



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative awards \$900,000 to three collective impact initiative grantees

DENVER – Sept. 12, 2016: The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative will award three grantees more than \$900,000 in Collective Impact Initiative Grants that provide resources for community groups to work together to reduce the attainment gap. A kickoff event will be held Thursday, Sept. 15 in Salida. Lumina Foundation joined the Scholarship Initiative in this effort, committing an additional \$200,000 for technical assistance.

The three organizations to receive these grants are: The American Indian Measurable Success Initiative, Aurora Postsecondary Pipeline and Pueblo Unites for Education to Build Life Opportunities. These three grantees were selected by the Scholarship Initiative board from 26 submissions and 10 finalists reflecting the participation of more than 100 entities throughout the state. The grantees will receive \$150,000 each in annual awards for two years.

“Closing the attainment gap is an economic imperative for Colorado, particularly since we know that, by 2020, nearly 75 percent of jobs in Colorado will require postsecondary experience or credential,” said Shelley Banker, Deputy Director, Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative. “Over the past year, the department has held meetings around the topic of closing the attainment gap in Colorado, developed very intentional department-wide goals, and received substantial investments from Lumina Foundation to carry this work forward.”

WHO: Collective Impact Initiative Grantees, national experts, which include: Jack Hess, executive director, Institute for Coalition Building; John Burnett, chief executive officer, Institute for Coalition Building; Brandy Johnson, executive director and founder of the Michigan College Access Network; Ken Weil, principal, Social Impact Solutions, Eddie Koen, HCM Strategists serving as Colorado state policy adviser of Lumina Foundation's Strategy Labs, Christina Sedney, project coordinator at Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and Luis Colon, Colorado Commission on Higher Education

WHAT: Kick-off event to recognize collective impact initiative grant awardees

WHEN: Thursday, Sept. 15, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WHERE: Hampton Inn & Suites Salida, 785 E. Highway 50, Salida, CO 81201

About the Grantees

The American Indian Measurable Success Initiative

- **Participants:** Colorado Education Initiative, San Juan BOCES, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Tribe, Durango School District, Ignacio School District, Montezuma-Cortez School District, Fort Lewis College, Southwestern Colorado Community College, Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado
- **Description:** The objective of the American Indian Measurable Success Initiative is to dramatically reduce the Native American college attainment gap in the rural school districts of Southwest Colorado. This is accomplished through the alignment of mutually reinforcing activities focused on personalizing

rigorous and relevant secondary education to Native American high school students in order to support their pursuit of postsecondary degrees and credentials.

Aurora Postsecondary Pipeline

- **Participants:** Goodwill Industries of Denver, Aurora Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools Foundation, Community College of Aurora, Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- **Description:** Aurora Post-Secondary Pipeline is committed to ensuring that more low-income and minority Aurora students pursue and earn postsecondary credentials. The group works with students, community partners, teachers, counselors, parents, and other stakeholders to establish and support a clear and focused pipeline to increase high school persistence and graduation rates, as well as college enrollment and persistence rates for Aurora’s most at-risk youth.

Pueblo Unites for Education to Build Life Opportunities

- **Participants:** Colorado State University – Pueblo, Boys and Girls Club of Pueblo County, Pueblo City Schools (60), Catholic Charities, Pueblo Community College, Crossroads Turning Point, Inc., Pueblo County School District (70), Pueblo Triple Aim Corporation, South Central BOCES, Summit Education Group, Teach for America – Colorado, Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, National Center for School Engagement, Latino Chamber of Commerce, Pueblo Economic Development, Pueblo County Dept. of Social Services, Corporation, Inc. (PEDCO), Pueblo Workforce Center, Pueblo City/County Library District
- **Description:** Pueblo Unites for Education to Build Life Opportunities establishes a network of partners around the common agenda of increasing the number of citizens ready to access and complete postsecondary credentials. The target populations for this grant work are 1) minority students (Hispanic, Black/African American, Native American, and mixed-race) and 2) low-income students (measured either by free and reduced lunch status in high school or Pell grant eligibility in college).

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 Department 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.

About Lumina Foundation:

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with degrees, certificates and other high-quality credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina’s outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an equitable, accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.

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