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Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative announces \$7.5 million available in its current round of matching scholarships grant program

DENVER, Oct. 15, 2018 – The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) announced today the availability of \$7.5 million for the 2018-2019 round of matching student scholarship grants.

The purpose of the matching student scholarship grants are to solicit applications from eligible counties, institutions of higher education and community workforce programs to increase the amount of scholarship giving available for postsecondary students. The scholarships reach students for whom college seems out-of-reach—who can't afford a degree but also need access to support to persist and graduate. The \$7.5 million is awarded to programs across the state that match the awarded funds dollar-for-dollar.

“Communities rally around COSI because it makes a difference locally,” said Dan Baer, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. “Our internal data show the vast majority of COSI students enrolled in COSI Community Partner Program grant programming — 90 percent — persist in their studies, a 12 percent increase compared to peers of similar demographic groups. Students receiving COSI scholarships perform even better: 94 percent persist, outpacing their non-COSI counterparts by 21 percent. Thanks to the tireless efforts of COSI grantees, thousands of Colorado students have had the support to reach higher and pursue their dreams.”

In 2017-2018, the program set out to leverage \$7.5 million in state funds to generate \$15 million in new scholarship funds for Colorado students. Over the past year, 90 percent of those funds were awarded as a 1:1 match challenge to communities across the state. These funds have the potential to impact more than 5,100 students over the next few years as they progress toward degree and certificate completion.

Colorado's public institutions of higher education, local municipalities, and workforce development programs are eligible to [apply for the matching grants](#). The Scholarship Initiative will accept applications on a rolling basis and expects to award its first round of grants for the year in November 2018.

About the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship initiative

The [Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative](#) (COSI) 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 COSI funds programs that will help prepare students for postsecondary education, as well as support them through completion. To increase affordability, COSI will provide tuition support via matching funds for community scholarships.

About the Colorado Department of Higher Education

The [Colorado Department of Higher Education](#) (CDHE) advocates, develops policies and supports students to maximize higher education opportunities for all. CDHE is guided by the belief that a credential beyond a high school diploma—whether a certificate, two-year or four-year degree—generates opportunity for the individual, the economy and society as a whole. There are many pathways to higher education that provide the skills, training and knowledge necessary for success in a rapidly evolving economy, and those paths should be available to every student in Colorado.

In its statewide plan, [Colorado Rises](#), CDHE sets a goal of reaching 66 percent educational attainment by 2025 and outlines four strategies to get there: increase credential completion, erase equity gaps, improve student success and invest in affordability and innovation.

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