



CREDIT

when it's due

Colorado



STATE PROFILE

State Funder: Lumina Foundation

About Credit When It's Due

The Credit When It's Due (CWID) initiative is funded by six foundations and is supporting 15 states to develop reverse transfer programs and policies. Reverse transfer enables students to receive an associate's degree when students meet associate's degree requirements after transfer to a 4-year college or university.

State Implementation Context

In April 2012, Colorado's governor signed the state's Senate Bill 12-045, which declared that community colleges and universities should work in collaboration with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CDHE) to develop a process to confer associate's degrees earned by students on the path to a baccalaureate. The legislation stipulates that if a student completes the residency requirement at a community college (15 college credit hours from one community college), transfers to a university, and accumulates 70 credit hours (including transferred credits) at the university level, that student must be notified that they may be eligible to receive an associate's degree from the primary, sending community college. As of May 2015, all public universities and colleges in Colorado (28) and one private university are participating in Degree Within Reach, the reverse transfer program in Colorado.

Key Implementation Strategies

Committee Structure and Implementation Plan. Colorado established three subcommittees to work on reverse transfer implementation: data advisory, communications, and stop-out students. The state also convened a reverse transfer task force to guide policy implementation, with representation by several universities,

the the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), and the CDHE. In addition to establishing committees, the state developed an implementation plan that involved (a) developing capacity and infrastructure for statewide implementation; (b) piloting reverse transfer with one university and its community college transfer partners; and (c) developing a plan to target transfer stop-outs.

Pilot Process. Prior to CWID in Spring 2012, Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSUD) became the first university to pilot the reverse transfer process. With the CWID grant awarded in Fall 2012, the CDHE invited additional institutions to develop reverse transfer processes in a pilot phase with eight universities. The eight universities contacted eligible students in April 2014, and degrees were conferred by the community colleges starting in January 2015. All public institutions began participating in spring 2015.

Course Equivalency Infrastructure and Electronic Transcript Exchange. A barrier to scaling reverse transfer identified early in the grant period was inadequate infrastructure related to course equivalencies and electronic transcript exchange. Building on the pilot with MSUD, the CDHE outlined a process whereby the CCCS obtained course catalogs from public universities, created a small team of transcript evaluators from CCCS institutions to establish direct course equivalencies, and uploaded those equivalencies into the state's Banner system, a very time consuming process. CCCS decided that in the future they will only create equivalencies in their student information system (Banner) for the courses eligible students completed, thus reducing the number of courses needing to be articulated. Also early in the grant period, CDHE issued an RFP and selected Parchment as the contractor to provide electronic, automatic and seamless transfer of transcript-level data from the CDHE to the CCCS for the purpose of reverse transfer. The Parchment process allows CCCS information technology staff to upload CDHE data to Banner. Community colleges then review the data and match and load it to the appropriate student record to begin the degree audit process. The two community colleges outside of CCCS will be sent a secure file of their student data via Biscom (secure file transfer tool).

"Degree Within Reach" Website. The CDHE created a brand for Colorado's reverse transfer efforts, called Degree Within Reach, and launched a website in October 2013 (<http://www.degreewithinreach.org>). Targeted toward potential reverse transfer students, the website allows students to register for email updates, view a promotional video about reverse transfer, learn about eligibility criteria, and receive answers to questions. Advisors and registrars can also see answers to frequently asked questions and submit questions to the web page

Implementation Timeline

Fall 2012: Colorado hired a Degree Audit Coordinator in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) office and Research/Program Coordinator in the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE).

December 2012 – Present: CCCS automated the download of electronic transcripts into the CCCS Banner system. CCCS is using Parchment as the vendor for the automated transcript exchange process.

May 2013: The statewide reverse transfer marketing campaign was launched.

October 2013: The Degree Within Reach website became operational.

November 2013 – Present: Plans were initiated to sustain reverse transfer efforts through the reverse transfer task force.

Fall 2014 – Present: Colorado began working with remaining Colorado public institutions that did not receive funding to scale-up reverse transfer statewide.

January 2015: The first reverse transfer degrees were awarded.



Credentials awarded as of May 2015: **68**

Credential Type(s): Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of General Studies



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Reverse Transfer Process

Based on a review of implementation across CWID states, OCCRL developed a framework for the reverse transfer process that consists of five broad processes, and Colorado's process is applied to this framework:

1. **Student Identification:** 2- and 4-year institutions submit transcript-level data each semester to CDHE. CDHE determines student eligibility based on these data, and the list of eligible students is then sent to the individual universities. The universities then check this list against their own records to ensure that all students are eligible.
2. **Consent:** The 4-year institutions send an email to eligible students notifying them of the opt-in process and directing them to Degree Within Reach website. Through Colorado's communication and policy design strategy, students may opt-in and consent to authorize transcript exchange and degree conferral. The universities send three emails to offer students the opportunity to consent.
3. **Transcript Exchange:** Once students have consented, the CDHE sends the electronic transcript-level data to the CCCS through Parchment. This process translates the transcript-level data into a format that is readable through Banner, which enables the degree audit process to occur. The two community colleges outside of CCCS are sent a flat file of student course data securely via Biscom.
4. **Degree Audit:** Degrees are audited at the community college using Banner.
5. **Degree Conferral and Advising:** Once the degree audit confirms that students meet all degree requirements, students are contacted by the community college regarding the degree. Colorado plans to contact students who are within a few requirements of the associate's degree and advise students on the steps needed to receive the degree.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

Successes: Key successes in Colorado's reverse transfer program includes the following: the successful completion of the first round of the reverse transfer process which has currently resulted in 68 (and counting) degrees awarded; the collaboration exhibited between the 2- and 4-year institutions in Colorado; quality feedback regarding the process from the institutions which have resulted in changes to the opt-in process; and the course equivalencies built in Banner by CCCS will benefit their processes in more efficiently articulating course work for transfer students.

Challenges: The following are the most significant challenges to Colorado's reverse transfer process: the time needed to manually determine and load course equivalencies in Banner for the community colleges; the requirement for students to opt-in to reverse transfer which negatively impacts student participation numbers; and the time required by the community colleges to follow-up with students with course work from other institutions (mostly private and out-of-state) which may be required to satisfy degree requirements.

Sustainability

The most significant expenses have already been realized in initiating the reverse transfer program in Colorado. After completing the first year of reverse transfer, institutions now have the experience to move through the steps more efficiently, and all involved will continuously seek methods to increase student participation and make the process more efficient.

Institutions Participating in Credit When It's Due

Adams State University
Aims Community College
Arapahoe Community College
Colorado Mesa University
Colorado Mountain College
Colorado Northwestern
Community College
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University-Fort
Collins
Colorado State
University-Global

Colorado State
University-Pueblo
Community College of Aurora
Community College of Denver
Fort Lewis College
Front Range Community
College
Lamar Community College
Metropolitan State University of
Denver (MSUD)
Morgan Community College
Northeastern Junior College

Otero Junior College
Pikes Peak Community College
Pueblo Community College
Red Rocks Community College
Regis University
Trinidad State Junior College
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Colorado-Colorado
Springs
University of Colorado-Denver
University of Northern Colorado
Western State Colorado
University

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