COLORADO OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

Community Partnership Program Grant

POSTSECONDARY
Student Support Service Model

A RESOURCE GUIDE ON PROGRAM MODEL, STRUCTURE, AND PROGRAMMING

COLORADO
Department of Higher Education

COLORADO
Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative

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Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative

The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) was created in 2014 to increase the attainment of postsecondary credentials and degrees for underserved students in Colorado. The project addresses this challenge in two ways: accessibility and affordability.

To increase accessibility, COSI funds programs – Community Partner Program (CPP) grants – that help prepare students for postsecondary education as well as support them though credential completion.

To increase affordability, COSI provides tuition support, through Matching Student Scholarship (MSS) grants. Students use the matching funds for community scholarships, so that tuition costs are not a barrier to entry. They also help to reduce student loan debt.

COSI commits to a series of multi-year **Community Partner Program Grants (CPP)** that help prepare students for postsecondary education, as well as support them through completion. In December 2014, the Initiative distributed $3.4 million in program grants. In 2016, COSI invested another $800,000 in New Partner Programs in addition to $2 million in continuing funding for the first round of grantees, known as Legacy Partners, and $450,000 toward collective impact initiatives across the state. The third iteration of grant

funding in 2018 awarded $2.7 million to community partners through a new funding model aimed at improving the alignment of CPP with the Colorado Department of Higher Education's (CDHE) Master Plan goals and Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) strategic plan. The new model, established in this guidebook, aimed to improve programmatic success through measurable metrics. Continuing with this model, in 2020 approximately $2.5 million annually was awarded and the grant term was extended to four years.

COSI solicits **Matching Student Scholarship (MSS)** applications from eligible counties, institutions of higher education and community workforce programs to increase the amount of scholarship-giving available for postsecondary students in Colorado. Allocations are made according to the population of high school seniors eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) for counties and the population of Pell eligible students for institutions of higher education.

In COSI's first six years,

$66.5 million

in MSS funds was awarded to serve approximately 100,000 students across its programs.

Annually, the COSI Advisory Board approves the amount of funding that will be made available and awarded during the next fiscal year. Currently, this awarded amount is set at $7.5 million ($5 million for counties, $1.5 million for institutions of higher education and $1 million for workforce development projects).

In fiscal year 2020-2021, COSI will award $7.5 million in MSS. Due to the COSI grants' responsiveness to communities' needs, grant amounts vary and are matched and dispersed on flexible schedules which provides variance between awarded funds *(funds that are approved by COSI Advisory Board in a specific year and encumbered for future fiscal years)* and funds which are distributed to grantees in a specific fiscal year.

In the first six years, $66.5 million has been awarded *(this includes the 1:1 match of $35 million in local and private dollars)* to serve approximately 100,000 students across its programs.

Internal program evaluations using the latest available data (2018-2019) show most COSI students enrolled in the Community Partnership Program Grant program persist at rates of up to 19 percentage points higher than their peers from similar socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Also, as of spring 2019, 1,869 students supported by COSI community partnership programs completed a postsecondary degree.

Students who participate in Matching Student Scholarship Grant (MSS) programs are found to persist at rates 17 percentage points higher than their peers and have up to $3,276 less debt per year. Using alternative estimators, the range of estimated impact of COSI scholarships is 21 to 30 percentage points, and debt is $1,112 to $1,920 lower per year. As of spring 2019, 4,210 students supported by COSI matching student scholarships completed a postsecondary degree. Persistence and completion are even higher for MSS students who were also supported by a CPP grantee.

POSTSECONDARY

Community Partnership Program Grant

Community Partnership Program (CPP) Grants are designed to increase the availability and accessibility of pre-collegiate and postsecondary student support services throughout the state.

The four-year grants are distributed to nonprofit organizations, state entities and community partnerships that provide student supports to increase access to higher education and improve retention and credential completion in public postsecondary institutions.

Since 2014, COSI has issued 120 awards to student-serving programs throughout the state for a total of more than $30 million. In 2020—it's fourth round of grants—COSI awarded an additional $10 million over four years, focusing on improving alignment with Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) strategic plan and, Colorado Commission on Higher Education's (CCHE) master plan, *Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development*. It also aims to advance programmatic success through measurable metrics, erase equity gaps and serve COSI scholarship recipients on campuses throughout the state.

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Community Partnership Program Grant Model

Through site visit observations, outcome data, and thorough literature reviews, the COSI team gained a better understanding of best practices for student support services at the pre-collegiate and postsecondary levels. To leverage the limited availability of student support funds, the grant program was realigned to emphasize programs that employ evidence-based strategies, align with the CPP model, and are demonstrating success.

The four-year grants focus on funding programs across the state to provide intensive services for students at the pre-collegiate and postsecondary levels. Grantees provide holistic student support from high school to and through credential completion. The programs contribute to the CCHE's master plan goals through effective implementation of the COSI program goals and developing objectives and strategies in each of the focus areas.

Pre-Collegiate, College and Career Centers (CCC)

- Housed in high schools, the CCC supports all students, with a focus on seniors.
- The CCC is designed to provide students and their support network with college-going knowledge, connections, and tools to map their college and career path after graduation.
- The CCC is a hub where students can connect with staff and mentors, and is a safe, welcoming environment that promotes a college-going setting for all students regardless of their background.

Postsecondary, Student Support Services Program (SSS)

- Housed at the postsecondary institution, the program primarily supports COSI Matching Student Scholarship Scholars.
- The SSS is designed to provide wraparound student support, focusing on providing students the support and tools to overcome institutional, social & wellness, and academic challenges and barriers that may impede on their progress toward completion.
- The program and space provide a hub for students to connect with peers and staff and provides a safe and welcoming environment that promotes a connection to campus, trust, and relationship-building.

Technical Assistance

COSI provides in-depth, continuous technical assistance to support grantees throughout the application, implementation, development and management of the program. COSI employs resources and tools that expand the use of evidence-based practices focused on efficiency while strengthening the grantee's capacity to improve program specific and statewide outcomes.

This guide provides grantees the support to assist with the successful development and implementation of the program model and to serve as a reference guide throughout the grant cycle. The guide provides an overview of postsecondary programs, the CPP postsecondary model and structure and required activities.

i Visit the COSI website

For materials and resources to support in program development.

https://highered.colorado. gov/community-partnership-program-grants/current-grantees

POSTSECONDARY

Student Support Service Programs[1]

What is the issue?

The 2019 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report identified that 64% of Colorado's top jobs require a credential beyond high school. However, only 57.6% of Coloradans 25-34 years old, and 56.4% of those 25 and older, hold a postsecondary credential, indicating a supply and-demand gap for some occupations. For every 100 students who enroll in college, eight will complete in two years, 37 will complete in four years and 58 will graduate in six years. (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2020)

While Colorado's adult population overall has a high educational attainment level, there are significant disparities in educational attainment levels by race/ethnicity. Additionally, the state's education and workforce pipeline is leaky: too few students from low-income and first-generation families' graduate and matriculate to college. In the next 25 years, Colorado's population is expected to increase by more than two million *(a 34% increase)*, with the fastest growing demographic being Hispanics, who will make up 23% of the total population by 2035 (Garner, 2010).

Of the students who make it to college, too few obtain a degree in four or even six years, creating a barrier to their employability and economic security. If left unaddressed, this gap will continue to increase.

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(Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2020)

1 This section was adapted from: Torpey-Saboe, N. (2018). Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, Student Support Programs. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=c3RhdGUuY28udXN8Y29zaXxneDo3ZjJmZjQ2MTZjN2lwY2Uz

What action is being taken?

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education, as well as institutions of higher education, are focused on increasing credential attainment and improving affordability. In 2017, the Commission reaffirmed a statewide goal of increasing Colorado's adult population attainment rate to 66% by 2025. In 2018, Colorado's attainment rate sits at 56.6% (Colorado Commission on Higher Education, 2020).

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Institutions are addressing these issues by building departments and teams to support persistence and completion. Research suggests that maintaining small caseloads allows practitioners the time to provide individualized services and support to students. (Swecker, Fifolt, & Searby, 2013). Other suggestions include proactive advising; warm handoff; case management; building advising models to support students throughout their college journey; and keeping students accountable to their goals (Longwell-Grice, Zervas Adsitt, Mullins, & Serrerta, 2016; Patrick, Furlow, Donavan, 1988; Rodgers, Blunt, Trible, 2014).

Additionally, interventions supporting affordability include campaigns that encourage full-time course loads and keep students on track to finish in a timely manner. Many institutions have coupled the aforementioned supportive services alongside scholarships (Complete College America, 2011). The Colorado Department of Higher Education found this to be an ideal formula for successfully serving students through the Colorado Challenge program. The program supported students from 2014-2018. The final program evaluation found that students that participated in the program persisted at rates of 12-14 percentage points higher than their peers from similar socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

What are student support service programs?

Student support service programs *(also known as student success or student support programs)* work to ensure that students have the necessary resources to access postsecondary education, successfully complete a degree or credential and are equipped to enter the workforce. On campus, student support programs help students connect to other institutional programs that support academic success and integrate into campus life.

These programs provide holistic wraparound support focused on a proactive advising model, where a staff member on campus frequently checks in and mentors students, guiding them and helping them succeed in their programs.

Why are student support programs important?

Evidence suggests that scholarship assistance alone, without an investment in student supports, will not generate the successful outcomes that Colorado needs to create a world-class workforce and lift the overwhelming burden of student debt. Students, especially those who are low-income and first-generation, need additional support to access and complete postsecondary education in a timely manner. Student support programs are critical in ensuring Colorado students accomplish this goal.

Once enrolled, low-income and first-generation students struggle more with the transition from high school to postsecondary education than their peers. According to a study by the Pell Institute, "low-income, first-generation students were nearly four times more likely to leave higher education after the first year than students who had neither of these risk factors" (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Research has found that many non-academic factors are particularly important in influencing student success, such as social integration, support and motivation, and monitoring and advisement (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004; Maton, Hrabowski, & Schmitt, 2000; Allen, 2008). First-generation and minority students may experience greater difficulties with social and cultural integration than other students (London, 1989) (Seymour & Hewitt, 1997). Given Colorado's large first-generation population, student support programs can help these students succeed in college.

What does research say about student support programs?

Research has shown that postsecondary supports are important components for increasing college enrollment and completion. In addition, studies have found that intensive advising and mentoring is a common thread among successful programs. Student support programs help to increase the rate of degree and credential completion for students to successfully enter the workforce, earn living wages and manage student loan debt.

Furthermore, students who succeed in completing degrees are not always doing so in an efficient manner. According to Complete College America (2011), first-generation students require more support and guidance to find a career path. Without access to student support programs, students may struggle with planning out the appropriate courses needed for their degree and career path.

COSI helps increase postsecondary completion for Colorado's students by funding postsecondary programs throughout the state that follow a research-based, best-practice model.

Student Support Model

The COSI postsecondary model is rooted in the Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement developed by researchers Swail, Redd and Perna (2003).

Cognitive FACTORS

Academic mindset	Learning skills
Academic rigor	Study skills
Aptitude	Technology ability
Content knowledge	Time management
Confidence in academic ability	Quality of learning
Critical thinking ability	

Social & Wellness FACTORS

Communication skills	Sense of belonging
Cultural background and values	Social and emotional coping skills
Family and peer influence	Work and home life
Financial issues	
Maturity	
Mental, emotional, and physical health	

Institutional FACTORS

Academic Services	Recruitment and Admissions
Curriculum and Instruction	Student Services
Financial Aid	

The model places cognitive, social and wellness and institutional as the three factors that impact student completion (Swail et al., 2003). Institutional factors are intentionally placed at the base of the triangle because the college sets the foundation for college success (Swail et al., 2003).

The researchers state that, "the triangle represents the complex set of internal processes within each student that affect his or her ability to persist and achieve in postsecondary education, and the area external to the triangle represents all outside variables impacting the student's development and decision making" (Swail et al., 2003, p. 76).

The use of this model provides a snapshot of the students' needs and abilities in relation to the cognitive, social and wellness and institutional factors. Recognizing the attributes or factors that students bring with them to campus and the role the institution can play in supporting their development and growth will positively influence the students' success.

In this guide, the model is presented in a manner that highlights its use in the practitioner to student relationship, but the model can be utilized on a larger scale to influence institutional practices and proactively address and support students needs institution-wide.

The model provides examples of factors, or attributes, that the student may bring to campus. Each student may react differently to each factor, and their impact on the student's success may be negative, positive or neutral (Swail et al., 2003).The model suggests that a student has a solid foundation for growth, development, and persistence when the triangle is at equilibrium (Swail et al., 2003). It is important to note that each students' "equilibrium" may be different, as are their needs and support in each area. The triangle rotates to emphasize the factor that the student may be struggling with and highlights the area of focus for the provider. The following section explores the three factors and provides examples of how each factor may impact student success.

Cognitive Factor

"Cognitive factors are important because they directly relate to the student's ability to comprehend and complete the academic portion of the college curriculum" (Swail et al., 2003, p. 78). The student's degree path, the course selection and completion, and involvement in the academic area are variables that may impact this factor (Swail et al., 2003). Also connected to the student's persistence and completion are the student's decision-making and problem-solving skills (Swail et al., 2003).

The cognitive factor relates to the students academic ability and their academic strengths and weaknesses (Swail et al., 2003).

SCENARIO:

Julia's confidence in her math ability is low due to her struggles in completing assignments and doing poorly on tests. She is afraid to ask for help, as she does not want to be viewed as "not smart enough" by her professor or peers.

HOW DOES THE COSI STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE PROGRAM HELP?

When Julia meets with her SSS coach he has her complete an intake which includes a strengths/needs assessment. The coach notes that Julia scored herself as low/needing support in math. The coach takes the time to talk through this with Julia and provides her support in finding tutoring and online math resources.

Academic mindset

Academic rigor

Aptitude

Content knowledge

Confidence in academic ability

Critical thinking ability

Learning skills

Study skills

Technology ability

Time management

Quality of learning

Recognizing the factors that students bring with them to campus and the role the institution can play in supporting their development and growth will positively influence the students' success.

Social & Wellness Factor

Research has shown that the lack of social integration to campus is related to low persistence rates (Swail et al., 2003). Creating a culture of wellness (physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual) has a significant impact on student success. A student's mental and emotional health, sleep habits, food insecurities, and home and transportation concerns are examples of wellness challenges that the student may encounter on their path to completion (Watts, 2017). When professionals recognize the interconnectedness of the student's well-being to their educational success, they can ensure that services and programming are developed to meet the student's needs (Watts, 2017).

The social and wellness factor relates to the students relationships, the student's ability to interact with others, and their ability to cope with social situations (Swail et al., 2003). The social and wellness factor also encompasses the student's personal attitudes, culture, and background.

SCENARIO:

Julia is attending a university that has a small population of students from diverse backgrounds. It has been difficult connecting with campus resources and making friends. When she meets with her SSS coach, he asks how she is settling in and what activities she has participated in. Julia shares her feelings of isolation and not belonging.

HOW DOES THE COSI STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE PROGRAM HELP?

The SSS coach works with Julia to identify student groups, activities and cultural centers where she can connect with others that share similar identities. Her homework assignment for the month is to begin connecting and participating in a few of the activities on her list. Getting involved may help Julia to stay connected on campus and begin to develop a sense of belonging.

Communication skills

Cultural background and values

Family and peer influence

Financial issues

Maturity

Mental, emotional, and physical health

Sense of belonging

Social and emotional coping skills

Work and home life

Institutional Factor

Institutional factors are "the practices, strategies, and culture of the college or university that, in either an intended or unintended way, impact student persistence and achievement" (Swail et al., 2003, p. 77). In addition, the way in which the institution reacts and supports students throughout the factors has an impact on persistence and completion rates (Swail et al., 2003).

The institutional factor describes how the culture of an institution impacts student success.

Academic Services

Curriculum and Instruction

Financial Aid

Recruitment and Admissions

Student Services

SCENARIO:

Julia has visited her SSS coach four times this week, seeking support with the financial aid verification process. She feels as though for each document she submits there are three additional requests. In addition, the financial aid department is located in the administration building two blocks from campus. Due to back to back classes, Julia struggles to make it to the office before closing time.

HOW DOES THE COSI STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE PROGRAM HELP?

The SSS coach's goal is to empower and teach the student, but in this instance he feels as though Julia needs him to step in and utilize his network to support her. He calls his contact in the financial aid office and gathers the information and documents Julia needs in order to complete her financial aid file. He sits with Julia and goes through each document to ensure they are complete, and due to her schedule, he offers to submit them for her.

The coach often hears from his students that they struggle to connect with the financial aid office due to the department's physical location on campus. Students have also expressed confusion and concern with navigating the verification/paperwork process. In an effort to advocate and support his students, he invites his contact to speak at the monthly team meeting, his goal is to learn more about the process and share student challenges.

Assessing the Level of Supportive Services[1]

As the number of COSI scholars continues to increase, and the capacity of the supportive services reaches its limit, it is essential to integrate a method to evaluate the level of support needed by the student. Assessing the level of need will help to "get out of the student's way" when they are thriving and require limited intervention, and in turn, provides more time and resources to students who need more support.

This section provides a method for program staff to evaluate the student's level of need and, in turn, provide supportive services that will be most beneficial for students on the path to completion. This method is flexible and can be adapted to meet the student population and grant site capacity.

TIER 1 **Low-Level** SUPPORT

TIER 2 **Moderate-Level** SUPPORT

TIER 3 **High-Level** SUPPORT
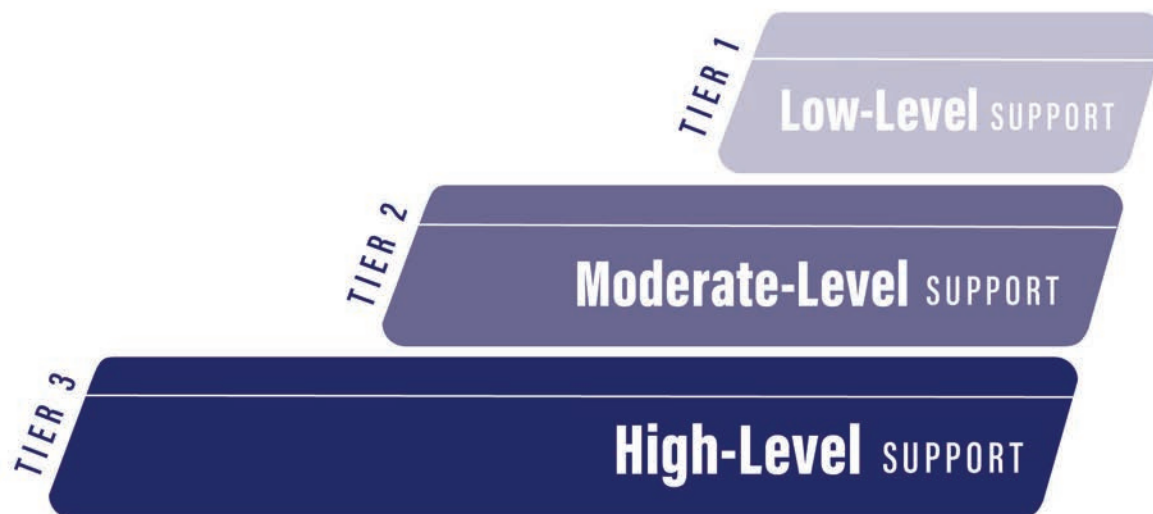
1 This section was adapted from Barnes, A.C., & Harlacher, J.E. (2008). Clearing the Confusion: Response-to-Intervention as a Set of Principles. Education and Treatment of Children 31(3), 417-431.

Assessing the Level of Support

- **In-person/face-to-face** - schedule time to meet with students individually. This type of interaction helps identify early challenges, builds a trusting relationship with the student, and determination of which factors (cognitive, social & wellness, and institutional) may impact the student's success.

- **Using technology**- develop a needs assessment that addresses the three factors- cognitive, social & wellness, and institutional - to aid in determining the level and type of support that the student needs to be successful.

   - Make the needs assessment a requirement of your scholarship program.

   - Require students to complete it on a semesterly basis.

   - The assessment is used to determine individual student needs. Still, the individual responses can be grouped to determine "need themes" or patterns and develop programming/services that are offered to all program participants.

- **Assigning a level**- individual student meetings, semesterly completion of the needs assessment and academic progress are examples of tools that will provide support in determining the level of supportive services that are helpful to the student.

   - The levels are fluid, as students may float in and out.

   - Assess the student level of support needed regularly and be prepared to adjust your caseload and services to meet the student where they are.

Things to keep in mind

- Regardless of the students' rating and their level of program participation, the student is still considered part of the program, and as such, their progress needs to be monitored, and data needs to be gathered.

- Mid-term and final grade checks are an essential piece of monitoring and may prompt early assessing of interventions.

- Assess the student level of support regularly—at least once a semester and be prepared to adjust your caseload and services to meet the student where they are.

- Depending on the student's level of need, in-person/face-to-face check-ins may be limited. Still, frequent phone calls, emails, or text check-ins are recommended to keep an active connection to the program and early identification of concerns.

Levels of Support

Tier 1: Low-Level Support

STUDENT ATTRIBUTES:

- The student's needs assessment does not highlight issues with any of the factors (cognitive, social & wellness, and institutional), and the student has a solid foundation for growth, development, and persistence (Swail et al., 2003).
- Students who are rated moderate-high in self-sufficiency, motivation, and life plan.
- Students know how to navigate the institution, may excel academically and socially, and check-in without prompting.
- Students who do not require a lot of individual attention and succeed knowing that resources are available when needed.

PROGRAM DELIVERY:

- In-person/face-to-face check-ins are limited
- Frequent follow-up via phone call, email, or text message
- Invitation to participate in programming and events
- Active program participation is not required, but recommended

Tier 2: Moderate-Level Support

STUDENT ATTRIBUTES:

- The student's needs assessment highlights issues with one or more factors (cognitive, social & wellness, and institutional).
- Students who are rated moderate in self-sufficiency, motivation, and life plan.
- Students who understand the institutional process but may require support in certain areas.
- Students who may be struggling in an academic area and in making on-campus connections.
- Students who will benefit from individual support and connection to resources.

PROGRAM DELIVERY:

- At least two in-person/face-to-face check-ins per semester
- Frequent follow-up via phone call, email, or text message
- Required to participate in specific programming and events
- Small group and/or targeted group intervention

Tier 3: High-Level Support

STUDENT ATTRIBUTES:

- The student's needs assessment highlights issues with two or all three of the factors (cognitive, social & wellness, and institutional).
- Students who are rated low-moderate or low in self-sufficiency, motivation, and life plan.
- Students who do not understand the institutional process and need high levels of support in all aspects.
- Students who are struggling academically, have not made connections on campus, and are dealing with feelings of not belonging.
- A student who has an emergency arises (i.e., housing or food insecurity, family concern, or other social/emotional issues) and needs specific interventions.

DELIVERY OF INTERVENTION:

- Monthly in-person/face-to-face check-ins
- Frequent follow-up via phone call, email, or text message
- Required to participate in programming and events
- Small group and/or targeted group interventions
- Detailed action plan and follow-up

Program Structure

In an effort to provide support to increase postsecondary completion across the state, COSI is funding organizations and institutions that currently provide or plan to implement a Student Support Service (SSS) Program.

Housed at the postsecondary institution, the program supports primarily COSI Matching Student Scholarship scholars (COSI Scholars) and is designed to provide wraparound student support. The program and space provide a hub for students to connect with peers and staff, receive support in navigating the institution, stay on track to completion, and create a safe and welcoming environment that promotes trust and relationship building.

Program Requirements

In order to ensure alignment across all grantees and programs COSI requires that all programs:

- Focus on serving COSI Scholars

- Are housed at postsecondary institutions and have dedicated space

- Dedicated program staff

- Staff has access to student systems and databases to support work

- Focus on the COSI program goals of increasing persistence and completion

- Provide persistence and completion programming and services in each of the postsecondary focus areas

COSI has specific focus areas in which grantees must develop objectives and strategies to support students with their postsecondary completion/career path and promote progress in achieving the COSI Program Goals.

Postsecondary Focus Areas

Postsecondary Enrollment/ Transition

Early outreach and summer melt programming to build connections, support through the enrollment process, and transition to the postsecondary institution.

Academic Success

Services that support students in successfully completing each semester and continued persistence toward completion.

Financial Literacy/Financial Aid

Programming focused on supporting students in accessing and understanding the full range of financial aid programs and locating resources for public and private scholarships. Hands-on support in completing the FAFSA/ CASFA, scholarship applications, and navigating the institution verification process.

Building Connection and Community

Providing opportunities for peer to peer interaction, community building and connecting with program and campus staff.

Individual Student Support

Individual meetings to provide support in navigating institutional barriers, academic hurdles and social/familial/personal concerns.

Seminars

Opportunities to gain skills and support in such areas as wellness, career services, networking, and other needs as identified by the students and staff.

Postsecondary Success Course
One-credit or equivalent

Course or series of workshops provided in the students first year. The course focuses on such areas as; postsecondary readiness skills, navigating the institution, connection to campus resources, and building community. It is recommended that program staff lead the course/workshops.
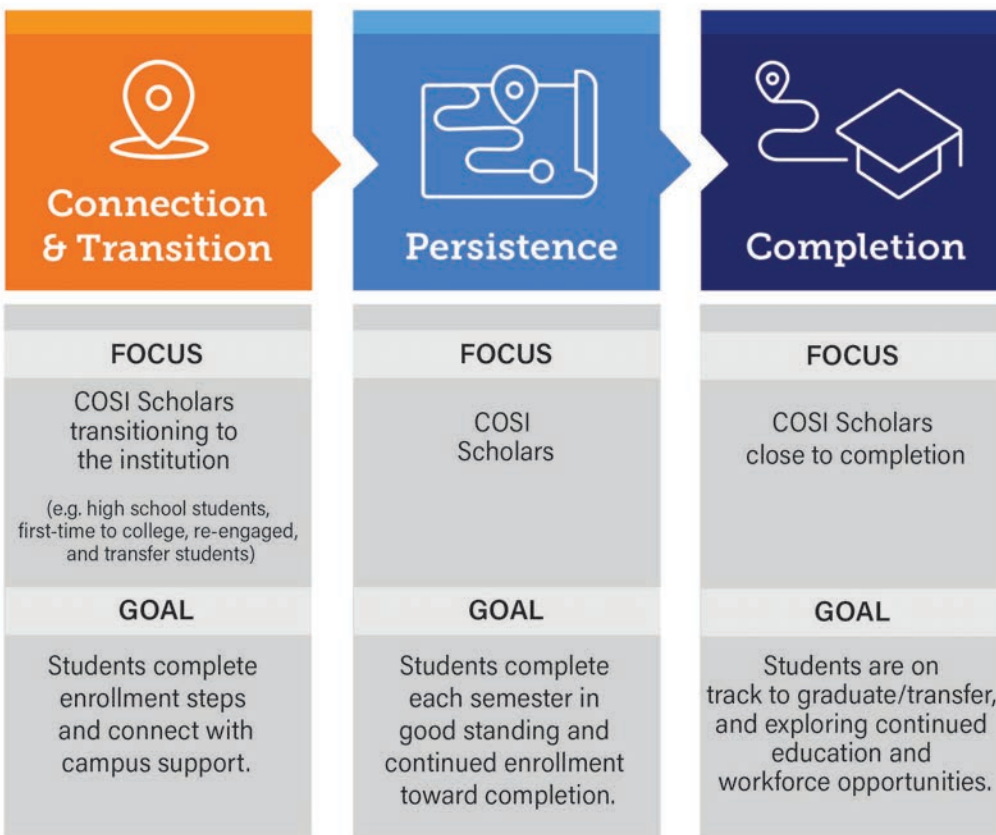
Completion/Transfer Course
One-credit or equivalent

Course or series of workshops that support and prepare students for life after graduation or transferring to another institution. The course focuses on such areas as; financial literacy, career preparation, graduate school, transitioning from college life to the real world, and the next steps after graduation. It is recommended that program staff lead the course/workshops.

Laying the Foundation

The COSI postsecondary program structure is organized into three overarching themes: Connection & Transition, Persistence, and Completion. The themes are intentionally general as the goal is to provide a basic structure from which program sites can develop their program to fit their students' needs, site capacity, academic calendar, and institution requirements.

Themes

Connection & Transition	Persistence	Completion
FOCUS	**FOCUS**	**FOCUS**
COSI Scholars transitioning to the institution	COSI Scholars	COSI Scholars close to completion
(e.g. high school students, first-time to college, re-engaged, and transfer students)		
GOAL	**GOAL**	**GOAL**
Students complete enrollment steps and connect with campus support.	Students complete each semester in good standing and continued enrollment toward completion.	Students are on track to graduate/transfer, and exploring continued education and workforce opportunities.

Mapping it Out

This section provides an example of how sites can breakdown the themes and arrange them by semester and month. The example adds in support services that assist the student in persisting and completing. This structure helps sites organize and focus to ensure students are receiving the necessary supports for success. As you begin working with students, you will notice that not all portions of the curriculum may be completed within a specific month. Please keep in mind that the program structure is flexible, and the COSI team is available to support grantees in developing and implementing their program!

Connection & Transition

FOCUS

COSI Scholars transitioning
to the institution.
(e.g. high school students, first-time to college,
re-engaged, and transfer students)

GOAL

Students complete enrollment
steps and connect with
campus support.

June/July
Postsecondary enrollment and connecting with students.

Persistence

FOCUS

COSI
Scholars

GOAL

Students complete each semester in good standing
and continued enrollment toward completion.

FALL SEMESTER

August/September
Welcome, connecting
with peers and campus
support, and postsecondary
success course

October
FAFSA/CASFA Application

November/December
Fall wrap-up, finals, and
spring registration

SPRING SEMESTER

January/February
Reconnecting after break,
review of grades, and
financial aid verification

March
Scholarship essays and
applications, degree checks
and summer registration

April/May
Spring wrap-up, finals
and fall registration

SUMMER SEMESTER

June/July
Stay connected, financial aid
and enrollment support

Completion

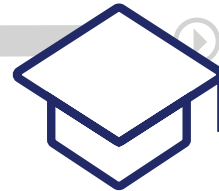**FOCUS**

COSI Scholars
close to
completion

GOAL

Students are on track to graduate/transfer,
and exploring continued education and
workforce opportunities.

Junior to Senior Year
Preparing for graduation and participation
in a completion/transfer course.

Putting it Together

This section helps to visualize how to put it all together by providing examples, guiding program development questions, and best practices.

The connection and transition, persistence, and completion themes are highlighted in this section and tie to the postsecondary focus areas to provide examples of programming and support that can be developed to meet student needs.

Remember to keep the postsecondary model in focus. The three factors-cognitive, social and wellness, and institutional- help guide program development. Recognizing the attributes or factors that students bring with them to campus and the role that the institution plays in supporting their development and growth will positively influence the students' success (Swail et al., 2003). Persistence and completion are the goals of the program, and developing a program that is guided by the model ensures that the program continually places the student's postsecondary experience and needs at the center. The information is not all-encompassing, but instead provides a place to begin. Additional materials such as worksheets, handouts, presentations, and research are provided on the COSI website.

The information and materials provided are examples and can be redesigned to meet program and student needs. The COSI team is available to support grantees in developing and implementing their programs. The team also offers a variety of professional development opportunities throughout the year. Visit the website, ask questions, and reach out, the team is here to support you!

i **Visit the COSI website**

Throughout the grant cycle as materials and information will be added regularly.

https://highered.colorado.gov/community-partnership-program-grants/current-grantees

Connection & Transition

The Connection & Transition theme is focused on building early connections with students and providing support through the enrollment process and transition to the institution.

Postsecondary Focus Areas

Below are examples of programming that can be implemented to meet select postsecondary focus areas.

Postsecondary Enrollment/Transition

☐ Hold summer events focused on the students you will serve at the postsecondary level. These events can be developed to build connections, and community, and support with pending enrollment steps.

Seminars

☐ Arrange an information night for students and families; invite current students to share their postsecondary experience.

Building Connection & Community

☐ Hold a summer social event; invite students to meet for ice cream or a bowling night.

Guiding Questions for Program Development

☐ What programming is currently in place? How can you help to promote or assist in organization/facilitation?

☐ What institution departments, community organizations, and pre-collegiate programs can you partner with?

☐ You will have minimal in-person contact with students over the summer. How can you continue to build connections, outreach, and support students in taking steps to complete the enrollment process?

Recommended Practices

- Support and collaborate; don't duplicate services.
- If possible, determine your caseload early so that outreach is targeted toward the students you will support at the postsecondary level.
- Work with high school counseling departments, pre-collegiate programs, and institution departments to access their space to meet with students. If possible, connect with students before they complete high school or transfer to the institution.
- Use a texting platform to set up texting campaigns over the summer.
- Develop summer programming to stay connected with students and support in completing the enrollment process.

Persistence

The Persistence theme is focused on providing students the wraparound services needed to complete each semester, and ensure continued enrollment toward completion.

Postsecondary Focus Areas

Below are examples of programming that can be implemented to meet select postsecondary focus areas.

Academic Success

☐ Organize study groups for classes (or subject areas) where students are struggling.

Financial Literacy/Financial Aid

☐ FAFSA/CASFA workshop, scholarship workshop, and daily support with the applications institutions verification process.

Individual Student Support

☐ One-on-one meetings with students throughout the year to develop a connection, ensure progress toward completion and support with personal and academic challenges.

Postsecondary Success Course

☐ With a focus on first-year success, hold weekly sessions for students to develop peer to peer connections, learn how to navigate campus, and build confidence. Use the COSI First Year Success curriculum or your own!

Building Connection & Community

☐ Hold a mid-term mixer or finals fuel-up to provide students an opportunity to de-stress and connect with peers and staff.
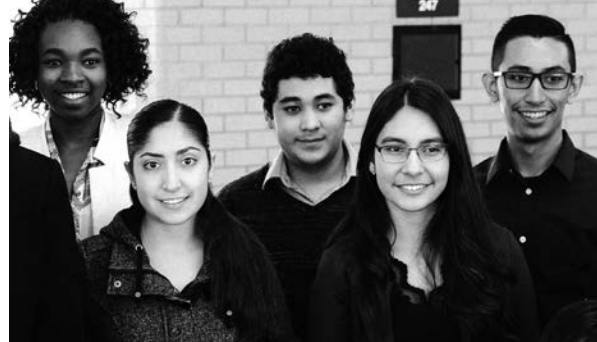
Guiding Questions for Program Development

☐ What programming is currently in place? How can you help to promote or assist in the organization/facilitation?

☐ What steps will you take to integrate into the college culture and campus?

☐ How will you determine caseloads?

☐ How will you organize your year?

☐ What data collection tools and policies need to be developed?

☐ Each year will bring new students to the program what programming and supports can you develop to build connection and community between the cohorts?

☐ How can you use technology and social media to connect and support students?

☐ How will you determine the students level of need and what supportive services will be most beneficial?

Recommended Practices

- Support and collaborate; don't duplicate services.

- Organize the year early and provide information to students.

- Familiarize yourself with college policies, academic calendars and college resources.

- Integrate the program into the college culture, outreach and develop your network.

- Participate in meetings, training and professional development offered by the college.

- Use a texting platform to set up texting campaigns throughout the school year.

- Take time to build a trusting relationship with students. This will help open lines of communication and allow for real conversations.

- Students will have challenges navigating FAFSA/CASFA and the financial aid process/policies. Take the time to learn about this area and develop partnerships and identify a go-to individual in this department.

- Summer semester is often less student-busy but it is still an important semester to keep track of student enrollment, financial aid completion and outreach with students. Also, this is a great time to plan the upcoming school year and complete program evaluation and reporting.

- Utilize the Assessing the Level of Supportive Services section to aid in determining the students level of need.

Completion

The Completion theme is focused on getting students across the finish line and ensuring they are on the path to completion/transfer and exploring next steps and life after graduation.

Postsecondary Focus Areas

Below are examples of programming that can be implemented to meet select postsecondary focus areas.

Seminars	Completion/Transfer Course	Building Connection & Community
☐ Arrange an event for students to learn about and connect with graduation evaluators, career services and the internship department.	☐ With a focus on completion/transfer and life after college, hold weekly sessions for students to ensure they are on the path to completion, career preparation, and exploring graduate school. Use the COSI Completion/Transfer Success curriculum or your own!	☐ Arrange a what's next monthly informal gathering of students to learn from each other, and connect and share their wins and challenges as they are nearing completion.

Guiding Questions for Program Development

☐ What programming is currently in place? How can you help to promote or assist in the organization/facilitation?

☐ What institution departments and community organizations can you partner with?

☐ What is the best time in the students' college career to offer the completion/transfer course?

☐ What are the institutions graduation requirements? Are there degrees that have specific requirements?

Recommended Practices

- Support and collaborate, don't duplicate services.

- If your institution offers a completion/transfer success course, focus on students that are not enrolled or those who may need additional support.

- Degree checks are extremely important. Take the time to learn about the degree monitoring system (such as Degree Works) at your institution and participate in professional development opportunities that will increase your knowledge in this area.

- Paying back loans will be a topic to address with students, ensure you are up-to-date with federal policies.

- Develop or expand your community and business network.

- Familiarize yourself with internships and study abroad opportunities.

Glossary

COSI has collected the following terms relevant to its programs and this guide. When a source is not indicated, the definition is drawn from standard collegiate dictionaries, COSI program materials, and CDHE materials and reports.

Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA)
In 2019, the General Assembly passed H.B. 19-1196, Financial Aid For Students With In-state Tuition, which allows state aid to be awarded to students who do not have lawful immigration status but have resided in the state for at least three years before graduating from a Colorado high school or passing a high school equivalency exam.

The CASFA is the application by which students that meet the qualifications can apply for this aid. Students who do not have lawful immigration status and who do not meet the qualifications listed above are also encouraged to apply for institutional aid using the CASFA. Students who are eligible for Federal Title IV aid by completing the FAFSA should not complete the CASFA.

Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Master Plan
The CCHE identified four strategic goals within the scope of the public system to reach a 66% statewide credential attainment goal.

Community Partner Program (CPP)
Are designed to increase the availability and accessibility of pre-collegiate and postsecondary student support services throughout the state.

Completion
A student who completes a certificate or degree.

COSI Scholar
A matching student scholarship recipient.

Credential
Refer to academic or educational qualifications, such as certificates or degrees that are completed or partially-completed.

Enrollment
Students considered enrolled have registered for classes and have continued classes by the schools' census date.

Financial aid
All types of money offered to a student to help pay tuition, fees and other educational expenses. This can include loans, grants, scholarships, assistantships, fellowships and work-study jobs.

Grantee
A grantee is a non-profit organization/state entity and the legal recipient of a grant. The grantee is legally responsible for following the terms and conditions of the award including all reporting and fiscal requirements.

Matching Student Scholarship (MSS)
A scholarship program that provides funds to grantees who match the funds dollar for dollar with local and private money. The students who receive the scholarships from the grantees are called COSI Scholars.

Needs Assessment
Process for determining and addressing needs, or gaps between current conditions and desired conditions or wants.

Need Themes
Pattern or themes that emerge from a needs assessment. The pattern or themes are then used to develop programming/services to address the need.

Persistence
The percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year.

Postsecondary
Any type of education that takes place after high school, or secondary school.

Pre-Collegiate Programs
Interventions that aim to increase postsecondary enrollment and smooth the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

Proactive/Intrusive Advising
Involves intentional contact with COSI students with the goal of developing a caring and beneficial relationship that leads to increased academic motivation and persistence.

Rigor-based wraparound support
Is one that provides services intended to guide opportunities for academic development, assistance for basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education.

Retention
Is the percentage of new first-year students that enroll in the same school the following year.

Scholarship
A type of financial aid that consists of an amount of free money given to a student by a school, individual, organization, company, charity, or federal or state government. Scholarship is often used interchangeably with grant.

Student Support Service Programs (SSS)
(student support or student success programs)
Provide services to ensure that students have the necessary resources to access postsecondary education, successfully complete a degree or credential and are equipped to enter the workforce. On campus programs help students connect to other institutional programs that support academic success and integrate into campus life.

Summer Melt
The phenomenon of prospective college students' motivation to attend college "melting" away during the summer between the end of high school and beginning of college. In the end these students do not enroll.

Technical Assistance
COSI provides technical assistance to grant recipients that is designed to assist a recipient in maximizing the return on the grant through efficiency and increased capacity. The assistance can include fundraising assistance and design, site visits, regional summits, statewide trainings, budgeting and financial planning for the grant, program planning, assistance in marketing to students, and other grant management components.

Wellness
Integrates the social, mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of health (NASPA, Wellness and Health Promotions Definitions).

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Author

Dr. Cynthia N. Armendariz led the development of the COSI Community Partner Program (CPP) Grant redesign. Research, best practices, and student feedback was utilized to develop the program model, structure, and activities that are outlined in this resource guide. She has worked in the higher education field for more than 10 years, serving traditional, non-traditional, and transfer students with a focus on access and student success.

She received her bachelor's degree in business management from Metropolitan State University of Denver, her master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and her Ph.D. in education and human resource studies/higher education leadership at Colorado State University. Cynthia's passion and research is focused on the development of programs and strategies to increase matriculation, persistence, and credential completion of underserved students.

Course Curriculum Development

Carla Castillo, MNM developed the COSI CPP Postsecondary Senior Year Success course and serves as one of COSI's student success network managers. She most recently served as one of Colorado Challenge's lead counselor at Auraria Campus and has been with the Colorado Department of Higher Education more than four years. Prior to joining the COSI team, she served as a college advisor at Denver East High School with the Denver Scholarship Foundation and as a community relations manager with College Invest. Carla received her master's in nonprofit management from Regis University and a bachelor of arts in psychology and spanish language and literature from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Jacquie Granados developed the COSI CPP First Year Success course and serves as one of COSI's student success network managers. She joined the Colorado Department of Higher Education in January 2017 as the transition coordinator for Colorado Challenge, where she coordinated, developed and implemented transition programming to support students as they graduate from high school, enroll in college, and began their first year. Jacquie's passion for higher education is inspired by creating a meaningful impact to students across Colorado.

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Colorado Department of Higher Education
https://highered.colorado.gov/

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development
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