



EmpowerEd

EmpowerEd ([HB 24-1403](#)) is a state-funded program administered by the Colorado Department of Higher Education to provide higher education funding and support to eligible individuals who experienced homelessness while enrolled in a Colorado high school. This assistance covers the remaining balance of the total cost of attendance after any private, state or federal financial aid. These costs are split 50/50 by the institution and state.

Eligibility Criteria

Students who meet the criteria are eligible to have the remaining cost of attendance (after scholarships, grants and other financial aid awards have been applied) covered through this program for up to 132 semester credit hours or 198 quarter credit hours.

- Identified by designated school personnel as a homeless child or youth under the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, while residing in Colorado anytime between the start of 9th-grade and end of 12th-grade,
- Is at least 17 years of age, and not yet 27 years old,
- Is a current Colorado resident,
- Has completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA) for the applicable school year,
- Has been accepted into an in-state, public institution of higher education, local district college or area technical college, and
- Is enrolled in courses leading towards the qualifying student's first bachelor's degree, associate degree or certificate of completion at an accredited institution of higher education.

*EmpowerEd cannot be utilized to pursue a second degree of the same type. For example, if a student has already received a bachelor's degree, EmpowerEd can only be used towards a certificate or an associate degree. If a student has an associate degree, EmpowerEd can only be used towards a certificate or a bachelor's degree.

Application Process

1. Complete the FAFSA or CASFA and indicate past or current experience of homelessness,
2. Be accepted and enrolled at an accredited Colorado public institution of higher education, and
3. Complete the [EmpowerEd Application](#).

**If a student graduated after October 2024, they are required to submit an EmpowerEd Student Verification Form that has been signed by a current Colorado McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison with their EmpowerEd application. Students who graduated before October 2024 do not need to fill out this form, as the Colorado Department of Higher Education can verify eligible status internally.

For questions, please contact: **Students:** eenavigator@dhe.state.co.us; **Financial Aid Directors:** empowerfinaid@dhe.state.co.us

