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Colorado Rises with College In Colorado

By 2020, nearly three in four jobs will require education beyond high school. That's why the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) has set a statewide goal of reaching 66 percent attainment by 2025 in [*Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development*](#). Since the 2012 Colorado Competes master plan first articulated the goal of 66 percent, the state rose from 53.5 to 56.2 percent attainment—we can't just stay the course, we need to accelerate our progress.

The Department outlined four key strategies to meet this mark, and College In Colorado directly supports these efforts.

1. Increase Credential Completion

Higher education includes all learning beyond high school, from certificate programs to doctoral degrees. CIC offers many tools and activities that help learners of all ages chart a path to their education, training and career goals. Our Career Cluster survey, for example, identifies learners' potential industry match, and our signature College Application Tool matches a student to a college or university where they'll thrive.

To earn any credential, you first have to enroll. Many learners don't even make the attempt. CIC helps all Coloradans understand that there's a place for them in postsecondary learning. These tools are especially important for retention and completion: studies show that students who specify a degree in their first year of college are more likely to complete it. By encouraging learners to explore options before they start their program, we boost chances for students to graduate on time.

2. Erase Equity Gaps

A free and comprehensive resource, CIC helps all students—regardless of their zip code or age—envision their future and seize educational opportunities. We work with counselors and



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other professionals to implement individual career and academic plans to ensure all learners understand and prepare for the many pathways ahead of them. This is crucial for Colorado's largest equity populations—African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians—who enroll in college at disproportionately lower rates.

3. Improve Student Success

Equity and access challenges start long before students arrive on campus. That's why CIC offers many free resources—from test preparation to academic planning to financial aid planning—so learners make informed choices and gain the confidence that they can succeed in higher education.

4. Invest in Affordability and Innovation

Too many Colorado students end up with debt and no degree. To help students bridge the gap, CIC offers one of the most robust online financial education programs in the state, helping students make smarter decisions around grants, loans and tuition. Our Scholarship Finder databases feature more than three million scholarships totaling \$18 billion in awards, which are customizable to learners' unique interests and qualifications. Plus, students can opt in to alerts and reminders so they never miss out on an opportunity.

We also know that students and adult learners face challenges outside the classroom. Looking to the future, College In Colorado is leading a groundbreaking, multi-agency collaboration that aims to consolidate and enhance the best tools and resources for career, education and training into one exploration and planning platform. Not only will the final product save agencies time and money, it will help more Coloradans plan for their future in a comprehensive way.