



# COLORADO

## **SB23-205: Universal High School Scholarship Program**

*Senators Bridges & Lundeen / Representatives Martinez & Wilson*

### **The Challenge:**

Colorado has two jobs open for every unemployed person, yet:

- 91% of Tier 1 Top Jobs and 70% of Tier 2 Top Jobs require postsecondary education or training beyond a high school diploma.
- Only half of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education the fall after graduation in 2020, a 10% decline from 2019.
- Postsecondary declines preceded the pandemic and apply across nearly all ethnic groups, in cities and rural areas alike.

### **The Universal Scholarship Program Purpose:**

The scholarship will support participants' pathway to a strong career by:

- Reducing financial barriers to a wide selection of postsecondary opportunities;
- Connecting graduating seniors to college and career planning support; and
- Elevating pathways to Colorado's most in-demand careers, both statewide and by region.

### **Eligibility:**

Scholarship recipients will be able to use funds for postsecondary education or workforce training opportunities, including apprenticeships, certificates, on-the-job training, and 2- and 4-year degrees.

#### *Student Eligibility:*

- Graduated from a CO high school or earned a high school equivalency credential in the 2023-2024 academic year;
- Colorado resident; and
- Has not received CO income-based scholarship.

#### *Provider Eligibility:*

- 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education;
- Providers included in the Eligible Training Provider List;
- Providers included in the Colorado State Apprenticeship Resource Directory; and
- Providers identified by an Opportunity Now regional entity and approved by OEDIT.

### **Implementation and Reporting:**

Each scholarship award is for up to \$1,500.

- Scholarship money is distributed to the service provider for use by the student for tuition, fees, books, and equipment.
- OEDIT is directed to establish guidelines regarding financial aid.

Each service provider that receives program scholarship funds shall report each student's enrollment status to OEDIT. In its annual report, OEDIT will provide:

- Number of scholarships provided;
- List of service providers participating;
- List of particular pathways chosen; and
- Any information on employment outcomes.