

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



September 11, 2008

## **Coloradans understand the value of higher education; worry about cost**

*Poll: Colorado families keep saving for college despite weak economy*

DENVER – Colorado parents are feeling the effects of tough economic times and cite the costs of college as the top reason standing in the way of a college education for their children. But based on their savings practices, they appear to understand and believe in the value of higher education for their children, according to a new statewide poll.

More Colorado parents than ever, 63 percent, are funding some type of college savings account, according to a poll by CollegeInvest, Colorado's not-for-profit higher education financing resource. That's the highest percentage since CollegeInvest started polling in 2003.

Fifty-seven percent of parents say they will pay most or all of their children's college costs. That is up slightly from last year's poll. An additional 33 percent report that they plan to pay some.

Most of these parents recognize the value of saving for higher education when their children are young. Seventy-two percent of those who have set aside money for college started when their child was no more than five years old.

"Although it's never too late to start saving for college, it's good to see that more Colorado families are starting to save for college when their kids are still young," said Jennifer Robinson, chief marketing officer for CollegeInvest. "Time is your greatest asset when it comes to savings."

Talmey-Drake Research and Strategy Inc. polled 800 Colorado parents with children 19 years old or younger on behalf of CollegeInvest, which is a division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. The interviews were conducted from May 21 to June 5, with half of the respondents surveyed by phone and half surveyed online.

While more Colorado families than ever are saving for college, the economy does seem to have taken a toll on how much they are putting aside. Despite parents' desire to fund most or all of their children's college costs, 29 percent of parents say they are saving less money each month for college than they did a year ago compared to just 11 percent who report that they are saving more.

The economy also appears to be making parents who haven't already set up a college savings account more cautious. Twenty-eight percent of those parents said they were likely to set up an account, compared to more than half of all parents surveyed in 2007.

“A 529 college savings plan is worth considering even during challenging economic times,” Robinson said. “CollegelInvest offers plans that can fit virtually any budget and can be opened with as little as \$25. Plus they have added tax benefits that can really add up over time.”

CollegelInvest offers the only college savings plans that combine federal tax advantages with a Colorado income tax deduction for all contributions. Money saved through these 529 plans can be used nationwide at any eligible public or private college, university or vocational school.

For parents who don’t foresee their children going to college, money and motivation are the biggest obstacles. According to the poll, combined these are cited as “major reasons” by 72 percent of these parents.

Colorado’s Department of Higher Education is focused on helping families surmount such obstacles. CollegelInvest and College In Colorado, both divisions of the state agency, offer resources to support students and parents.

“CollegelInvest and College In Colorado are here to stress the importance of higher education to Colorado families, as well as to increase accessibility by addressing issues like money and motivation,” Robinson said. CollegelInvest offers community outreach, tools and products to help financially prepare for college at any age. College in Colorado offers a free website with helpful tools to help families plan, apply and pay for college.

### **About CollegelInvest**

CollegelInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Since 1979, CollegelInvest has helped more than half a million families break down the financial barriers to college by providing expert information, simple planning tools, scholarships, college savings plans, and low-cost student and parent loans. For more information, visit [CollegelInvest.org](http://CollegelInvest.org), call 1-800-448-2424 or contact your financial advisor.

### **About College In Colorado**

The State of Colorado initiated College In Colorado as a statewide effort to improve college access and change expectations about college for all Colorado students, particularly low-income and minority students. To ensure greater information access for students and parents, the campaign offers [CollegelInColorado.org](http://CollegelInColorado.org) as a free resource to explore careers, plan curriculum, search scholarships, review financial aid, compare colleges and apply online – all the tools needed to help plan, apply and pay for college.

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