

## First Step Program by CollegeInvest

### Terms & Conditions for 2026

#### General:

The First Step Program by CollegeInvest provides a contribution to the CollegeInvest account of a Beneficiary born or adopted in the State of Colorado on or after January 1, 2020. If you do not have a CollegeInvest account, you must open one prior to your application.

The Account Owner must meet certain eligibility criteria as outlined in these Terms and Conditions.

No more than one application per Beneficiary will be accepted for a First Step contribution. Account Owners must submit separate applications for multiple Beneficiaries.

First Step awards in the calendar year of 2026 will be \$121 per Beneficiary. Thereafter, the rate will be adjusted periodically based on the cost-of-living adjustment.

CollegeInvest currently offers two (2) Special Programs to help families save for their higher education goals. A beneficiary may only participate in one (1) Special Program.

1) The First Step Program provides a \$121 starter contribution. For parents and legal Guardians who claim that award, we offer a match on a portion of future contributions. First Step is designed for children born and/or adopted in Colorado starting in 2020.

2) The Matching Grant Program is a different program than First Step. The Matching Grant Program is geared toward children born outside of Colorado but live here now. Also, it is mainly for children born in 2019 or before. Please review the Matching Grant Program Terms and Conditions for more details.

#### Matching Incentive for Parents/Legal Guardians:

Offering more opportunities for Colorado families to save for higher education, CollegeInvest will also match a portion of future contributions made by the parent or legal Guardian. Participants who received their \$121 First Step award between January 1, 2026 and December 31, 2026 will receive a dollar-for-dollar match of their contributions up to \$500 per year for three (3) consecutive years. If the participant contributes less than \$500 during their enrollment year, the match will start on the following calendar year. This matching incentive is only available for parents or legal Guardians of the beneficiary.

Eligible contributions are contributions made only by the parent or legal Guardian during the contribution period. Upromise, Ugift, employer, rollovers from another 529 account, promotions, including but not limited to the initial First Step award, and other non-account owner contributions do not qualify. The contribution period is for a calendar year from January 1 through December 31 annually. The matching funds will be awarded the following year by May 1. Awards will be deposited into the Account Owner's CollegeInvest account as a scholarship. Contributions made by the Account Owner are tax deductible, but the matching funds are not tax deductible.

#### Defined Terms:

Account Owner – The individual who owns and controls a CollegeInvest Account.

Awardee – An Applicant that meets all the requirements of the First Step Program and is awarded a contribution to their CollegeInvest Account.

**Beneficiary** – The child named in the account who will receive the benefits of the ColleeInvest Account. For the First Step Program, this individual must meet the eligibility requirements specified in these Terms and Conditions.

**ColleeInvest** – ColleeInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, responsible for administering Colorado's 529 college savings program. ColleeInvest manages and administers the First Step Program. No taxpayer dollars or admin fees are used for this Program.

**ColleeInvest Account** – An account or accounts in any plan offered under the ColleeInvest 529 College Savings Program administered by ColleeInvest. These plans currently include the Direct Portfolio College Savings Plan, Scholars Choice College Savings Program, Smart Choice College Savings Plan, and the Stable Value Plus College Savings Plan.

**ColleeInvest First Step Program, or Program** – The program as described in these Terms and Conditions, as such Terms and Conditions may be amended from time to time by ColleeInvest.

**First Step Applicant, or Applicant** – A ColleeInvest Account Owner applying for ColleeInvest First Step who meets the eligibility criteria outlined in these Terms and Conditions.

**First Step Funds** – The funds awarded by ColleeInvest as a First Step contribution. Funds are subject to availability and are not guaranteed.

**Participant** – An Applicant that has been awarded a ColleeInvest First Step contribution.

#### **First Step Applicant Eligibility:**

Starting on January 1, 2026, the Applicant is not limited to a parent (or legal Guardian) of the child. It can be another family member or friend. Furthermore, the Applicant must be a U.S. citizen, legal permanent resident, or is otherwise lawfully present in the U.S. pursuant to federal law. Colorado law requires verification of the lawful presence in the United States of all persons 18 years of age or older before providing public benefits. As noted above, the matching incentive for future contributions is only available to parents and legal Guardians.

The Applicant must own a ColleeInvest account for the Beneficiary. If they don't have an existing account, they must open one, which may be unfunded if they wish to use the \$121 as the initial contribution.

#### **Beneficiary Eligibility:**

The Beneficiary must be born or adopted in the State of Colorado on January 1, 2020 or later and must be under the age of 8 years old at the time of Application.

The Beneficiary may only receive one (1) First Step award. In the event of two First Step Applicants with the same Beneficiary, only the first application received in good order and processed by ColleeInvest will be accepted.

#### **Conditions and Amount of Award:**

If all of the eligibility criteria have been met and the application is eligible, the Applicant will be notified by ColleeInvest they are eligible. All such First Step contributions to be awarded will be subject to the availability of First Step Funds.

**Application for a First Step Contribution:**

Account Owners whose child may be eligible to receive a First Step contribution to their CollegeInvest account must submit an online First Step Application. Only one Application Form per Beneficiary. An Account Owner may apply for multiple Beneficiaries with separate CollegeInvest Account(s), by submitting a separate Application Form for each Beneficiary.

By applying for the Program, you agree to receive communications about the Program and your status from CollegeInvest by mail, email or phone.

**Application Period and Process:**

First Step Application Forms began on February 18, 2020 and have been accepted daily thereafter.

First Step Applicants must complete the online Application Form. Eligibility for an award will be determined by CollegeInvest based on information provided to CollegeInvest by the Colorado Department of Health and Public Environment and the Applicant.

If the Beneficiary is deemed ineligible, or the application is incomplete, the application is rejected and CollegeInvest will notify the Applicant.

**Program Eligibility Verification:**

In the event CollegeInvest determines that any false information was provided by the Participant with respect to his or her Program eligibility, CollegeInvest shall have the right to immediately revoke the First Step Award without the consent of or prior notice to the Participant or the Beneficiary. The selection of First Step Program Participants will be conducted by CollegeInvest personnel whose decisions shall be final.

**Ownership and Investment of Participant's CollegeInvest Account:**

The Participant opens, owns and otherwise maintains control of his/her CollegeInvest account as the Account Owner. The Participant chooses investment options and determines when and if funds are disbursed according to Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code. His or her CollegeInvest Account is governed by the rules set forth in the Plan Disclosure Statement for the particular plan in which the Participant (as Account Owner) has invested.

**Program Disqualification:**

First Step participants who make a withdrawal from their CollegeInvest account, close their CollegeInvest account, change the beneficiary from the First Step participant, or rollover into a non-CollegeInvest account are immediately disqualified from the First Step Program and will not receive future matches or any other program incentives. However, investment changes, including rollovers into another CollegeInvest plan are allowed in accordance with applicable plan guidelines. See Plan Disclosure Statements for the Plan you are invested in for more details.

**Investment Options for Accounts:**

The Participant can choose any investment option available under the CollegeInvest plan for his/her CollegeInvest Account. See the Plan Disclosure Statement for the Plan you are invested in for details.

**Public Assistance Consequences:**

Determining the effect of the First Step Award and the Participant's CollegeInvest Account on eligibility for public assistance programs is the responsibility of the Participant/Account Owner. The Participant/Account Owner should consult a qualified advisor to determine how a college savings plan

and/or an award such as First Step may affect eligibility for state and/or federal benefits. CollegenInvest makes no representation in regard to the effects of a First Step or CollegenInvest Account on eligibility for public assistance programs.

**Participant's CollegenInvest Account Tax Advantages and Consequences:**

To learn about tax advantages and consequences for any CollegenInvest Account, please refer to the Plan Disclosure Statement for the applicable CollegenInvest plan in which you are invested.

**Updated Terms and Conditions:**

To meet the demands of the First Step Program, CollegenInvest reserves the right to and may periodically make adjustments to the Program's Terms and Conditions.