



ASPIRE TO COLLEGE
COLORADO
SAVING | GROWING | LEARNING



Investing in Hope

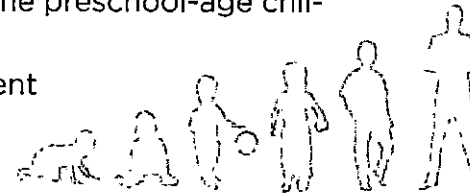


Building Economic Security for Colorado
Children and Families through Savings and Education

OUR VISION

A Colorado children's savings account (CSA) program for low-income preschool-age children, supported by a public-private partnership, that:

- Increases low-income children's college aspirations and enrollment
- Creates a more educated, competitive workforce for the state
- Builds economic opportunities for low-income families



Colorado Children's Savings Account Pilot Program

THE PROBLEM

Less than 10% of students from low-income families graduate from college by their mid-20s

What contributes to low graduation rates for these families?

- Skyrocketing higher education costs
- Gaps in financial aid
- High tuition makes students believe higher education is unattainable
- Lack of savings options & incentives for low-income families

The current range of college savings incentives & products don't work for low-income families:

- Low-income families fear they will lose eligibility for need-based aid
- Many savings plans require minimum deposits

THE SOLUTION

Key CSA Program Features

- CSAs for approximately 6,000 low-income, preschool-age children, being served in Head Start settings, over the 3-year pilot program
- A partnership with Colorado's 529 college savings program, Collegenvest, as the provider of the savings account product
- \$50 state-funded initial deposit in each account
- \$100/year in savings matches + a bonus to encourage regular saving
- Financial education for children and parents
- Evaluation of program impact on children and parents

An Investment in Colorado's Future

- A pioneering opportunity to be involved in an exciting public/private partnership & state-level plan to transform the college aspirations & attendance of thousands of Colorado children
- Opens the door of opportunity and hope for low-income children & parents
- Helps make saving for college part of the collective culture of Colorado
- Positions the state as a visionary pioneer in building family financial capacity
- Helps develop a stronger, more qualified workforce in Colorado



Members of the House Education Committee
Colorado State House of Representatives
Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

February 19, 2016

Dear Representatives,

We are writing to urge you to strongly support House Bill 16-1196, the Aspire to College Colorado Pilot Program which will establish Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs) for low-income kids throughout the state. As early childhood providers, whose children would greatly benefit from this program, we ask you to be a "Yes" vote so that we all can assist in the fight to end the cycle of multigenerational poverty.

This three-year pilot program will provide 6,000 low-income preschool-age children with a 529 college savings account through Colorado's CollegenInvest with an initial "seeded" \$50 deposit from the Colorado Department of Human Services. In addition, the program will leverage public-private partnerships where private foundations will match dollar for dollar every contribution into a child's 529 savings account up to \$100 a year, meaning even greater incentives for these families to save their hard-earned money.

Empirical evidence gathered over the last several years documents the potential of CSAs to expand educational and economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income families. The research shows that low- to middle-income students with college savings accounts are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate with a degree. Aspire to College Colorado aims to transform the college aspirations and attendance of thousands of Colorado children, while simultaneously building economic opportunity for these children and their families, and providing a foundation for these children to become part of a more educated, competitive workforce in Colorado.

The children and families enrolled in our early childhood programs deserve every chance to be able to pull themselves out of poverty. These types of college savings programs help them to do just that. Please lend your support to House Bill 16-1196, and help turn the prospect of going to college from a far off dream to a reachable reality.

Sincerely,

Noreen Landis-Tyson
Community Partnership for Child Development
Colorado Springs

Jamie Swartz
Otero Junior College Child Development Services
La Junta

Geneva Torr
Gingerbread House & Children's Garden Early Learning Centers
Alamosa

Marcia Bledsoe
Fort Morgan Head Start/CPP
Fort Morgan

