



COLORADO

Department of
Higher Education

BOLDLY DELIVERS FIRST TERM WINS

Governor Jared Polis' Bold Goals for Higher Education

- Advance **affordability** for students through institutional cost containment and innovative practices
- Increase **credential completion** by leading and developing strategies that prepare Coloradans for jobs of the future
- **Erase equity gaps** in educational attainment

Affordability

More Completion, Less Debt

Graduation rates for students at Colorado 2-year and 4-year institutions continue to increase. Debt among Colorado residents graduating from the state's public institutions continues to be on a steady downward trend. **In 2021, 55% of resident students graduated with no loan debt at all.**

Open Educational Resources

With the 2021-2022 grant cycle, Colorado students have saved more than **\$20.5 million** on textbook costs from a \$2.425 million investment from the State.

Free Application Days

In the last four years, Colorado Free Application Days has saved students **more than \$9.2 million** in college application fees.

Social Determinants of Student Success

Leading the way nationally, more than 20 Colorado campuses have transformed student supports to address food insecurity and mental health needs. CDHE's work on our Hunger Free and Healthy Minds campus checklists have inspired similar work in states including Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

Free Entry-Level Training in Healthcare and ECE

- **CareForward Colorado** is revitalizing Colorado's healthcare workforce through zero-cost, short-term training programs at community and technical colleges.
- **Behavioral Health Incentive Program** provides financial incentives to rural and low-income Colorado students to obtain a credential in certain behavioral health programs of study.
- **ECE Educator Stipends/Scholarships/Loan Forgiveness:** In partnership with the Office of Early Childhood within the Colorado Department of Human Services, CDHE is collaborating with the Colorado Community College System and public institutions of higher education to provide funding opportunities to aspiring and in-service early childhood educators.

Increased Financial Aid

- From FY19-20 through FY22-23, financial aid increased by 17.8% (\$35.6 million). (*Compares to 12.3% financial aid increase from FY15-16 through FY18-19*).
- Colorado leads the nation with its First Step Program which provides a \$100 529 contribution to every child born in Colorado since 2019.

IHE Spotlight

CCCS' **Bridge to Bachelor's Degree** program ensures new, first-time students attending any CCCS college are guaranteed admission to a participating four-year college or university across the state. Since June 2020, **nearly 6,200 students have registered, and 285 have graduated** and are now eligible to enroll with a four-year college or university partner. When accepted into the **Aims2UNC** program students are considered a student on both campuses, allowing them to engage at each campus including access to facilities (including UNC residence halls), events, clubs and organizations.



Credential Completion/Workforce Development

Colorado Collegiate Apprenticeship Program

CDHE is paving the way with our Colorado Collegiate Apprenticeship Program with a **164% increase** in participation in the last reporting period with **945 participants** in partnership with **36 healthcare partners**. Of grant participants and apprentices, **57.4% identify as people of color, 53.7% identify as women of color** and our participants range in **age from 18-68**.

Stackable credentials

- CDHE is creating 10 stackable credential pathways in five high-demand occupations over the next two years including healthcare, education, and information technology. Pathways include non-degree credentials, high school pathways, adult student pathways, and prior learning credit. This includes \$1.8 million in grants to institutions to support students pursuing non-degree credentials.
- Leading nationally as part of a \$3 million, multi-state grant with the USDOE to develop more stackable credential pathways across the Colorado education landscape (Credential As You Go).

Job Market Analytics

A project with Colorado Future Jobs and CWDC, this new data-related tool aims to help policymakers, program developers, and employers understand the job market as a complement to the Top Jobs list and other data. Through this tool, data can be disaggregated by county in order to help users understand current, local workforce dynamics.

Anti-Human Trafficking Toolkit

In collaboration with national leaders, developed a toolkit for state regulators and agency stakeholders to identify and act on human trafficking in higher education institutions.

Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative

- The Back to Work** program works to reskill and upskill Coloradans for the state's top jobs. Since the program launch in 2020, more than **2,500 people have participated resulting in 1,125 credential completions so far**.
- The Finish What You Started** program targets adult learners with some college, no degree, reengaging them to finish their postsecondary credential and helping to close Colorado's attainment gap. Since the launch in January 2022, more than **2,000 people have participated and 133 have completed a credential**.
- The Matching Student Scholarships** program matches donors to generate \$15 million in scholarship funding each year for the past four years. The latest report (2020-2021) shows participating students persisted at rates **17-22 percentage points higher** than their peers and have up to **\$4,277 less debt per year**.

Erase Equity Gaps

First State Agency to Create An Equity Division

Hired Chief Educational Equity Officer and staff, launched Hispanic Serving Institution Tour, created Colorado HSI Consortium, launched student speaker series, introduced Senior Diversity Officers Group and held Equity Day of Dialogue and Symposium.

Created the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA) to provide state financial aid to undocumented students.

For More Information

Colorado Department of Higher Education
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