

# News Release

## Pueblo County Board Of County Commissioners

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, February 13, 2017**

**PUEBLO COUNTY NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR WORLD'S FIRST CANNABIS FUNDED  
COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS**  
*EVERY LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR IS AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE*

PUEBLO – Pueblo County Commissioners have announced that the world's first cannabis-funded scholarship has begun accepting applications for its first full-year of funding. On Monday, February 13, the Board of Pueblo County Commissioners approved a contract between Pueblo County and the Pueblo Hispanic Education Foundation (PHEF) to administer the scholarship.

The Pueblo County Scholarship is anticipated to have nearly \$475,000 in funding available for college freshmen enrolling in the Fall semester; an anticipated \$425,000 from cannabis excise tax revenue and another \$49,664 from the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative. Those state funds would not be available without a local match, which was made possible by the cannabis-funded scholarship program. Students can apply at the same time for both funds on the same application form.

Students who meet the following criteria will automatically qualify for the cannabis-funded scholarship:

- The applicant must be a graduating high school senior in 2017 and;
- Reside in Pueblo County and;
- Attend either Pueblo Community College or Colorado State University-Pueblo in the Fall of 2017.

Students can apply for the Pueblo County Scholarship online at [www.phef.net](http://www.phef.net).

Scholarship applications are due Sunday, April 30, 2017. The Board of Pueblo County Commissioners expects roughly a \$1,000 scholarship will be available to every qualifying graduating high school senior who resides in Pueblo County. However, students must fill out the application form to be awarded the scholarship. In past years, between 300 and 400 incoming college freshmen have graduated from local high schools and attended a local Pueblo college. The remainder of the funds will be divvied up based on merit and need.

“Pueblo County has been on the forefront of cannabis policy in America and the world. The full roll-out of our cannabis-funded scholarship program is groundbreaking. We are the first community in the world to provide a cannabis-funded scholarship to every graduating high school senior. It is so critically important to make college affordable for our youth if we want to provide long-term economic opportunity to our community. Too many kids can’t afford to go to college, with this program we are taking cannabis-tax revenue and using it to provide for a brighter future in Pueblo.”

In 2016, Pueblo County awarded 23 scholarships totaling \$50,000.

The Pueblo County Scholarship Fund was created by a ballot initiative in the 2015 Coordinated Election. A minimum of 50 percent of all of the marijuana excise tax collected in Pueblo County is allocated to the Pueblo County Scholarship Fund. The remaining marijuana excise tax revenue is allocated to a list of community enhancement projects.

Pueblo County’s marijuana excise tax is a tax on all marijuana grown in Pueblo County. The tax is charged to the marijuana cultivator only once, when the marijuana is first sold or transferred to a retail store or manufacturer. Pueblo County has been collecting excise tax, by voter approval, since January 1, 2016. The excise tax rate is currently at two percent and will increase by one percent annually until a five percent excise tax rate is achieved. No less than half of the excise tax collected by the County is required to go into the Pueblo County Scholarship Fund. The remainder of the excise tax revenue must go towards a specific list of capital improvement projects.

CONTACT: For more information, please contact Paris Carmichael, Pueblo BOCC Community Information Manager at [carmichp@pueblounty.us](mailto:carmichp@pueblounty.us) or 719-252-8550.

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