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Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative approves 12 new local scholarship proposals; \$7 million in additional funds available for 2017-2018

DENVER, March 28, 2017 – The Colorado Scholarship Initiative board approved twelve local scholarship proposals that will grow into a total of \$3.9 million and announced another \$7 million in funds for the 2017-2018 grant cycle.

The board awarded nearly \$2 million to the groups—including counties, institutions of higher education and workforce development organizations—to form local scholarship programs that match funds one-to-one.

“Our goal is to leverage another \$7 million in state funds this year to generate a total of \$14 million in new scholarship funds for Colorado students,” said Shelley Banker, director of the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative. “Between this review period and November, we have achieved 60 percent of that goal. There has been quite a bit of interest from counties and institutions to reapply for funding, so we’re thrilled the board also approved additional grant funding for next year.”

The program expects approximately 30 more counties and at least three more institutions of higher education to apply for funding in May 2017. The additional \$7 million in funds will support program growth across the state in the next year.

“We’re already seeing great results from our existing scholarship programs and are eager to expand our reach to even more Colorado students,” said Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education and executive director of the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative. “As we look to increase attainment and make college more affordable, these scholarships help bridge the gap while creating positive change in students’ communities.”

This is the third proposal review period for 2016-2017. The last opportunity is May 2017.

The 12 awards represent ten counties (\$1,549,390), two institutions of higher education (\$86,492) and four workforce programs (\$347,000). Scholarships are multi-year awards ranging from \$1,000-\$5,000 depending on program and financial need. The majority of the funds are available to students over the next two to four years.

Recipients and award amounts

County-based awards:

- Adams County Education Consortium on behalf of Adams County - \$518,731
- Aspen Community Foundation on behalf of Garfield County - \$83,334
- Front Range Community College Foundation on behalf of Larimer County - \$230,472
- Lamar Community College Foundation on behalf of Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Kiowa, & Prowers Counties - \$42,799
- Pagosa Springs Rotary Community Assistance Fund on behalf of Archuleta County - \$24,000

- University of Colorado Foundation, in partnership with University of Colorado Colorado Springs and Pikes Peak Community College, on behalf of El Paso County - \$650,054

Institutions of higher education:

- Colorado Mountain College Foundation on behalf of Colorado Mountain College - \$19,177
- University of Colorado Foundation on behalf of University of Colorado Colorado Springs - \$67,315

Workforce:

- Colorado Educational Services and Development Association (CESDA) - \$72,000
- Colorado Mountain College Foundation – Colorado Mountain College Culinary Workforce - \$100,000
- Denver Public Schools Foundation on behalf of Denver Public Schools CareerConnect - \$100,000
- Hide in Plain Sight - \$75,000

Counties, workforce programs, and institutions of higher education interested in applying for matching funds can find application materials, dates, and available amounts at:

www.coloradoscholarshipinitiative.org/matching-scholarships.

About the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative

The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (Scholarship Initiative) was created to increase the attainment of postsecondary credentials and degrees for underserved students in Colorado. The project addresses this challenge in two ways: accessibility and affordability. To increase accessibility, the Scholarship Initiative funds programs that will help prepare students for postsecondary education, as well as support them through completion. To increase affordability, the Scholarship Initiative will provide tuition support via matching funds for community scholarships.

The Colorado Department of Higher Education is committed to reducing the “attainment gap,” which is the gap between Coloradans who traditionally go to college and Coloradans who are historically less likely to go to college. The Dept. of Higher Education is working toward that goal through a variety of ways, including addressing college affordability through programs like the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative.

To inquire about forming a scholarship partnership, please contact Shelley Banker at 303-974-2673 or shelley.banker@dhe.state.co.us.

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