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Colorado's FAFSA Completion Project receives additional support from The Kresge Foundation

The \$175,000 grant will provide vital revisions to the model and expand FAFSA support to additional states

DENVER – March 22, 2017: The Colorado Department of Higher Education announced today an extension grant from The Kresge Foundation to continue its work on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Completion Project.

The Colorado project consists of a web tool that securely provides information to school counselors about students who have not yet completed a FAFSA. Colorado's model has been adopted by 12 other states; 23 in total are a part of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) that has drawn national attention for its effectiveness in increasing college enrollment among low-income students. Once students complete the FAFSA, they become aware of federal, state and institutional aid that can make college more affordable. Filling out the FAFSA has been shown to be a strong predictor of college enrollment.

"This support from The Kresge Foundation will help us go much further with the tool," said Beth Bean, chief research officer for the department. "The grant includes technical support services to states already using the tool and those considering adopting Colorado's model; the grant will also allow an additional year of updates and support the continuation of the national PLC where we share best practices, address challenges and propose solutions."

The project received its first Kresge Foundation grant for \$600,000 in 2014. The 2017 grant extends through October 2018, allowing an estimated additional 5-10 states to join the initiative. It also aligns to The Kresge Foundation's strategy of *pathway to and through college* by specifically helping underrepresented students across the nation.

"We are honored to provide this additional support to the Colorado Department of Higher Education, a recognized leader in the field, to make FAFSA data available and actionable in more states and more schools across the country," said Bethany Miller, a program officer on the education team at Kresge. "With the costs of higher education as a top concern of so many families and students, FAFSA completion is a critical step in unlocking federal and state aid and in ensuring students can pursue their postsecondary dreams."

Colorado currently has 104 school districts and five designated entities using the Colorado tool. FAFSA completion last year reached 47 percent.

For more on the FAFSA Completion Project, visit <https://fafsa.highered.colorado.gov/>.

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