



Colorado Re-Engaged (CORE) Initiative

- Enables four-year institutions of higher education to award an associate degree to eligible students who have stopped out from a bachelor's program.
- By awarding an associate degree in recognition of academic credits already completed, Colorado's four-year institutions can open new career opportunities for individual degree recipients, strengthen the state's workforce and economy, and create pathways for these former students to reengage in higher education.

Created under [HB21-1330 \(C.R.S. 23-1-131.5\)](#). Funding to establish the CORE Initiative originates from the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

Program Details

- Institutional participation is optional but highly encouraged. Institutions must receive governing board and accreditor approval to award associate degrees.
- Over 30,000 former students who stopped out during the last 10 years may be eligible for an associate degree under the CORE initiative.
- Student eligibility details:
 - Earned at least 70 credit hours
 - Did not earn a bachelor degree;
 - Stopped-out (unenrolled) from a bachelor's program for at least two consecutive semesters
 - Stopped-out within the last 10 years
 - Cannot be eligible for an associate degree through Colorado's Reverse Transfer program (i.e. earned 15 or more credits from a Colorado two-year institution before transferring to the 4-year institution)
- Designed as a completion award only; participating four-year institutions cannot market to or enroll students into associate degree programs. Institutions cannot "promote" the program to students before they meet eligibility requirements - including being unenrolled for at least two semesters.
- CDHE is charged with helping institutions implement and market CORE.

Benefits

By offering qualifying stop-out students an associate degree for credits already completed, participating institutions can:

- Enable degree recipients to obtain higher paying jobs and more secure employment, which will improve economic prospects for these former students and their communities.
- Increase the number of Coloradoans with academic credentials and degrees, which will strengthen the state's workforce and support the economic recovery of the business community.
- Better position degree recipients to return to higher education to complete a bachelor's degree or higher.

For More Information

Colorado Department of Higher Education: <https://highered.colorado.gov/>

The CORE Initiative: <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/students/attending-college/colorado-re-engaged-core-initiative>

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