



Engineering Colorado

ACEC Colorado Education & Scholarship Foundation Opening Doors for Future Engineers

by Heidi Gordon, CAE
ACEC Colorado



Between 2015 to 2019, Colorado's engineering and architectural (E/A) sector experienced a 3.2 percent compound annual growth rate, equating to fast market growth and high employment. In fact, in 2019, with 49,960 E/A jobs—40,470 specific to engineering and surveying and mapping services—Colorado ranked eighth among all states for highest total employment in this sector.

This trajectory of growth illustrates why Colorado firms in this industry are vested in strategies to develop a career pipeline for future engineering professionals. In response to this need, ACEC Colorado Scholarship & Education Foundation ("ACEC Colorado Foundation") was formed in 2017 to support and promote education in the field of engineering within Colorado by raising awareness of consulting engineering as a career choice. Since its founding, ACEC Colorado Foundation has disbursed \$102,000 in scholarship funds to 36 students pursuing careers in engineering, hosted Colorado Engineers Week events, and worked on diversity, equity and inclusion programs and other educational activities that attract future and retain current consulting engineering professionals.

The Foundation's college scholarship program provides financial support to full-time students planning to enter their junior or senior year and pursuing bachelor's degrees at Accreditation Board for Engineering & Technology (ABET)-approved engineering or surveying programs in Colorado. The online application for these awards open in October and are announced the following spring. Additionally, the Foundation annually co-sponsors the Colorado High School Bridge Building Contest and presents a \$500 check to the Region 2 Winner with the option for the student to receive an additional \$1,500

contingent upon future enrollment at a university-level ABET-approved engineering school.

To further its work, ACEC Colorado Foundation's board of directors recently adopted a three-year strategic development plan. One initiative from this plan is the development of outreach programs that introduce STEM career options to middle school students and engineering career paths to high school students. These programs will offer standardized training to volunteers who will deliver presentations to schools, specifically those with student populations who have been historically underrepresented in the engineering industry. ACEC Colorado Foundation intends to then build on this career pipeline at the college level by introducing consulting engineering as a specific career of choice to those eligible for its undergraduate scholarships. ACEC Colorado Foundation will also continue and expand its support of organizations that offer related programming within schools and universities.

ACEC Colorado Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, is supported by corporate and individual contributions; a portion of eligible purchases on AmazonSmile; and its premiere fundraising event, an annual golf tournament. Also, for the first time this year, the Foundation is part of Colorado Gives Day (Tuesday, Dec. 7). This means that donors can schedule gifts beginning Monday, Nov. 1, or choose to contribute on Dec. 7. Either way all proceeds will benefit the Foundation's student scholarship and educational outreach programs. Contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law under Internal Revenue Code Section 170.

For more information about how to get involved with or support ACEC Colorado Foundation, visit <https://acec-co.org/acec-co-foundation/> or send an email to heidi@acec-co.org.

¹Source: ACEC National Research Institute 2020 Engineering Industry Profile, pp. 17-21.