

Colorado Department of Higher Education

Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative Overview

September 7, 2023



What is COSI

- The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) was created in 2014 with the goal of increasing the attainment of postsecondary credentials and degrees for Colorado residents.
- The program addresses this challenge by focusing on affordability, access, and success.
 - Affordability- COSI provides funds for scholarships to support the cost of attendance.
 - Access & Success- COSI funds programs that help prepare students for postsecondary education, as well as support them through completion.
- Funding
 - Initial commitment of \$35 million
 - Annual appropriation
 - Annual allocation to programs

Affordability, Access, & Success

Why COSI

COSI is having a positive impact on persistence and completion for underserved students in Colorado

Matching Student Scholarships

- 59 percent of students receiving scholarship support through MSS grants were students of color.
- COSI scholars persist at a rate 17-22 percentage points higher than their peers.
- As of spring 2021, 9,952 postsecondary degrees had been completed by students supported by COSI matching student scholarships
- COSI MSS scholars have up to \$4,277 less debt per year than their peers.

Community Partner Programs

- 64 percent of students receiving wraparound support through COSI's CPP grant were students of color.
- 6,754 postsecondary degrees have been awarded to students served by the CPP program
- COSI Scholars persist at rates of up to 27 percentage points higher than their peers from similar socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds

Students who received a combination of wraparound support and scholarships (CPP and MSS) persisted at much higher rates of 92% than students who received CPP or MSS support alone.

COSI Programs



Back to Work provides scholarships and support services to individuals impacted by the pandemic to reskill, upskill, and pursue short-term credentials in high-demand pathways.



Career Launch provides scholarships to support with the cost of attendance and increase the number of learners pursuing high demand pathways



Finish What You Started provides scholarship and support services to individuals impacted by the pandemic and adults with some college, no degree.



Fund My Future provides funds to local education providers to implement strategies to increase the number of students who complete the FAFSA/CASFA before high school graduation.

Matching Student Scholarship Grants increase postsecondary attainment by growing the number of available scholarship dollars for Colorado students. Partnering with higher education foundations and non-profits to match new scholarship dollars 1:1.

Pre-collegiate Student Support Services
Model for High Schools provides college-going support to increase postsecondary enrollment

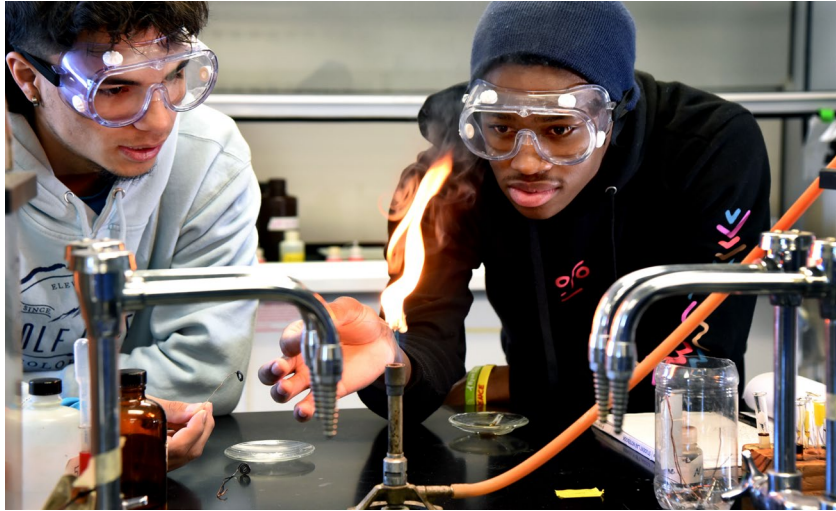
Postsecondary Student Support Services for Public Institutions of Higher Education provides student support services to recipients of COSI matching student scholarships

Second Chance Scholarship provides scholarship and support services to previously incarcerated youth who have been released from the Division of Youth Services (DYS) commitment facility within the last 5 years.

Youth Mentorship Scholarship Program provide scholarships to students who provide mentorship services to support with the cost of attendance.



Program Review & Redesign



Impacted Programs

Matching Student Scholarships

Goals	Features	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide financial support for the cost of attendance so that costs are not a barrier to entry and student loan debt is mitigated.• Encourage communities to create or leverage partnerships with scholarship foundations to assist students with covering the costs of higher education and motivate students to pursue a degree or credential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual allocations for counties, institutions of higher education, and workforce.• Require a 1:1 match, reduced match available for counties with high poverty levels• Eligible students must attend a Colorado public institution and up to 250% of Pell eligibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports an average of 7,000 students each year• Over \$50 million has been disbursed by the state to support the program• Approximately \$85 million in scholarship funds to students across the state when leveraging the 1:1 match.

Pre-Collegiate

Goals	Features	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase postsecondary enrollment and smooth the transition from high school to postsecondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A career and college center embedded within the high school, focused primarily on supporting seniors.• Implements curriculum and activities that focus on supporting the student through all aspects of the college-going process, from college and career exploration to postsecondary enrollment and transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COSI funds 14 pre-collegiate grantees in rural areas, serving 52 high schools.• Supports approximately 5,500 students per year

Postsecondary

Goals	Features	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postsecondary student support services to increase student access, persistence, and completion rates at the postsecondary level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housed at the postsecondary institution, the program primarily supports COSI Matching Student Scholarship Scholars.• The program focuses on providing students the support and tools to overcome institutional, social & wellness, and academic challenges and barriers that may impede students on their progress toward completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 grantees serving a total of 20 Colorado public institutions of higher education• Supports approximately 4,500 per year.



Overview & Recommendations



The goal of COSI's Program Redesign is to better align MSS & CPP grants to ensure all students are equipped to succeed



COSI Scholars receive both **financial and non-financial supports** (scholarship dollars, wraparound services) to enable them to thrive



COSI Grantees are better **equipped to meet student needs** through scholarship disbursement and support services



COSI is able to better **fulfill its mandate**, gain **more holistic insight** into what's moving the needle on outcomes (and for whom), and partner with grantees on **data-driven continuous improvement** to close equity gaps

In 2022-2023, Third Sector partnered with COSI to unpack the challenges and potential solutions to increase MSS-CPP alignment



Data & Document Review

- COSI Strategic Plans, priorities
- CCHE Strategic Plans
- MSS and CPP qualitative and quantitative outcome reports
- COSI Program Handbooks
- Promising practices, college access & success evidence base



Stakeholder Engagement

- **Interviews with 5 COSI Board members**, selected based on varied positionalities
- **3 focus groups with 14 COSI grantees total**, including representatives from *all* grantee types:
 - 2-year IHEs, IHE foundations
 - 4-year IHEs, IHE foundations
 - Community / workforce organizations
- **Discussion Content:**
 - What is working well with MSS & CPP
 - Challenges to aligning MSS & CPP
 - Reactions to proposed solutions
 - Benefits, tensions, and tradeoffs
 - Open-ended solution-visioning

Key challenges emerged through data review and stakeholder input related to capacity, standardization, & equitable access to services

Grantee Capacity Constraints

- CPP grantees serving their students and those receiving MSS from other grantees are **over-burdened**
- Grantees who have only one grant are unable to guarantee students are receiving paired supports
- Grantees with both MSS & CPP have **additional admin burden** (e.g. reporting requirements)

Program Standardization

- COSI scholars at the same IHE have **different expectations and/or requirements** from one another depending on the source of their MSS scholarship
- The **division of scholarships and services amongst different grantees** inhibits COSI from effectively measuring impact

Equitable Access to Services

- Multiple scholarship program models makes it difficult to ensure **all students are being served equitably**; varying types and intensities of services ranging from none to high-touch intrusive advising
- Some COSI scholars receive scholarships to enroll at IHEs with **no or fewer CPP supports** than others

To ensure students receive scholarships and supports, COSI proposes combining the MSS and CPP Post-Secondary grants into a joint grant

Current Grant Programs (MSS, CPP)	Proposed Joint MSS-CPP Program
3 MSS funding pools: Counties, IHEs, Workforce*	1 competitive pool of MSS+CPP funds for all grantees; MSS Workforce will continue to operate*
Separate RFPs and rubric criteria for MSS and CPP	1 RFP with adjusted, equity-focused rubric criteria (e.g. serving rural students, first-gen students, etc.) inform recommendations presented to the Board
Separate grant awards for scholarships and wraparounds; COSI scholars may/may not receive support depending on where they enroll	All grantees will have resources to provide both scholarships and wraparound services to students. <i>COSI to continue providing guidance on advising model.</i>
Limited insight into student outcomes when COSI scholars enroll & bring MSS from non-IHE grantees	Grantees can better track outcomes of COSI scholars
A match is required for the total MSS grant amount	A match is required for scholarship portion of the grant
Allowable use of MSS funds is limited to scholarships	A portion of funds is intended for scholarships; a portion is intended for the direct provision of wraparound supports and/or contracting with a service provider

The joint MSS-CPP grant will address many of the challenges inherent in the existing, siloed system

<u>Challenge</u>		<u>How the new joint grant addresses this challenge</u>
Capacity Constraints	➔	MSS & CPP provided by the same grantee Grantees have the resources to coordinate wraparound supports and students are more likely to receive both supports when they come from the same source
Program Standardization	➔	All Grantees are expected to provide wraparounds Grantees are held to the same standards
Equity	➔	All COSI scholars have access to wraparounds Every student who receives a scholarship through MSS has access to wraparound support

The MSS Workforce grant will continue to operate (in addition to the joint program) & provide scholarships for in-demand career pathways



MSS Workforce

Rationale

- COSI expects the majority of current MSS & CPP grantees would be eligible and choose to apply for the new joint grant, however, there is a subset of current MSS grantees that:
 - are providing financial support for students pursuing **high-demand job pathways**
 - **smaller grantees** and those have **historically relied on matched funds** for fundraising and/or are not well-suited to provide wraparounds and may not qualify for the new joint grant
- The proposed \$3M funding increase will enable COSI to maintain the MSS Workforce grant



Potential Grantees

Any organization supporting students to pursue career & technical education, including:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Area Technical Colleges | • Workforce organizations |
| • Community-based organizations | • Foundations |

In addition, COSI will gradually sunset CPP Pre-Collegiate & redirect funds to equip all postsecondary grantees to shift to a dual service approach

CPP Pre-Collegiate Grant



Eligibility Criteria

- 2020-2024 Grantee in good standing
- Must demonstrate need for continued funding
- A plan for integrating student services into high schools, aligned with COSI's theory of change



Sustainability Mechanisms

- 2-year grant cycle to enable grantees time to sustain funding
- Technical assistance from COSI to grantees to explore sustainability
- Fund My Future program through June 2026

While COSI believes it is vital to free up funding to better support the administration of post-secondary wraparound services, **COSI is committed to supporting CPP Pre-Collegiate grantees to strategize pathways to sustain and integrate programming** into secondary schools in the absence of this funding stream.



What's Next

Board and Partner Feedback

- Agreement with the concept of a joint program
- Concerns with the details and structure, particularly around MSS and moving from allocations to a competitive grant.
- No concerns were brought forward regarding sunseting pre-collegiate

MSS & CPP Adjustments

MSS	Postsecondary	Pre-Collegiate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Grant term decreaseWorkforce transitioned to standalone program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extend current grantees through June 2026.Maintain current allocations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extend current grantees through June 2026.Maintain current allocationsSunset program in June 2026Support grantees in exploring other funding opportunities

Timeline

2024

- Planning phase focused on stakeholder engagement, data analysis, administrative and staff structure, budget impact and forecasting, and evaluation plans.

2025

- Request for proposal release
- Technical assistance with proposal development
- COSI Board will select grantees in Fall 2025

Jan-July 2026

- Technical assistance with program development and implementation
- Hiring of programmatic staff

Fall 2026

- Program Launch

Thank You!



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