



COLORADO

**Department of
Higher Education**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative releases \$1.5 million for support services aimed at workers displaced by COVID-19

Grant awards could contribute 1,500 new degrees or credentials to Colorado economy by 2022

DENVER – May 5, 2020: Today, the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) announced the availability of up to \$750,000 annually in grants to help workers displaced by COVID-19 enroll in certification and degree programs that align with Colorado Top Jobs, identified in the [Talent Pipeline Report](#), so they can complete their credential within the next two years.

Public higher education institutions, community partners and workforce centers are encouraged to apply for the funds through a request for proposal grant process that will award \$75,000 annually per grant. Awards will go to student supports which improve and enhance local community-based service networks and increase enrollment and retention in public postsecondary institutions through proactive advising, wraparound support, and other support services.

“We are excited for this innovative opportunity to leverage COSI as a way to partner with institutions and workforce centers and identify new or reengaged students who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19,” said Dr. Angie Paccione, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. “These grants allow displaced workers to upskill while our economy is in recovery so upon completion of gaining that credential or degree, they are ready to reenter the workforce with new knowledge and expertise.”

“COSI is focused on expanding supportive services and taking our proven support models on the road,” said Dr. Cynthia Armendariz, director of COSI. “With months of research and development, we were already planning this type of intervention before COVID-19 hit. Our team is excited to pivot and immediately respond to community need and support our state.”

Interested applicants can review grant eligibility and application materials at <https://bit.ly/3d7HgZx>. Additionally, COSI will host two webinars for interested applicants:

- Wednesday, May 6 at 3:30 p.m. - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83349649684>
- Thursday, May 7 at 9 a.m. - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87527978282>

About the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative:

The [Colorado Opportunity 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, COSI funds programs that will help prepare students for postsecondary education, as well as support them through completion. To increase affordability, COSI provides matching funds for community scholarships.

About the Colorado Department of Higher Education

Working with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, we support students, advocate and develop policies to maximize higher education opportunities for all. The Department believes every Coloradan should

have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities. Read the CDHE master plan [Colorado Rises](#).