



**COL**  
Department of  
Higher Education

Please support HB18-1414,  
**Higher Education Student Emergency Assistance Grant.**

*-Establishing a program to assist students with unforeseen financial emergencies to encourage completion of their postsecondary program-*

The Emergency Completion and Retention Grant Program is part of the Department of Higher Education's 2018 legislative agenda and would **create a grant program that assists students with financial emergencies that could force withdrawal from their education**. Colorado's current financial aid programs are designed to reduce a student's cost of attendance and institutions package all their aid at the beginning of the semester. However, students cannot plan for emergencies and most institutions do not have the flexibility to address one-off financial issues that may impede a student's ability to stay in school or complete. **In light of limited resources, this approach is targeted to assist the state in supporting increased credentials at a limited cost.**

Specifically, the program would provide grants of up to \$1,500 per student for students pursuing their first credential who need funds to pay for an emergency event. To be eligible students will be required to meet certain guidelines and priority will be given to low-income students who do not have other financial resources.

### Why is This Fix Needed?

Financial obstacles contribute to students failing to continue and/or complete their degree or credential. Low income, minority, and working students are most impacted by unforeseen emergencies as they are often unable to rely on parents or family for additional support. **A recent study cites that 60% of the students who left college without graduating felt solely responsibility for paying for college and that a lack of financial support from other sources impacted their ability to graduate.**

Traditional financial aid programs typically only cover a student's cost of attendance (COA) - which includes tuition, living expenses, and transportation - but does not take into account unforeseen financial needs. This gap in assistance can force students to stop-out or withdrawal from their education, while still having to repay loans. Emergency aid is a demonstrated way to have an impact on retention and completion at a small cost. Georgia State University reports having impacted 2,600 students with their aid program, and in 2012-13, approximately 70% of the seniors targeted completed within two semesters.<sup>1</sup> By providing funding when students need it most to stay enrolled this grant program will help increase credential completion and support students at a limited cost.

The Department of Higher Education urges your support for program.



For more information, please contact Tyler Mounsey, Legislative Liaison for the Colorado Department of Higher Education, at (202) 270-8607 or [Tyler.Mounsey@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:Tyler.Mounsey@dhe.state.co.us)

<sup>1</sup> [http://hcmstrategists.com/maximizingresources/images/Tuition\\_Paper.pdf](http://hcmstrategists.com/maximizingresources/images/Tuition_Paper.pdf)

