

Overview

With special emphasis on supporting students from low-income families, Hispanic communities, and African American backgrounds, this brief responds to the need for legislative interventions to help Colorado reach its postsecondary attainment goals and strengthen its talent pipeline. This memo will summarize a couple of Colorado's existing postsecondary transition advising processes based on existing literature and provide suggestions to improve these practices.

Problem Area: Guiding and Advising Students through Postsecondary Transitions

High-quality advising is especially important for students who identify as low-income, Hispanic, or African American (2), which makes the need for targeted advising interventions (1) necessary for equitable pathways through higher education to gainful employment. Students will face challenges in their pursuit of a college degree; therefore, advising students to stay motivated and supporting them in closing the gaps in their experience requires ongoing efforts to strengthen existing efforts.

Colorado's Current Postsecondary Transition Advising Practices:

CDHE's strategic plan (1) invests in understanding barriers to academic and career advancement and provides resources for FAFSA/CASFA and the CCA Tool (3) for a personalized career action plan.

House Bill 22-1349 (4) mandates the statewide creation of a postsecondary student data system that supports students in career decisions and improves institutional programming to enhance data-informed advising strategies.

Measurable recommendations for practice:

- Enhance the CCA Tool to expand its capabilities for advising interventions.
 - **Action:** Make more personalized suggestions during summer months using bilingual text message campaigns.
 - **Target:** Seamless integration of the CCA Tool into existing K-12 advising strategies and postsecondary outreach efforts during the school day or with collaborative workshops.
- Targeted advising (6) to demystify enrollment processes related to college applications and financial aid and increase completion rates for low-income and first-generation students.
 - **Action:** Reinforce support, community, and shared experiences by establishing culturally relevant peer mentoring programs where current college students from similar backgrounds provide guidance and support to incoming students.
 - **Leverage:** Regular development of outcomes-based evaluation and feedback mechanisms to assess data and gather input from students, families, and advisors on the effectiveness and accessibility of advising and mentoring services to align college enrollment rates and persistence toward career goals.
- Use data and technology to improve advising efficiency, supporting the goal of HB22-1249 by establishing a system for student persistence.
 - **Action:** Build a user-friendly online hub with virtual check-in meetings to address any barriers with accessing Colorado postsecondary institutions, including self-service access to information about academic and career programs, financial aid resources, and potential career paths that will be a valuable resource for students, families, and advisors.
 - **Accessibility:** Establish or expand equitable access to technology and internet connectivity for all students to utilize online advising resources and added support.

These suggestions will help the CDHE improve postsecondary transition advising in Colorado for underrepresented student populations. Continuous study and assessment will be necessary to determine the results of these policy adjustments and make them as successful as possible.

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Resources

1. Colorado Commission on Higher Education. (2023). *Building skills for an evolving economy*. <https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/StrategicPlan/cdhe-strategic-plan-2023.pdf>
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3. *Home* | CO Career Advising. (n.d.). CO Career Advising. Retrieved April 11, 2025, from <https://www.coloradocareeradvising.com/>
4. PathwaysMatter.org. (2022). STATE CASE STUDY. In *PathwaysMatter.org*. <https://excelined.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ExcelinEd.PathwaysMatter.StateCaseStudy.Colorado.pdf>
5. *Strategies Overview* | Colorado Workforce Development Council. (n.d.). Retrieved April 11, 2025, from <https://cwdc.colorado.gov/strategies/strategies-overview>
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