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, have access to the skills, resources, and opportunities they need to secure high-quality jobs.

We plan to deepen collaboration with employers, schools, and training providers to create more tailored pathways that align with industry demand. This will include expanding internship and apprenticeship opportunities, increasing access to short-term training, and providing upskilling options for current workers. As we progress through the year, we will also begin a strategic transition toward work under our new Department of Labor grant, with a focus on advanced manufacturing. This shift will allow us to leverage the momentum from Opportunity Now to further strengthen our talent pipeline, introduce specialized training programs, and prepare our region for growth in high-demand manufacturing careers. Through these efforts, we aim to grow our reach, strengthen local capacity, and create lasting economic opportunities within our region.

EMERGENT CAMPUS

In the News

> Start Up Colorado Case Study

Fremont County: The Emergence and Development of a Rural Tech Hub



> The Colorado Sun

Could a small southern Colorado town's tech hub be replicated in other rural communities?



> History Colorado Podcast

Fremont County: The Emergence and Development of a Rural Tech Hub



> Start Up Colorado Case Study

Fremont County: The Emergence and Development of a Rural Tech Hub



Conclusion



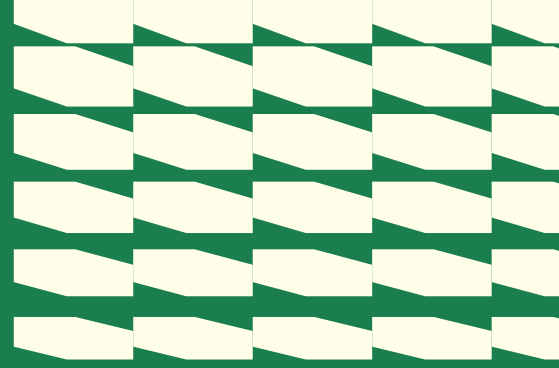
Summary

Year One of the Opportunity Now grant has proven that rural communities are not only ready but essential in shaping Colorado's future workforce. Emergent Campus has laid a strong foundation by building partnerships, launching impactful programs, and creating pathways that connect talent with opportunity. From internships and apprenticeships to professional development and regional collaboration, the progress achieved this year demonstrates the power of innovation rooted in community.

As we look ahead, our commitment remains clear: to expand opportunities, strengthen partnerships, and scale programs that bridge the gap between education and employment. With the added momentum of our new U.S. Department of Labor grant and the trust of our regional partners, we are positioned to deepen our impact in advanced manufacturing and beyond.

The work ahead is ambitious—but so is the promise of rural Colorado. Together, with the continued support of our stakeholders, employers, and community members, we will build on this momentum and create lasting opportunities that ensure our communities thrive for generations to come.

Emergent Campus is more than a hub, it's a movement. Year Two is where that movement grows.



Stay Connected

Thank you for reviewing our Year One report. We welcome any questions, feedback, or opportunities to further discuss the progress and future goals of Emergent Campus.

- ✉ info@emergentcampus.com
- 🌐 www.emergentcampus.com
- f <https://www.facebook.com/emergentcampus>