



COLORADO

**Department of
Higher Education**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Jared Polis announces Colorado colleges and universities will again waive applications fees on October 15

Institutions received about 23,000 applications in last year's campaign

DENVER – Sept. 20, 2019: –To encourage more Coloradans to continue their education, Gov. Jared Polis announced today that all 32 public colleges and universities in Colorado and several private institutions will allow students to apply for free on Tuesday, October 15 as part of the second [Colorado Free Application Day](#). [View Gov. Polis' video announcement.](#)

The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) has posted admissions application and fee waiver information for each institution at highered.colorado.gov/FreeAppDayCO.html. The day caps off [Colorado Applies Month](#), a four-week, statewide campaign that encourages high school seniors to submit an application to a higher education program and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

“We know applying to college or technical school can feel daunting for students, especially those who are the first in their family to go on to higher education,” said Gov. Jared Polis. “By eliminating this cost barrier, we believe more Coloradans will seize the opportunity to reach higher and get the education and training they need to thrive in today’s workforce.”

The statewide push is designed to increase Colorado’s stagnant postsecondary-going and FAFSA completion rates. Despite being one of the most educated states in the country, Colorado sends just 56 percent of its high school seniors to a college, university or certificate program, and just 50 percent of students submit a FAFSA application—a key indicator of student success.

“Colorado Free Application Day sends the message that every student matters,” said Dr. Angie Paccione, executive director of CDHE. “Whatever your interests—from engineering to education to outdoor recreation—there’s a program in Colorado that will unlock your ideas and activate your potential.”

During last year’s campaign, students turned in nearly 23,000 applications, half of which came from students of color and a third from first-generation students. Statewide, application submissions were up 12 percent compared to the same timeframe in 2017.

Colorado Free Application Day aims to improve access to further education and training, which is becoming increasingly critical in the state’s rapidly-changing economy. Research from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce shows that by 2020 nearly 75 percent of jobs in Colorado will require some education beyond high school, yet only 56.9 percent of the adult population in Colorado has earned a degree or certificate.

In response to these workforce demands, the Colorado Department of Higher Education set a goal of reaching 66 percent attainment by 2025 in the statewide plan for higher education, [Colorado Rises](#). Increasing postsecondary enrollment and reducing equity gaps—the racial disparities in educational attainment—are priority strategies to improve access and reduce costs for Coloradans.

For more information, visit the [Colorado Free Application Day](#) and [Colorado Applies Month](#) webpages.

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