

COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY FUND

INFORMATION

Q: What is the College Opportunity Fund (COF)?

A: The College Opportunity Fund provides state-tax dollars to students through a stipend, to support undergraduate education at member community colleges of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). It is designed to bring awareness to elementary, middle and high school students and parents that state tax dollars are available to assist with the costs of an undergraduate education. The COF will support the costs of up to 145 eligible undergraduate credits. Upon completion of a Bachelors Degree, some students may be eligible for an additional 30 credits for job retraining.

Q: Will the stipend cover the total amount of in-state tuition?

A: No. The stipend is designed to increase public awareness that the state helps offset the costs of undergraduate education at public and participating colleges and universities. With the stipend estimated to be worth about \$80.00 per credit hour at public institutions, the cost for undergraduate education will not decrease from today's current rates. Projections suggest that the stipend will cover a little more than 50% of the per credit cost at CCCS member community colleges. Students will still have college and course fees in addition to their portion of the credit hour tuition. Students remain responsible for paying the full cost of tuition and fees, which may continue to be covered through loans, grants, work-study, or personal income.

Q: How soon do I need to apply for a stipend?

A: **You should immediately access the College Opportunity Fund Homepage, and establish an account.** This website can be accessed from the [College Opportunity Fund](http://www.cccs.edu) link at www.cccs.edu. The sooner you build an account, the sooner you will receive eligibility information. Since most colleges start registering for Fall Semester during the early Spring, building an account now, will get you ready for Fall registration.

Q: Who is eligible to participate?

A: Students who are classified as in-state residents and taking eligible undergraduate classes at one of the CCCS member community colleges are eligible to participate in the College Opportunity Fund. **Age and income are not eligibility factors.**

Q: Can I use my stipend at any community college in Colorado?

A: Students are eligible to use their stipends at any CCCS member community college, or at multiple community colleges. In addition, the stipend may be used at most public institutions in Colorado and at private institutions where participation is authorized by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. However, the local district colleges (Aims Community College and Colorado Mountain College) and the area vocational schools (San Juan, Emily Griffith, Pickens, and Delta-Montrose) are funded differently by local taxes and state appropriations. The stipends will not be disbursed on behalf of students attending those institutions. Additionally, off-campus, extended campus, or continuing education classes that are not supported by state funding will not be eligible for stipends.

Q: Can I qualify for a stipend if I attend any private college or university?

A: Pell-eligible students at participating private institutions can qualify for a reduced stipend. **Check back for updates after January 1, 2005, to see what in-state private institutions are participating in the College Opportunity Fund.**

Q: Can I use my stipend if I attend an out-of-state college?

A: No. In order for a student to participate in the College Opportunity Fund, he or she must be enrolled at an in-state institution.

Q: If I'm already a student, will I be able to receive a stipend?

A: If you are already enrolled in an undergraduate program, you will be eligible to begin applying the stipend toward your tuition in Fall 2005. Once you have applied for your account with the College Opportunity Fund, you will be notified of the additional credits you still have available.

Q: Is the stipend retroactive?

A: No. Students who are enrolled in an undergraduate program before Fall 2005 will not be eligible under the College Opportunity Fund to be reimbursed for previous tuition payments.

Q: How much is the stipend worth?

A: The stipend is estimated to be worth approximately \$80.00 per credit hour. For CCCS member institutions, this will translate into approximately \$80.00 per credit hour, toward the total credit hour cost of approximately \$150.00. Actual tuition rates are set each Spring for the following year. Students should check with their local community college to receive current rates.

Q: Can the amount of the stipend change?

A: Yes. The Colorado General Assembly sets the stipend during its budgeting process each spring. At this time, the General Assembly has the discretion to increase or decrease the amount of the stipend.

Q: Will acceptance of a stipend affect my eligibility for Federal PELL Grants?

A: No. If you are eligible to receive either Federal, State or local aid through grants or scholarships, the stipend will not affect this eligibility. Financial Aid will provide support toward the student portion of college tuition and fees.

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