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Denver tax for scholarships passes in final tally

Voters approved the scholarship measure alongside tax hikes for mental health, healthy food and parks.

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At first, it seemed like Denver voters had found a tax they could refuse.

Nope.

Final results from Denver Elections, released Tuesday, show that a sales tax to create post-secondary scholarships for local students has passed.

The measure trailed in early results Election Night, but Initiated Ordinance 300 ultimately received 52 percent of the vote. It will raise the city's sales tax by 0.8 cents per \$10, raising an estimated \$14 million in 2019.


Voters rejected a similar measure in 2015. This year, voters approved the scholarship measure alongside tax hikes for mental health, healthy food and parks.

The city will distribute the scholarship money through a new nonprofit with board members appointed by city leaders.

The program will be limited to people who have lived in Denver for at least three years, are younger than 26 years old and who hold a GED or high school diploma. Only 5 percent of the money can go to salaries and other administrative expenses.

The nonprofit won't directly award scholarships to students. Instead, other nonprofits will pay the scholarships and then seek partial reimbursements from the new scholarship fund. The scholarship fund will only pay out if the student is in good standing.

TAGS: CITY, EDUCATION, ELECTION, ELECTION 2018, ELECTIONS, MONEY, NONPROFITS, PARKS, SALES TAX, SCHOOL, TAX



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