First Regular Session Seventy-fourth General Assembly STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 23-0943.01 Conrad Imel x2313

SENATE BILL 23-205

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Bridges and Lundeen,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Martinez and Wilson,

Senate Committees

Education

House Committees

	A BILL FOR AN ACT
101	CONCERNING A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR COLORADO HIGH
102	SCHOOL GRADUATES THAT PRIORITIZES AWARDS FOR STUDENTS
103	PURSUING HIGH-PRIORITY POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS.

Bill Summary

A DILL EOD AN ACT

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill establishes the universal high school scholarship program (program) in the office of economic development (office) to provide scholarships for the 2024-25 academic year to students who pursue an in-demand or high-priority postsecondary pathway, including degrees, certificates, and registered apprenticeships, with a provider on the eligible

training provider lists disseminated by the department of labor and employment, a provider in the Colorado state apprenticeship resource directory, a public or private institution of higher education operating in Colorado, or an organization approved by the office (service providers).

The office, or a vendor contracted by the office, administers the program. The office shall develop policies and procedures necessary to administer the program.

A student is eligible for the program if the student graduated from a Colorado high school or was awarded a high school equivalency credential during the 2023-24 academic year; completes the free application for federal student aid or the Colorado application for state financial aid; and did not receive a grant from the Colorado opportunity scholarship initiative.

Scholarships are awarded in the following priority: To all eligible students who intend to enroll at a service provider to pursue an in-demand or high-priority postsecondary pathway, then to other eligible students who intend to enroll at a service provider. 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, and books.

The bill requires the office to contract with vendors to provide postsecondary and career advising at schools identified by the office.

The bill requires the general assembly to appropriate \$25 million for the program.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

- (a) Colorado has one of the most talented workforces in the country, but there are not enough workers with the skills and training needed for jobs vacant now or in the future. There are currently two available jobs for every unemployed person in the state.
- (b) Many available jobs in Colorado require a postsecondary education and training, but there are significant declines in high school graduates taking advantage of postsecondary education and training programs, with a ten percent decline from the 2019-20 academic year to the 2020-21 academic year;

-2- SB23-205

(c) To begin to address the decline in participation in postsecondary education, Colorado must invest in homegrown talent, ensure the skills that Coloradans are being trained in match those that our industry partners require, and establish a deeper connection between talent development and industry needs. Colorado must prioritize the modernization of education to be more responsive to our business needs, as Colorado's industry partners are at the center of co-creating talent with education through apprenticeship and on-the-job training to accelerate skill development and secure in-demand skills.

- (d) In recent years, Colorado has seen innovative partnerships between our educational institutions and employers that have led to quality career pathways for Colorado workers, and through Opportunity Now Colorado, the state is supporting these pathways at a regional level to meet the unique economic needs of every Colorado community;
- (e) The universal high school scholarship program will build on prior initiatives to support recent graduates and equivalent completers to gain the skills needed to succeed in Colorado's high-demand career pathways. It will strengthen Colorado's workforce by helping students to identify and execute the postsecondary path that is right for them.
- (f) The universal high school scholarship program will support all Coloradans to build and follow through on a postsecondary plan 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 regionally.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** part 5 to article 48.5 of title 24 as follows:

-3- SB23-205

1	PART 5
2	UNIVERSAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
3	24-48.5-501. Definitions. As used in this part 5, unless the
4	CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:
5	(1) "ELIGIBLE STUDENT" MEANS A STUDENT WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR
6	A SCHOLARSHIP AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-48.5-502 (4).
7	(2) "In-demand or high-priority postsecondary pathways"
8	MEANS THE POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS IDENTIFIED BY THE OFFICE
9	PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-48.5-502 (2)(b).
10	(3) "Office" means the Colorado office of economic
11	DEVELOPMENT CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-101.
12	(4) "Program" means the universal high school
13	SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-502.
14	(5) "REGIONAL ENTITY" MEANS AN ENTITY THAT RECEIVES A
15	GRANT PURSUANT TO THE REGIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
16	GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIBED IN PART 4 OF THIS ARTICLE 48.5.
17	(6) "REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP" MEANS AN APPRENTICESHIP
18	REGISTERED WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OR THE
19	STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 8-15.7-102.
20	(7) "SERVICE PROVIDER" MEANS A PROVIDER INCLUDED IN THE
21	ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LISTS DISSEMINATED BY THE DEPARTMENT
22	OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 8-83-225 (1)(c), A
23	PROVIDER INCLUDED IN THE COLORADO STATE APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE
24	DIRECTORY CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 8-83-308, A PUBLIC OR
25	PRIVATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OPERATING IN COLORADO,
26	OR AN ENTITY APPROVED AS A SERVICE PROVIDER PURSUANT TO SECTION
27	24_48 5_502 (2)(c)

-4- SB23-205

1	24-48.5-502. Universal high school scholarship program -
2	established - administration - funding - eligibility. (1) (a) THERE IS
3	ESTABLISHED IN THE OFFICE THE UNIVERSAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP
4	PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS THAT OFFSET A STUDENT'S COSTS
5	ASSOCIATED WITH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, A REGISTERED
6	APPRENTICESHIP, OR TRAINING OR EDUCATION RELATED TO AN IN-DEMAND
7	OR HIGH-PRIORITY POSTSECONDARY PATHWAY, AT A SERVICE PROVIDER.
8	(b) The office shall administer the program or may
9	CONTRACT WITH ONE OR MORE VENDORS TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.
10	THE OFFICE OR VENDOR SHALL:
11	(I) MANAGE A STATEWIDE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS
12	AND ALL RELATED FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING SCREENING FOR STUDENT
13	ELIGIBILITY;
14	(II) Award scholarships for the $2024-25$ academic year to
15	ELIGIBLE STUDENTS AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-48.5-503 AND
16	DISTRIBUTE THE SCHOLARSHIP MONEY TO THE SERVICE PROVIDER THAT
17	HAS ENROLLED THE STUDENT FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OR
18	ACCEPTED THE STUDENT FOR TRAINING;
19	(III) MANAGE A STATEWIDE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN IN
20	PARTNERSHIP WITH REGIONAL ENTITIES TO ADVERTISE THE PROGRAM,
21	RECRUIT APPLICANTS, AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO STUDENTS
22	APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP OR NAVIGATING POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS;
23	(IV) VERIFY STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY COLLECTING A REPORT
24	FROM EACH SERVICE PROVIDER ON THE STATUS OF EVERY SCHOLARSHIP
25	RECIPIENT IN THE PROVIDER'S PROGRAM OF STUDY, WHICH MUST INCLUDE
26	WHETHER EACH STUDENT COMPLETED THE PROGRAM OF STUDY,
2.7	TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER SERVICE PROVIDER DROPPED OUT OF OR

-5- SB23-205

1	REMAINS ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM OF STUDY, OR HAS ANOTHER STATUS
2	IDENTIFIED BY THE OFFICE, AND ANY OTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED BY
3	THE OFFICE; AND
4	(V) AUDIT, OR CONTRACT WITH A VENDOR TO AUDIT, SERVICE
5	PROVIDERS TO ENSURE THAT SERVICE PROVIDERS COMPLY WITH ALL
6	PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS.
7	(2) (a) The office shall develop policies and procedures
8	NECESSARY TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM. THE POLICIES AND
9	PROCEDURES MUST INCLUDE:
10	(I) AN APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES, CRITERIA FOR
11	IDENTIFYING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AWARD
12	PRIORITIES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-48.5-503 (1)(a), AND A SCHEDULE
13	FOR AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS AND DISTRIBUTING SCHOLARSHIP MONEY;
14	(II) A LIST OF ENTITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE REGIONAL TALENT
15	DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIBED IN PART 4 OF THIS
16	ARTICLE 48.5 THAT THE OFFICE DETERMINES ARE SERVICE PROVIDERS
17	PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2)(c) OF THIS SECTION; AND
18	(III) A LIST OF IN-DEMAND OR HIGH-PRIORITY POSTSECONDARY
19	PATHWAYS.
20	(b) THE OFFICE SHALL IDENTIFY POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS THAT
21	ARE IN-DEMAND OR HIGH-PRIORITY, BOTH STATEWIDE AND IN SPECIFIC
22	REGIONS OF THE STATE. IN DETERMINING IN-DEMAND OR HIGH-PRIORITY
23	POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS, THE OFFICE SHALL CONSIDER THE TOP JOBS
24	LISTED IN THE MOST RECENT COLORADO TALENT REPORT PREPARED
25	PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-46.3-103 AND THE MOST RECENT VERSION OF
26	THE STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL TOP JOBS LIST PUBLISHED BY THE
2.7	COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

-6- SB23-205

1	(c) THE OFFICE SHALL ESTABLISH A PROCESS TO REVIEW AND
2	APPROVE AS SERVICE PROVIDERS ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE NOT A PUBLIC
3	OR PRIVATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OPERATING IN COLORADO
4	AND ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LISTS OR
5	THE COLORADO STATE APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE DIRECTORY. IN ORDER
6	TO BE APPROVED AS A SERVICE PROVIDER, AN ORGANIZATION MUST BE
7	IDENTIFIED BY A REGIONAL ENTITY AND OFFER PROGRAMS FOR IN-DEMAND
8	OR HIGH-PRIORITY POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS.
9	(3) (a) FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2023-24, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
10	SHALL APPROPRIATE TWENTY-FIVE MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE GENERAL
11	FUND FOR THE PROGRAM. ANY UNEXPENDED OR UNENCUMBERED MONEY
12	APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (3)(a) REMAINS
13	AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURE FOR THE SAME PURPOSE IN THE 2024-25
14	STATE FISCAL YEAR WITHOUT FURTHER APPROPRIATION. EXCEPT AS
15	OTHERWISE PERMITTED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3), THE OFFICE SHALL USE
16	THE MONEY FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS.
17	(b) THE OFFICE SHALL USE TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND
18	DOLLARS OF THE MONEY APPROPRIATED FOR THE PROGRAM FOR
19	POSTSECONDARY AND CAREER ADVISING AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION
20	24-48.5-504.
21	(c) The office may, on or before December 31, 2023, expend
22	MONEY FROM THE PROGRAM APPROPRIATION FOR THE DIRECT AND
23	INDIRECT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
24	PROGRAM; EXCEPT THAT EXPENDITURES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS
25	SHALL NOT EXCEED SIX PERCENT OF THE TOTAL APPROPRIATION. THE
26	OFFICE SHALL USE THE MONEY DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3)(c) THAT

WAS NOT SPENT ON ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31,

27

-7- SB23-205

1	2023, FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS.
2	(4) A STUDENT IS ELIGIBLE FOR A SCHOLARSHIP IF THE STUDENT:
3	(a) During the 2023-24 Academic Year, graduated from A
4	COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL OR WAS AWARDED A HIGH SCHOOL
5	EQUIVALENCY CREDENTIAL AWARDED BY THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT
6	OF EDUCATION;
7	(b) COMPLETES THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID
8	OR THE COLORADO APPLICATION FOR STATE FINANCIAL AID;
9	(c) DID NOT RECEIVE A GRANT OR SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO
10	PART 10 OF ARTICLE 3.3 OF TITLE 23 FOR THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR;
11	AND
12	(d) SUBMITS AN APPLICATION FOR A SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO
13	THE PROGRAM.
14	(5) (a) SCHOLARSHIP MONEY MAY ONLY BE USED AT A SERVICE
15	PROVIDER.
16	(b) A SERVICE PROVIDER SHALL COMPLY WITH THE PROGRAM
17	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND WITH ALL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
18	DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION. A SERVICE PROVIDER SHALL SUBMIT TO AN
19	AUDIT BY THE OFFICE OR VENDOR CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION
20	(1)(b) OF THIS SECTION.
21	(c) THE OFFICE, OR A VENDOR CONTRACTED TO ADMINISTER THE
22	PROGRAM, MAY REMOVE SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP IF
23	THE SERVICE PROVIDER IS DETERMINED TO BE OUT OF COMPLIANCE WITH
24	PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS.
25	24-48.5-503. Program scholarship award - selection criteria -
26	amount - use of award. (1) (a) THE OFFICE OR VENDOR SHALL ACCEPT
27	AND DEVIEW SCHOLADSHID ADDLICATIONS AND AWARD SCHOLADSHIDS IN

-8- SB23-205

1	ACCORDANCE WITH THE OFFICE'S PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.
2	THE OFFICE OR VENDOR SHALL AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS TO:
3	(I) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS WHO INTEND TO ENROLL OR TRAIN AT A
4	SERVICE PROVIDER TO PURSUE AN IN-DEMAND OR HIGH-PRIORITY
5	POSTSECONDARY PATHWAY, INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO INTEND TO
6	ENROLL FULL-TIME AND THOSE WHO INTEND TO ENROLL PART-TIME; AND
7	(II) AFTER AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS TO ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS
8	DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION, TO ELIGIBLE
9	STUDENTS WHO INTEND TO ENROLL OR TRAIN AT A SERVICE PROVIDER IN
10	A PROGRAM OF STUDY THAT IS NOT ALIGNED TO AN IN-DEMAND OR
11	HIGH-PRIORITY POSTSECONDARY PATHWAY.
12	(b) The office or vendor shall not require a student to
13	DEMONSTRATE FINANCIAL NEED TO RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP AND SHALL
14	NOT CONSIDER AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT'S FINANCIAL NEED IN DETERMINING
15	SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS.
16	(2) (a) EACH SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED IS FOR ONE THOUSAND FIVE
17	HUNDRED DOLLARS; EXCEPT THAT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY DISTRIBUTED
18	TO THE SERVICE PROVIDER PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(b) OF THIS
19	SECTION MUST NOT BE GREATER THAN THE STUDENT'S TOTAL COST OF
20	TUITION, FEES, BOOKS, AND EQUIPMENT REMAINING AFTER THE STUDENT
21	HAS APPLIED ALL OTHER FINANCIAL AID, INCLUDING A FEDERAL PELL
22	GRANT.
23	(b) Scholarship money is distributed to the service
24	PROVIDER FOR USE BY THE STUDENT.
25	(3) (a) A STUDENT MAY USE A SCHOLARSHIP AWARD FOR TUITION,
26	FEES, BOOKS, AND EQUIPMENT AT A SERVICE PROVIDER.
27	(b) SCHOLARSHIP MONEY MUST BE EXPENDED NO LATER THAN

-9- SB23-205

1	JULY 31, 2025. ON AUGUST 1, 2025, A SERVICE PROVIDER SHALL RETURN
2	ALL UNUSED SCHOLARSHIP MONEY TO THE OFFICE.
3	24-48.5-504. Postsecondary and career advising. (1) THE
4	OFFICE SHALL CONTRACT WITH ONE OR MORE VENDORS TO PROVIDE
5	POSTSECONDARY AND CAREER ADVISING TO COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL
6	STUDENTS WHO MAY BE LESS LIKELY TO PURSUE A POSTSECONDARY
7	EDUCATION.
8	(2) The office shall identify schools to receive
9	POSTSECONDARY ADVISING SUPPORT. THE OFFICE MAY USE MULTIPLE
10	CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY SCHOOLS, INCLUDING DECLINES IN POSTSECONDARY
11	PARTICIPATION BY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, STUDENT POPULATION SIZE,
12	ECONOMIC NEED, OR ANY OTHER CRITERIA AS DETERMINED BY THE OFFICE.
13	THE OFFICE SHALL CONTACT SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE FOR ADVISING PURSUANT
14	TO THE PROGRAM AND WITH THE SCHOOL'S, AND IN IF APPLICABLE, THE
15	SCHOOL DISTRICT'S, PERMISSION, DESIGNATE VENDORS TO PROVIDE
16	ADVISING IN THE SCHOOL.
17	(3) A VENDOR SHALL PROVIDE ONE-ON-ONE ADVISING TO
18	STUDENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO INTEND TO PURSUE A TWO-YEAR OR
19	FOUR-YEAR DEGREE, WORKFORCE OR TECHNICAL TRAINING, OR A
20	MILITARY PATHWAY. THE ADVISING MUST INCLUDE INFORMING STUDENTS
21	ABOUT IN-DEMAND OR HIGH-PRIORITY PATHWAYS, INCLUDING IN-DEMAND
22	OCCUPATIONS BY REGION.
23	24-48.5-505. Service provider report - program report. (1) ON
24	OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2025, EACH SERVICE PROVIDER THAT RECEIVED
25	PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP MONEY ON BEHALF OF A STUDENT SHALL REPORT
26	TO THE OFFICE, FOR EACH STUDENT, THE STUDENT'S STATUS IN THE

STUDENT'S PROGRAM OF STUDY AT THE SERVICE PROVIDER AND ANY

27

-10- SB23-205

1	OTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE OFFICE.
2	(2) (a) In its annual report before the house and senate
3	COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE PURSUANT TO SECTION 2-7-203, THE OFFICE
4	SHALL INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING, IF
5	AVAILABLE:
6	(I) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED A
7	SCHOLARSHIP;
8	(II) A LIST OF SERVICE PROVIDERS;
9	(III) THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY RECEIVED BY EACH SERVICE
10	PROVIDER AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED WITH OR RECEIVING
11	TRAINING FROM EACH PROVIDER;
12	(IV) THE POSTSECONDARY PATHWAY BEING PURSUED BY EACH
13	SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT, AGGREGATED BY PATHWAY;
14	(V) EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS; AND
15	(VI) ANY OTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE SCHOLARSHIP
16	PROGRAM THE OFFICE DETERMINES IS APPROPRIATE TO INCLUDE IN THE
17	REPORT.
18	(b) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), THE
19	REPORTING REQUIREMENT DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (2) CONTINUES
20	UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2026.
21	24-48.5-506. Repeal of part. This part 5 is repealed, effective
22	DECEMBER 31, 2026.
23	SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act
24	takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
25	ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
26	that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
27	of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this

-11- SB23-205

- act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
- 2 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
- November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
- 4 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

-12- SB23-205