

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION



John Hickenlooper
Governor

Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia
Executive Director

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COLORADO CHALLENGE

1. What is the Colorado Challenge?

The Colorado Challenge is a pilot college completion program serving students traditionally underrepresented at Colorado colleges and universities. It is a collaboration of three pre-collegiate programs focused on serving low-income and minority students and four Colorado campuses. The goal is to create an effective and cost-efficient model for increasing college completion rates that can be replicated across the state.

2. Who are the Colorado Challenge partners?

The three pre-collegiate partners are the Denver Scholarship Foundation, the Daniels Fund and Colorado GEAR UP. The four college campuses involved are Adams State University in Alamosa, Metropolitan State University of Denver and Colorado State University campuses in Fort Collins and Pueblo. The campuses were selected based on their geographic diversity, their prior experience with the three pre-collegiate programs and their willingness to participate.

3. Which students will be served by the Colorado Challenge?

The Colorado Challenge will launch in January 2014 with freshmen and sophomores affiliated with the three pre-collegiate programs on the four campuses. These students will be supported through four years of college. In addition, freshmen affiliated with the three programs on the four campuses in fall 2014 also will be part of the pilot. All students will receive additional supports through at least four years of college. In total, we expect to serve 2,500 students.

4. What kinds of services will Colorado Challenge students receive?

While the pilot may vary based on individual campus, a majority of students will receive summer transitional programming between high school and college, one-on-one attention from campus-based advisors and access to increased academic advising via technology. The college partners have agreed to consider, where possible, strategies such as grouping pilot students in classes, block scheduling for working pilot students and offering “whole programs of study,” meaning students receive four-year schedules and classes are available when they need them.

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5. How much will the Colorado Challenge pilot cost and who's paying for it?

The pilot is expected to cost \$5 million, or about \$500 per student per year. However, the actual per-student cost is expected to be lower due to initial start-up costs such as an online advising system. The three pre-collegiate programs are pooling their resources and the college partners are offering in-kind support. There is no direct state funding of this pilot.

6. What is the goal of the Colorado Challenge and how will you determine if you reach it?

The goal is to determine effective and efficient practices in increasing four-year college-completion rates for students, particularly those who are low-income, minority and/or the first in their families to go to college. Data from the Colorado Department of Higher Education show less than a third of students graduate from Colorado four-year public colleges and universities in four years. Slightly more than half of white students earn four-year degrees in six years while only 32 percent of minority students earn bachelor's degrees in six years. Success for the Colorado Challenge pilot would mean improving those rates and funneling the lessons learned into an effective and cost-efficient model that can be replicated across the state.

7. What happens once the Colorado Challenge pilot is over?

The Colorado Challenge is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation – a collaboration of K-12 and higher education, public and private organizations, state and federal agencies. The hope is that its effectiveness will prove worthy of future investment, from private or public sectors, to ensure Colorado has the highly-skilled workforce its future demands.

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For more information about the Colorado Challenge partners, please visit:

Colorado GEAR UP: <http://www.coloradogearup.org/public/index.html>

Daniels Fund: <http://www.danielsfund.org/>

Denver Scholarship Foundation: <http://www.denverscholarship.org/>

Adams State University: <http://www.adams.edu/>

Colorado State University – Fort Collins: <http://www.colostate.edu/>

Colorado State University – Pueblo: <http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

Metropolitan State University of Denver: <http://www.msudenver.edu/>