



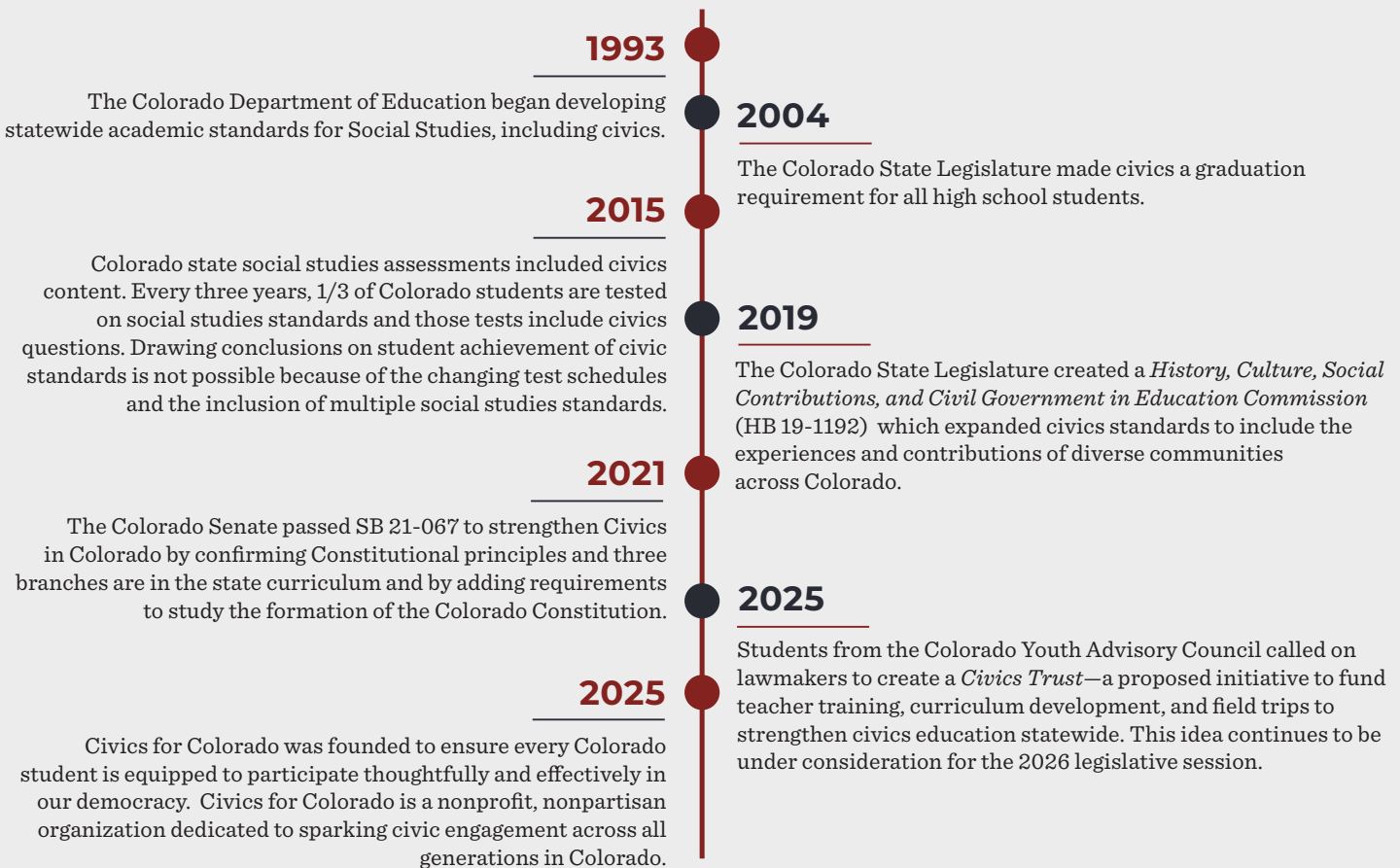
A Brief History of Civics Education in Colorado

**“The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool.
It must be taught and learned by each new generation.”**

Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

We must empower every Colorado student to become a confident, capable participant in our democracy by providing them with real-world civic engagement opportunities that build constitutional understanding and sharp decision-making skills. Currently, some Colorado teachers and schools partner with a variety of high quality civic engagement opportunities for students that build practical skills and understanding. However, giving all students access to engaging civics learning is challenging because many Colorado children do not get access to civics topics until high school. At Civics for Colorado, we aim to ensure each student has access to engaging and authentic civics education throughout their school experience.

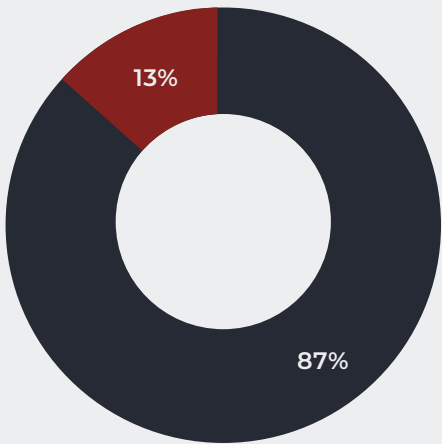
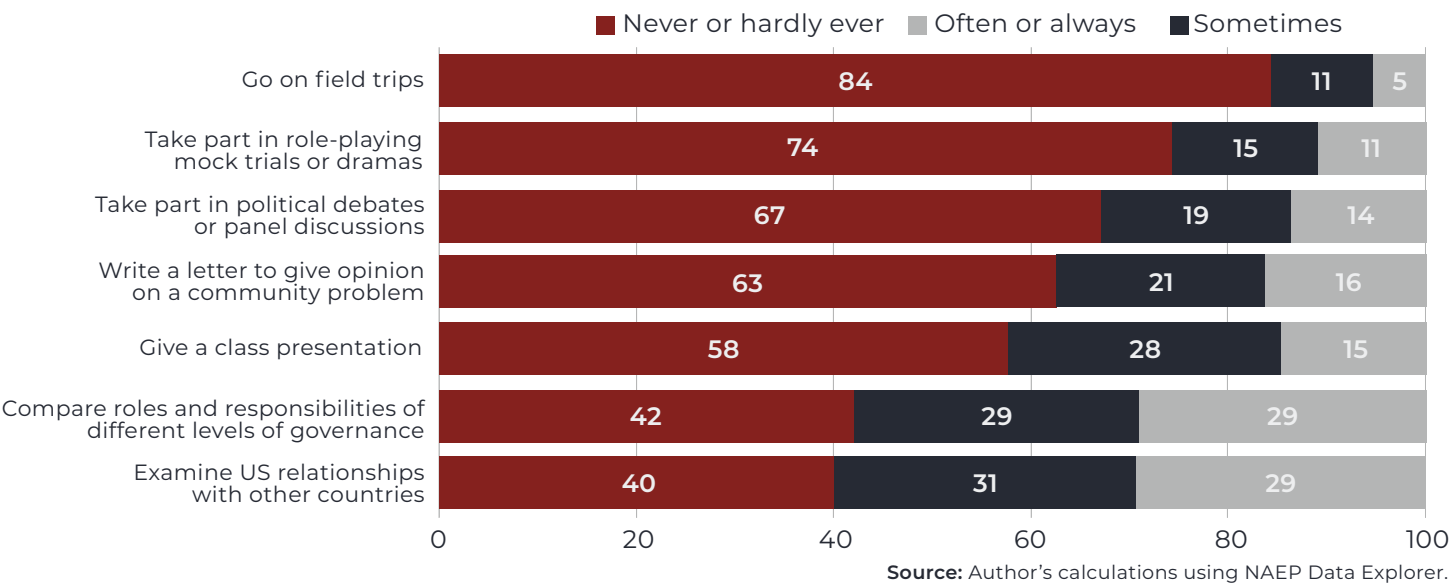
Timeline of Civics Education in Colorado understanding.



Civics for Colorado aims to provide students and educators with tools and opportunities to engage deeply in civic learning by:

- Convening a coalition of stakeholders who advocate for civics education
- Increasing access to professional learning for teachers to empower them in delivering effective civics education.
- Championing real-world civic engagement opportunities for students that build practical skills and understanding.

Eighth-Grade Students’ Participation in Civic-Oriented Activities

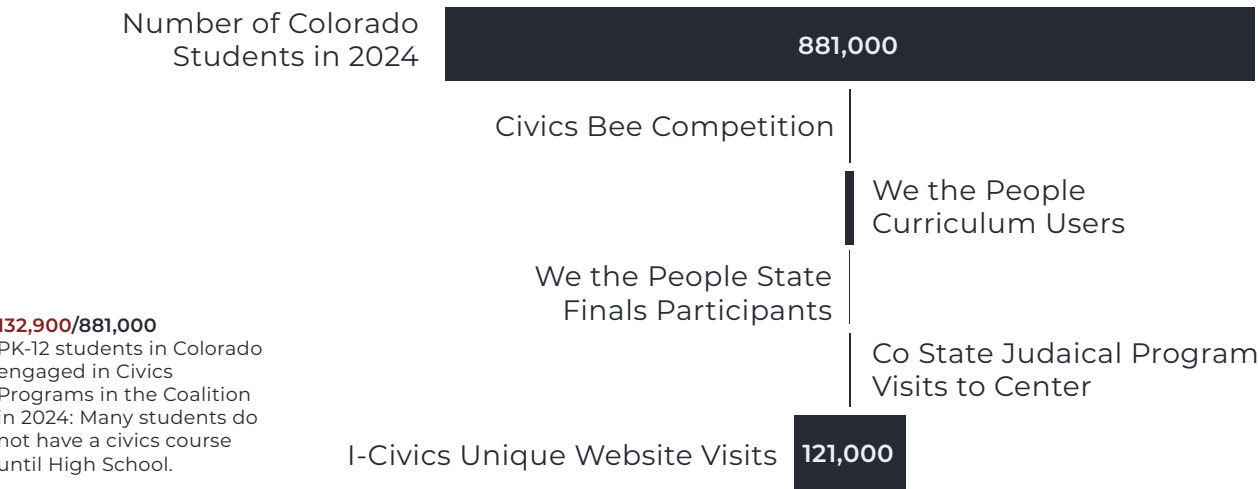


2024: Students in Colorado Engaged in Coalition Programs

■ Number of Colorado Students
■ Total Known Users of Coalition Civics Programs

This is total number of students PK-12:
Many students do not get civics course work until High School.

2024: Colorado Student Connections to Coalition Programs



The Path Forward

Our vision is that every Colorado student is equipped to participate thoughtfully and effectively in our democracy. We believe the most effective strategy to achieve this vision is to equip teachers with the tools and resources they need for high quality, experiential learning.

The funding landscape for public education in Colorado is one of the bleakest in our nation. At a time when many schools can barely afford to stay open 5 days a week and many teachers have to take on second jobs to make ends meet, some might ask—why civics?

— Our future is uncertain. As we head into the 250th anniversary of our democratic republic, and the 150th anniversary of the state of Colorado, we know that our society must tackle complex problems head on. We also know that students who graduate with proficiency in civic competencies gained through high quality civic learning practices are “equipped to address complex challenges, work and study with diverse colleagues, and creatively solve problems that do not have easy solutions.”¹

In order to achieve this, we propose multiple potential paths forward. These paths require private funders, legislators, government officials, and educators to come to the table in good faith and find a way to make these ideas become a reality.

- **Programmatic**

- Build a Civics Hub through the Civics for Colorado Coalition to be the leading resource for information on high quality civics education in Colorado.

- **Legislative**

- Funding for professional development and student resources² for civic education programs (See 2024-25 COYAC Bill proposal).
- Establish a state-sponsored Civic Seal program

Engaged Citizens Are:

- concerned for the rights and welfare of others
- socially responsible
- willing to listen to alternative perspectives
- confident in their capacity to make a difference
- ready to contribute personally to civic and political action



They strike a reasonable balance between their individual interests and the common good while recognizing the importance of practicing civic duties such as voting and respecting the rule of law.

¹J. Torney-Purta and B.S. Wilkenfeld, Paths to 21st Century Competencies Through Civic Education Classrooms: An Analysis of Survey Results from Ninth-Graders. A Technical Assistance Bulletin. (Chicago, Ill.: American Bar Association Division for Public Education, 2009)

²Resources would primarily be used to pay for costs associated with field trips to enable students far from the Capitol to visit hubs of civic activity in the state.



Denver East High School at National We the People Hearing in April 2025. 2nd Place in United States.

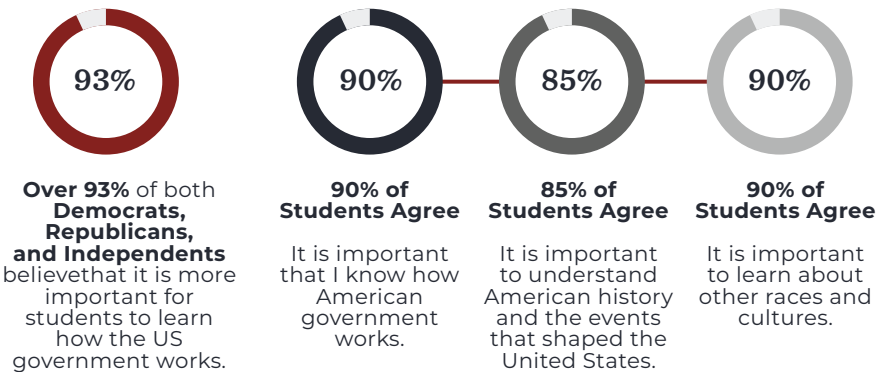
“Further threatening the civic health of our nation is the civic opportunity gap that emerges when schools provide marginalized communities with fewer and less high-quality civic learning opportunities than they provide to middle class and wealthy white students-all of this at a time when democratic aspirations are surging across the globe.”

National Council for the Soocial Studies- Feb 2025

Partners

- All Sides
- Civics Bee
- ICivics
- National History Day
- CO Judicial Outreach
- Bill of Rights Institute
- The Center for Civic Education

Adult & Student Perceptions on Civic Learning



(USC EdPolicy HUB, 2025)
 civiced.org | 60 Years of Civic Education

