



COLORADO

**Department of
Higher Education**

Early Grad Program Fact Sheet

Early High School Graduate Innovation Program

- This program allows early high school graduates from low-income households to receive funding for postsecondary education or training programs during what would have been their fourth year of high school.
- Creates a pilot program where five local education providers (LEPs) or a group of LEPs can apply to participate.
- Creates a coordinator of innovation programs, a part-time position within the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), to manage outreach, outcomes reporting and coordination of the program.

Implemented by [SB21-106](#), the intent of the law is to, “result in meaningful innovative learning opportunities for students that will significantly support them in the transition from high school to postsecondary education or the workforce.”

High School Selection and Participation Details

- The Colorado Commission on Higher Education will create an application process and select five Colorado LEPs or groups of LEPs to participate from a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- The first cohort begins during the 2021-22 school year, and the final cohort during the 2025-26 school year.
- A student who graduates before their fourth year of high school receives the greater of 75% of the FY 2021-22 average state share of per-pupil revenue, or \$3,500, as determined during the 2021 legislative session.
- A student who graduates before the second semester of their fourth year receives the greater of 45% of the FY 2021-22 average state share of per-pupil revenue, or \$2,000.
- Schools will receive 25% of the average state funding allocation for each student. Schools are encouraged to direct this funding towards academic counseling and support for students who participate in this pilot program.
- Participating LEPs must annually report to CDHE demographic and other information on the number of participating students.

Postsecondary Program Eligibility

- State and private occupational (as defined in section 23-64-103 (20)) higher education institutions and training program providers who meet the eligibility and quality requirements for funding under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are eligible.
- Participating programs must provide reports on funding disbursement, number of students, demographics, program enrollment, as well as exit data regarding completion rates, earnings, and employment outcomes for graduates.

Student Eligibility & Use of Funds

- Students must enroll in a qualifying educational or training program, must be Pell-eligible, or have been eligible for free and reduced lunch in any grades eight through 12.
- Students must begin their postsecondary program within 18 months of graduation.
- Funds will first be used to pay tuition, fees, or other expenses within the institution. Unspent funds may then be used by the student for other qualifying expenditures, including textbooks, equipment, or transportation.

For More Information

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

Early High School Graduate Program

<https://highered.colorado.gov/students/preparing-for-college/early-high-school-graduate-program>

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