



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Colorado Scholarship Initiative announces third year of \$7 million matching scholarships grant program**

DENVER, Oct. 4, 2017 – The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) announced today the availability of another \$7 million to fund matching student scholarships.

The \$7 million is awarded to programs across the state that match the awarded funds dollar-for-dollar. The local scholarship programs must also provide student services to help recipients succeed in college.

With significant investments in student support programs and scholarships throughout the state, COSI has made headway toward its goal of boosting postsecondary completion and helping make college more affordable. Including the matches, 102 grants totaling \$26.9 million will provide tuition assistance to 51 counties, 29 institutions of higher education and 15 workforce programs over the next four years. In the 2016-2017 academic year alone, more than 4,600 scholarships were disbursed drawing from these funds.

“COSI grantees are on the front lines generously and effectively supporting our students as they prepare for a rapidly changing economy,” said Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. “By 2020, nearly three in four jobs in Colorado will require education and training beyond high school, making our state’s demand for college-educated adults the fifth highest in the nation. Programs like COSI are critical to put college in reach for all students.”

At the county level, the matching-grant scholarship programs must be approved by the county commissioners, and institution-level scholarship programs must be approved by school governing boards. The local scholarship programs must distribute the scholarships to Colorado students who attend Colorado public institutions of higher education.

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 2017.

#### **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.

#### **About the Colorado Department of Higher Education**

The [Colorado Department of Higher Education](#) (CDHE) develops policies, conducts research and helps coordinate stakeholders in support of Colorado’s public colleges and universities. 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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