



Fund My Future

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The Colorado Department of Higher Education
Report to the Colorado General Assembly

Statute: 23-3.3-1007

The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE), under its own authority and through the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), oversees and coordinates policy for 31 public institutions of higher education (including community colleges, independent local district colleges and local area technical colleges) and authorizes and regulates private colleges, universities and occupational schools.

Mission – We support students, advocate and develop policies to maximize higher education opportunities for all.

Vision – All Coloradans will have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities.



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Executive Summary

The student aid application completion grant, known as Fund My Future (FMF), administered by the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) within the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), is a statewide effort to increase student aid application completion among high school students. Funded through a combination of federal and state sources—including State and Local Recovery Fund (SLFRF), funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER II), Colorado Workforce Development Center (CWDC) WIOA Discretionary Funding, and COSI state funds—the program supports local education providers in implementing strategies to boost completion rates for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA).

As of June 30, 2026, Fund My Future has awarded approximately \$2.2 million to seven grantees serving 11 high schools across Colorado, reaching more than 9,600 students. Despite challenges associated with the delayed rollout of the new FAFSA during the 2023-24 academic year, participating schools demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, achieving a combined financial aid completion rate of 61% amongst participating schools.

The Fund My Future program concluded in June 2026 due to the expiration of program funding. In its final year, CDHE and COSI prioritized program closeout activities, including comprehensive financial and narrative reporting, and supported grantees in developing sustainable models to continue FAFSA/CASFA completion efforts beyond the grant period. The program continued to inform state policymakers and education leaders on strategies to improve financial aid access and strengthen postsecondary enrollment statewide.

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Introduction

Program Overview

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) determines a student's eligibility for financial aid in postsecondary education. FAFSA completion is strongly associated with postsecondary enrollment: 92% of seniors who completed the FAFSA enrolled by the November following graduation vs. 51% who did not complete a FAFSA (National College Attainment Network, n.d.¹). Students who do not complete a financial aid application are not able to leverage federal or state financial aid because FAFSA is the primary mechanism institutions of higher education use to determine financial aid. The applications are an essential tool to help students pay for college, and they bridge the affordability perception gap that prevents many students from enrolling in postsecondary education and training. Recognizing that completing financial aid applications is a critical step toward accessing postsecondary opportunities, Fund My Future was launched to increase student access to financial support for education beyond high school.

Colorado's FAFSA completion rates are historically below national averages. During the first year of the program, in 2022, Colorado ranked 44th nationally with a completion rate of 42.2%, compared to the national average of 52.9% (National College Attainment Network, 2026²). The Fund my Future program has been an important component of CDHE's efforts to increase FAFSA completion rates in Colorado. According to the [NCAN FAFSA tracker](https://www.ncan.org/Web/Web/FAFSA/FAFSA-Tracker.aspx), Colorado now ranks 46th nationally with a statewide application completion rate of 51.4%, compared to the national average of 64.4% (National College Attainment Network, 2026³). Despite Colorado's low national FAFSA completion ranking, the state has seen an 9.2

¹ National College Attainment Network. (n.d.). *FAFSA completion resources*. <https://www.ncan.org/Web/Web/FAFSA/Why-FAFSA.aspx>

²National College Attainment Network. (2026). *FAFSA Tracker*. <https://www.ncan.org/Web/Web/FAFSA/FAFSA-Tracker.aspx>

³ National College Attainment Network. (2026). *FAFSA Tracker*. <https://www.ncan.org/Web/Web/FAFSA/FAFSA-Tracker.aspx>

percentage point increase in FAFSA completion since the launch of Fund My Future in 2022. While this growth is encouraging, many states across the country have also prioritized FAFSA completion efforts and experienced similar gains, contributing to Colorado's continued position below the national average. Although Fund My Future concluded in June 2026 due to the end of program funding, these results demonstrate both the impact of targeted FAFSA support and the ongoing need to improve financial aid application completion rates across the state.

Fund My Future was led by the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI), a division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). The program received over \$2.2 million in funding from a combination of state and federal sources including State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER II), Colorado Workforce Development Center (CWDC) WIOA Discretionary Funding, and state funds. These funds supported local education providers in implementing strategies to increase the number of students who complete a FAFSA before graduating high school.

The grant supported local education providers (e.g., school districts, charter schools, and boards of cooperative services that operate as a high school). Table 1 illustrates the two program categories that local education providers could apply for.

Table 1. Fund My Future Program Categories

	Option 1: Supplemental Funding Application Completion Strategies	Option 2: Pre-Collegiate Program College-Going Support
Intended Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers interested in increasing opportunities and/or creating new initiatives focused on increasing FAFSA/CASFA completion rates. Providers in this category typically have pre-collegiate/college-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers who currently have pre-collegiate programming and staff in place and would like to expand support to increase student aid application completion and postsecondary access.

	Option 1: Supplemental Funding Application Completion Strategies	Option 2: Pre-Collegiate Program College-Going Support
	programming in place, and the funds will be used to focus on and expand FAFSA/CASFA completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers interested in developing a pre-collegiate program focused on providing college-going support to increase student aid application completion and postsecondary access.
Program	Supplemental funding to add or improve FAFSA/CASFA completion programming. This option focuses on programming and provides funds to applicants who already have pre-collegiate programming and staff. The additional funds supported in creating or expanding initiatives and strategies focused on increasing awareness, completing FAFSA/CASFA, and helping students through the verification process.	This option focuses on staff and programming and aligns with the COSI pre-collegiate program model. Applicants hired staff and developed (or expanded) pre-collegiate programming to create initiatives and strategies focused on increasing awareness and completion of FAFSA/CASFA, supporting students through the verification process, providing robust college-going programming, and increasing postsecondary access.
Program Goal	Increase the number of students completing a student aid application before graduation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of students completing the student aid application before graduation. Increase the number of students enrolling in postsecondary education after high school graduation.
Types of Services Offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Aid and Paying for College: Programming focused on supporting graduating seniors in accessing and understanding postsecondary costs, FAFSA/CASFA completion, financial aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Aid and Paying for College: Programming focused on supporting graduating seniors in accessing and understanding postsecondary costs, FAFSA/CASFA completion, financial aid

	Option 1: Supplemental Funding Application Completion Strategies	Option 2: Pre-Collegiate Program College-Going Support
	<p>verification, the full range of financial aid options, and locating resources for public and private scholarships to supplement federal student aid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver Support Network Engagement: Programming to enhance the student support network, such as caregiver and guardian engagement in FAFSA/CASFA completion and awareness and knowledge of financial aid, postsecondary costs, postsecondary options, and college-going support. 	<p>verification, the full range of financial aid options, and locating resources for public and private scholarships to supplement federal student aid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Success and Student Support: Programming focused on navigating barriers, academic hurdles, and social/familial/personal concerns that can impact academic success and graduation. • Postsecondary Process and Exploration: Support in completing applications, essay preparation, transcript submission, and other tasks associated with the application process, as well as opportunities to explore institutions directly and indirectly through websites, college fairs, college visits, on-campus summer programs, etc.

Source: Colorado Department of Higher Education

Legislative Reporting Requirements

HB21- 1330 required that on or before August 1, and immediately following the completion of a school year in which a local education provider receives a grant through the grant program, local education providers must submit to the board a report specifying how the local education provider used the

grant money to increase the student aid application completion rate and whether and to what degree the student aid application completion rate increased above the completion rate for the preceding school year. In addition, the department must submit a report summarizing the reports received by the grantees; this report fulfills those requirements.

Program Progress

As of 2025-2026, the program supported seven grantees and 11 high schools, as illustrated in Table 2 below. All remaining funds were disbursed during the 2025-2026 fiscal year, totaling \$2.2 million, and serving more than 9,600 students through June 30, 2026. While the Better FAFSA rollout was soft-launched on December 31, 2023 for the 2024–25 academic year, though full, reliable access and processing faced ongoing delays into early 2024. The application redesign originated from the FAFSA Simplification Act passed by Congress in December 2020 and contributed to lower completion rates in 2023-2024, over the course of the program grantees have significantly improved their FAFSA completion efforts. A breakdown of FAFSA completion rates before and after Fund My Future implementation for each organization is presented in Tables 7 and 8.

The Fund My Future program and funding concluded in June 2026. Throughout the final program year, efforts focused on program closeout activities, including preparing comprehensive financial and narrative documentation. In addition, emphasis was placed on supporting grantees in developing strategies to ensure organizational and programmatic sustainability beyond the grant period.

Program Data

This section contains data that meets the legislative reporting requirements. The Local Education Provider submits the data through annual reporting.

Grant Awards, Disbursement and Spend

Table 2 provides an overview of the Fund My Future program, listing all participating grantees, their affiliated high schools, the specific program model, program launch dates and total awards received. The table highlights the staggered program launch dates due to a rolling application deadline, ranging from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023. It also shows the total funding allocated to each grantee, combining all funding sources. All program funding concluded on June 30, 2026.

Table 2. Fund My Future Grant Awards

Grantee	High School(s) Served	Program Type	Program Launch	Total Award
Adams 14 School District	Adams City High School	Pre-Collegiate	Fall 2022	\$400,000
Animas High School	Animas High School	Supplemental	Fall 2023	\$75,000
Atlas Preparatory School	Atlas Preparatory School	Pre-Collegiate	Fall 2023	\$225,000
Colorado High School Charter -Globeville Elyria Swansea (GES)	CHSC GES	Pre-Collegiate	Fall 2022	\$300,000
Colorado High School Charter -Osage	CHSC Osage	Pre-Collegiate	Fall 2022	\$300,000
Harrison School District 2	Harrison High School Sierra High School Aspire Online High School Career Readiness Academy	Pre-Collegiate	Fall 2023	\$300,000
Westminster Public Schools	Westminster High School Hidden Lake High School	Pre-Collegiate	Spring 2023	\$600,000
Total				\$2,200,000

Source: Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, Fund My Future Award Data

Note: All numbers rounded to the nearest dollar

Funding Sources

Table 3 provides more detail regarding the specific funding sources. Note that the GEER II funds had a fund expiration date of September 2023, and the CWDC funds were exhausted in FY25. Finally, Table 4 details the total program disbursement from COSI to the grantee and spending through program closeout on June 30, 2026.

Table 3. Fund My Future Funding Stream Breakdown

Grantee	GEER II Funds EXP: 9/1/2023	CWDC Funds EXP: 12/1/2024	SLFRF Funds EXP: 12/31/2026	COSI Funds EXP: 6/30/2026	State Funds EXP 6/30/2026
Adams 14 School District	\$106,867	\$25,000	\$68,133	\$105,633	\$94,368
Animas High School	\$5,556	N/A	\$31,944	N/A	\$37,500
Atlas Preparatory School	N/A	\$75,000	N/A	N/A	\$150,000
Colorado High School Charter- GES	\$58,056	N/A	\$91,944	N/A	\$150,000
Colorado High School Charter- Osage	\$55,168	N/A	\$94,832	N/A	\$150,000
Harrison School District 2	N/A	N/A	\$100,000	N/A	\$200,000
Westminster Public Schools	\$124,988	\$150,000	\$25,012	N/A	\$300,000
Total	\$350,635	\$250,000.00	\$411,864	\$105,632	\$1,081,868

Source: Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, Fund My Future Award Data

Note: All numbers rounded to the nearest dollar

Table 4. Fund My Future Program Disbursements and Expenditures

Grantee	Total Disbursed	Total Spent
Adams 14 School District	\$400,001	\$400,001
Animas High School	\$75,000	\$75,000
Atlas Preparatory School	\$225,000	\$225,000
Colorado High School Charter-GES	\$300,000	\$300,000
Colorado High School Charter-Osage	\$300,00	\$300,000
Harrison School District 2	\$300,000	\$286,331
Westminster Public Schools	\$600,000	\$600,00
Total	\$2,200,001	\$2,186,331

Source: COSI Fund My Future Annual Reporting, 2022-2023 through 2025-2026

Note: All numbers rounded to the nearest dollar

Students Served

Table 5 presents the cumulative number of students served by the Fund My Future program in grades 9-12 and the cumulative number of seniors served, spanning the 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026 academic years. It highlights the growth in student participation between the four years, with grantees who did not launch their programs until Fall 2023 naturally having no data for the 2022-2023 academic year. As detailed in the program categories table, the grantees provide services focused on financial aid, postsecondary costs, and the college application process while also addressing academic and personal challenges that may hinder students' success.

Table 5. Fund My Future Students Served

Grantee	22-23 Cumulative Students Served	23-24 Cumulative Students Served	24-25 Cumulative Students Served	25-26 Cumulative Students Served
Adams 14 School District	1,376 24% Seniors	2,030 33% Seniors	2,340 44% Seniors	2,650 50% Seniors
Animas High School	N/A	177 27% Seniors	427 26% Seniors	589 28% Seniors
Atlas Preparatory School	N/A	483 20% Seniors	1,011 22% Seniors	1,484 22% Seniors
Colorado High School Charter-GES	177 21% Seniors	266 45% Seniors	412 56% Seniors	525 61% Seniors
Colorado High School Charter-Osage	204 15% Seniors	277 30% Seniors	377 43% Seniors	454 52% Seniors
Harrison School District 2	N/A	807 37% Seniors	1,482 44% Seniors	2,036 53% Seniors
Westminster Public Schools	141 87% Seniors	670 80% Seniors	1,288 78% Seniors	1,868 84% Seniors
Total Students	1,898	4,710	7,337	9,606

Source: COSI Fund My Future 22-23 through 25-26 Annual Reporting

FAFSA Completion

Tables 6 and 7 compare FAFSA completion rates among participating Fund My Future grantees against their program baselines (completion rate prior to implementation). Table 6 presents completion rates for programs that began participating in Fund My Future during the 2022-2023 academic year, while Table 7 presents programs that began implementation in 2023-2024 due to the rolling deadline. Among the 2022-23 cohort, FAFSA completion rates increased during the 2022-23 application cycle before declining in 2023-24, a trend largely attributed to the delayed rollout of the Better FAFSA.

Despite this disruption, participating schools in both cohorts reported a 61% FAFSA completion rate in 2025-2026. Compared to program baseline rates, schools demonstrated gains ranging from 10 to 45 percentage points, depending on the school.

Each table includes the percentage point change between baseline and final completion rates, illustrating program growth over time. This information is based on completion data pulled from [Federal Student Aid, FAFSA Completion by High School](#). While FAFSA completion rates increased statewide to 51.4% in 2025-2026, during this same period, participating Fund My Future schools achieved a 61% completion rate, suggesting the program contributed to improvements beyond broader statewide trends.

Table 6: FAFSA Completion for Programs with a 2022-2023 Fund My Future Launch

Grantee	Baseline 2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Percentage Point Change
Adams City High School	42%	62%	37%	45%	62%	+20%
Colorado High School Charter-GES	28%	26%	36%	15%	61%	+33%
Colorado High School Charter-Osage	37%	50%	30%	48%	48%	+11%
Westminster High School	40%	47%	43%	50%	55%	+15%
Hidden Lake High School	8%	22%	16%	26%	53%	+45%

Source: [Federal Student Aid, FAFSA Completion by High School](#)

Table 7: FAFSA Completion for Programs with a 2023-2024 Fund My Future Launch

Grantee	Baseline 2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Percentage Point Change
Animas High School	62%	74%	90%	78%	+16%
Atlas Preparatory School	51%	49%	64%	79%	+28%
Harrison High School	50%	41%	63%	70%	+20%
Sierra High School	37%	27%	58%	63%	+26%
Career Readiness Academy	15%	17%	26%	49%	+34%
Aspire Online Academy	40%	50%	55%	50%	+10%

Source: [Federal Student Aid, FAFSA Completion by High School](#)

Conclusion

The Fund My Future program has made meaningful progress in helping Colorado students access the financial resources and support needed to pursue postsecondary education. Over the course of the program, Fund My Future awarded a total of \$2.2 million to seven grantees serving 11 high schools across the state. As of June 30, 2026, more than 9,600 students have been served through programming focused on financial aid awareness, FAFSA application completion, academic support, and postsecondary preparation.

While the delayed rollout of the Better FAFSA during the 2023-2024 academic year created significant challenges and contributed to temporary declines in completion rates, participating grantees adapted

their outreach and support strategies to respond to changing circumstances. As implementation stabilized, schools demonstrated strong recovery and continued progress. By 2025-2026, the final year of the program, grantees achieved a 10-45 percentage point completion rate increase in comparison to program baseline rates established prior to program implementation.

Overall, the program was deemed successful in meeting its primary goals of increasing FAFSA completion rates and expanding access to financial aid support services for Colorado students. Success was measured through annual financial and narrative reporting, student participation data, the number of students served, and FAFSA completion outcomes compared to baseline rates. Key practices that supported successful implementation included annual reporting, consistent monitoring of FAFSA completion data, data-driven program adjustments, targeted student and family support services, and ongoing technical assistance and sustainability planning provided by COSI.

The Fund My Future program concluded on June 30, 2026. During the final year of the program, efforts were focused on closeout activities, including comprehensive financial and narrative reporting. The program model demonstrated that targeted student support, family engagement, dedicated staffing, and ongoing data monitoring can effectively increase FAFSA/CASFA completion and support postsecondary access. Many grantees identified family engagement as a particularly valuable strategy and emphasized the importance of providing families with timely information and individualized support throughout the financial aid process.