



The Trailblaze Fund

Helping Denver students forge their own path.

[Apply Here](#)

Mission Alignment

The DPS Foundation helps ensure that investments in our schools are directed in the most effective, equitable, and lasting way. Public funds alone cannot meet every student’s unique needs—especially when financial and access barriers limit opportunities for growth and success.

Guided by our core values—Students First, Integrity, Equity, Collaboration, Accountability, and Fun—the Trailblaze Fund invests directly in high school students who are motivated to pursue their academic, leadership, or career goals, reducing barriers and expanding access to opportunities that help every student thrive.

Program Purpose & Goals

The Trailblaze Fund provides direct support to Denver Public Schools high school students who face barriers related to **student success, post-high school readiness, or leadership development.**

The program aims to:

- Reduce financial and systemic barriers that impact student learning and growth.
- Expand access to opportunities that build confidence, skills, and readiness for the future.
- Empower students to take initiative, practice self-advocacy, and define their own goals.
- Advance equity by supporting students from historically underrepresented or under-resourced communities.

Eligibility & Focus

Who Can Apply:

- Current Denver Public Schools high school students (grades 9–12).
- Projects must be student-initiated and individually focused. For example, if for a school or community club/group, funds will go to the student to manage, not through the district or an intermediary.

Verification:

Eligibility may be verified internally through DPS student ID.

Funding Focus Areas

The program supports expenses that directly contribute to a student's **success, growth, and post-high school readiness.**

Tier 1: Barrier Reduction Grants (\$100–\$1,000)

For immediate or short-term needs that remove barriers to learning or participation.

Examples:

- Course-related expenses (books, materials, lab fees)
- Tutoring, test preparation, or academic support programs
- Transportation to and from school or educational programs
- College application, testing, or transcript fees
- Internet or technology access needed for coursework

Tier 2: Development Grants (\$1,000–\$3,000)

For opportunities that strengthen post-high school readiness, leadership capacity, and long-term goals.

Examples:

- Costs associated with college visits or tours (airfare, lodging, transportation)
- Internship support, including transportation, supplies, or professional attire
- Career certifications, trainings, or workshops
- Leadership development, youth advocacy, or pre-college programs
- Professional or educational conferences related to career or leadership goals
- Required tools, materials, or technology for specialized learning tracks or career programs

What the Program Does Not Fund

The following requests are not eligible:

- Sports-related fees
- Classroom, school, or group projects (covered through [A to Z Fund](#))
- Teacher, staff, or organizational-led initiatives
- Personal income, stipends, or wages
- Non-educational travel or recreational expenses

Application Components

Applicants will complete a short online form including:

1. Description of Need or Opportunity – What do you need funding for?
2. Personal Motivation – How will this support help you achieve your academic, leadership, or career goals?
3. Timeline & Milestones – Outline key dates, steps, or goals for how this funding will support your plan.
4. Expected Outcomes or Impact – What do you hope to learn, achieve, or experience through this opportunity?
5. Budget & Amount Requested – Provide itemized costs and any documentation if available (invoice, screenshot, program details).

Support Offered:

- Optional workshops or office hours for drafting applications.
- Accommodations as needed.

Funding & Disbursement

- Award range: \$100–\$3,000 depending on tier and scope.
- Funds may be distributed via:
 - Check directly to student
 - Direct vendor payment (preferred when possible).
- Receipts or confirmation of use are required to ensure accountability.
- Funds must be used for the approved purpose within the school year.

Review & Selection

- Applications will be reviewed first come, first serve by DPS Foundation staff

Applications are evaluated for:

- Alignment with program focus areas
- Clarity and purpose of request
- Demonstrated need and potential impact
- Feasibility and efficient use of funds
- Thoughtfulness and reflection in responses

Student Advisory Committee

Grant recipients are expected to join the Student Advisory Committee, which meets (virtually) monthly and:

- Provides Input: Reviews and gives feedback on DPS Foundation initiatives, communications, and grantmaking strategies.
- Shared Resources: Help curate, recommend, and disseminate student-centered opportunities and supports.
- Represent Student Voice: Amplify diverse student experiences from across DPS schools.
- Builds Leadership: Offer real-world experience in leadership, philanthropy, and community engagement.

Regular participation is encouraged for leadership development. DPS Foundation facilitators will guide the process neutrally—promoting integrity and collaboration, without leading decisions.

Reporting & Recognition

- Final Report: Recipients will complete a brief reflection describing:
 - How the grant supported their goals.
 - Key lessons learned or personal impact.
 - Any outcomes or experiences they'd like to share with the Foundation community.
- Recognition: Select stories and reflections may be featured in Foundation newsletters, social media, or events celebrating student success.
- MSU Celebration

Timeline (2025–26 School Year)

Application Opens – October 24

Priority Round Reviews - November 7

Rolling Applications Close – March 15

Implementation Period – October – May

Final Reports Due – May 31, 2026

Promotion & Outreach

- Targeted outreach to Title I and under-resourced high schools.
- Collaboration with school counselors, student support teams, and college/career offices.
- Inclusive promotion through social media, newsletters, and student events.
- Multilingual materials and assistance for accessibility needs.

Program Contact

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