



COLORADO

Department of Higher Education

Long Bill Amendment Fact Sheet
4/13/2021

Funding a Chief Educational Equity Officer

The Department of Higher Education (Department) **requests a Long Bill amendment, totaling \$160k in FY 2021-22 and beyond for a new Chief Educational Equity Officer (CEEO) position.** The CEEO will build on the Department's momentum toward addressing the educational equity gaps in Colorado. Immediately, this individual will be responsible for administering a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) framework intended to assess state policies with an equity lens, while mobilizing existing networks of equity champions at institutions across the state to look at their own policies and campus climates. The CEEO will also be instrumental in implementing new legislation designed to address equity gaps. Most importantly, the CEEO will lead a statewide cultural shift, ensuring Colorado's higher education system is accountable for making progress on eliminating equity gaps.

The problem

While Colorado is known for its highly educated population, it has deep and persistent educational equity gaps. Colorado has the largest attainment gap between White and Latinx residents of any state. Only 46 percent of Latinx students who graduate from high school attend higher education institutions, and only 44 percent who enroll complete a college credential within six years. Among Black and African American students, 54 percent pursue college after high school, and only 38 percent of those who enroll complete a college credential within six years.

The vision

The CEEO promotes the vision of a Colorado higher education community that is inclusive and deliberate in making progress in erasing the persistent gaps in

educational attainment across all student demographic categories. The CEEO leads the Office of Educational Equity and serves as a catalyst and advocate for academic equity initiatives and systemic change at institutions of higher education (IHEs) to develop quick and sustaining results that support historically underrepresented students.

Meets all strategic goals of *Colorado Rises* to

Reach 66% credential attainment by 2025

This initial establishment of the CEEO position reflects the growing maturity of the Department in our internal and external DEI work, and signals a strengthened commitment to equity as it is reflected by educational attainment. The new CEEO will serve as a facilitator and guide in the next phase of deep learning in all aspects across the State, as we engage with all stakeholders and constituencies in the post-secondary ecosystem in Colorado to close educational equity gaps toward our goal of 66% post-secondary degree and credential attainment by 2025.

This position is critical to the advancement of our action plan from the report on educational equity:

In December, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and Colorado Equity Champions Coalition (ECC) published *Report on Educational Equity: Creating a Colorado for All*. The report sets a broad vision for the department, campuses, legislators, and other community members to drive improvements in success and completion for students of color in Colorado. It also provides a historic look at educational inequities showing racial, gender, and socio-economic gaps in college-going rates, college completion and workforce earnings. Likewise, it offers recommendations to create a framework, informed by data, to identify elements and actions that collectively create an equitable education system. Finally, the report provides strategies and a plan for work to continue.

For More Information

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

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development <http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/>

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