

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# College Access Challenge Grant Program

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## FY 2010 Project Abstracts

U.S Department of Education  
Office of Postsecondary Education  
Teacher and Student Development Programs Service  
1990 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006

ALABAMA (\$2,052,910)

Alabama Department of Education  
Sherry Key, 334-242-9111

The primary goal of the Alabama College Access Challenge Grant (AL CACG) project is to increase the number of underrepresented secondary students who enter and remain in postsecondary.

Objectives:

- (1) Significantly increase the percentage of qualified, underrepresented students that complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); enroll in college; and receive a certificate, credential, or degree; and
- (2) Improve the capacity of secondary and postsecondary counselors and financial aid administrators to promote financial literacy and deliver relevant financial awareness information for transition period from secondary to postsecondary.

Authorized Activities/Services:

- Provide information to students and families on postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, planning, and career preparation;
- Provide information on financing options, including activities that promote financial literacy and debt management among students and families;
- Conduct outreach activities through Graduation and Career Coaches for students who may be at risk of not completing high school, not enrolling in or completing college;
- Assist students in completing the FAFSA;
- Implement professional development for guidance counselors at middle and secondary schools and financial aid administrators and college admissions counselors at institutions of higher education to improve such individuals' capacity to assist students and parents with:
  - a) Understanding entrance requirements for admission to institutions of higher education and state eligibility requirements for Academic Competitiveness Grants or National Science & Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant;
  - b) Applying to institutions of higher education, applying for financial assistance and scholarships;
  - c) Activities that increase students' ability to successfully complete the coursework required for a postsecondary degree (including tutoring and mentoring); and
  - d) Activities to improve secondary school students' preparedness for postsecondary entrance examinations.

## ALASKA (\$1,500,000)

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
Laura Jergensen, 907-269-7591

For the past two years, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) has successfully developed and implemented a peer mentoring program in the Anchorage School District (ASD), using initial College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) funds. The primary goal of the program is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Starting in March of 2009, three recent University of Alaska graduates provided “near peer” mentoring to over 2,400 students at Service and Bartlett High Schools. Mentoring activities range from career exploration, preparation for higher education, and resources on the full spectrum of college/training application processes. With the College/Career Guide Program already established at two locations within the ASD, ACPE will expand into other areas of the state, including rural communities for the direct purpose of developing statewide capacity for college access services and long-term program sustainability.

In an effort to extend college access services throughout Alaska, leverage available resources, and keep administrative costs to the minimum, ACPE and project partners identified three levels of service available to interested schools or communities: (1) ACPE will oversee all aspects of the program, including staffing, daily operations and fiscal management; (2) ACPE will provide start-up funding, initial program supervision and fiscal management. During the second or third year, ACPE would begin transitioning components to local control (i.e. tribal entity, local education agency (LEA), or school-based organization). By the end of year four, the entire program would be locally run and funded; and (3) For communities/schools that have financial resources to start their own College/Career Guide Program, ACPE will provide technical support while the local entity meets core program elements. Technical support includes staff training on program development/implementation, a network to share best practices with other peer mentors across the state, and advisory consultation on various program related issues. ACPE will also provide a “toolkit” to assist schools or communities starting their own local peer mentor program.

ACPE is also in the process of establishing a Research and Analysis Unit, which will craft critical policy questions, track and align statewide corresponding data sets, and facilitate the improvement of Alaska’s educational system through evidence-based interventions. The one targeted project of the Research and Analysis Unit will be to assist in the design and implementation a Free Application for Federal Student Aid completion pilot with one school district. Upon completion, ACPE will then identify best practice methodologies and design a statewide strategy for implementation. ACPE and the Alaska College Access Advisory Team have also identified a need for a component related to improving the very low rate of degree completion, particularly at institutions in Alaska. One full-time staff will provide support to all peer-mentored students throughout Alaska as they navigate the transition from high school to college and degree completion throughout the United States.

ARIZONA (\$2,931,727)

Office of the Governor  
Debra Raeder-Gay, 602-771-1205

Improving college attainment opportunities for all students will help ensure the economic health, competitiveness, and future prosperity of the State of Arizona. Data shows that the more highly educated an individual, the higher that person's lifetime earnings. Someone with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn, on average, over \$1 million more than someone with only a high school education.

To ensure Arizona's future economic success, we must address the participation and achievement gaps of segments that historically achieve higher education success at much lower rates. The goals and initiatives of Arizona's College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Application are strategic and designed to connect with and leverage other significant statewide initiatives that provide outreach programs as well as scholarships for disadvantaged and under-served students to achieve a college education.

Through the six goals outlined in our CACG application, Arizona will continue to build on initiatives that increase the number of disadvantaged students who are prepared for, enroll in and successfully achieve a postsecondary degree or certification by: (1) Providing scholarships to Pell-eligible students; (2) Expanding the influence of the Arizona College Access Network including a student/parent portal; (3) Partnering with local and regional college access programs; (4) Providing specific initiatives for our rural and Native American students; (5) Providing an early college and career readiness assessment for under-served students to recognize their abilities and the academic pathway necessary to enter and successfully complete postsecondary coursework; and (6) leveraging these programs with other statewide initiatives.

The governor's office will serve as the fiscal agent of this program and as the grant-making entity to meet the goals of this application. The executive director of the Governor's P-20 Coordinating Council will serve as the CACG project lead. The governor's office will work in partnership with the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education, Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University, the University of Arizona and the Arizona Tri-University Indian Education Council in the coordination and implementation of the goals of this application.

ARKANSAS (\$1,500,000)

Department of Higher Education  
Brooks Harrington, 501-371-2013

The purpose of this project is to encourage students and families to learn about, prepare for, and finance a postsecondary education. The mission of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), in part, is to advocate for higher education and to work towards improving the delivery of higher education services to the citizens of Arkansas. This project will be a comprehensive partnership that will focus the state's attention on the need for its citizens to understand the positive impact of higher education upon the lives of all Arkansans and upon the economic development of Arkansas.

The scope of this project will include a statewide outreach effort that will provide tools that can be used on a long-range basis to help tell the story of the importance of higher education. The attention of the state and local media will be centered on one week in February during which a statewide focus on higher education will take place.

Dropout Factories: A recent study by Johns Hopkins University identified almost 2,000 high schools (about 13 percent of American high schools) where the typical freshman class shrinks by 40 percent or more by the time the students reach their senior year. These “dropout factories” serve large numbers of minority and low-income students, and have fewer resources and less-qualified teachers than schools in more affluent neighborhoods with larger numbers of more economically advantaged students.

Arkansas has nine high schools designated as dropout factories based on their three-year average graduation rates. An existing training program will be expanded for high school guidance counselors who are located in the poorest counties of Arkansas and six career coaches will be placed in some of these dropout factories where there are no existing career coaches.

Arkansas is proposing three new College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) activities focusing on transitioning from high school into college (College 101 Seminar, The Good2Go Group, and a Freshman Seminar) based on the psycho-social needs of students in Tier 4 counties and associated schools. These activities have the dual purpose of providing a large number of students with basic college information as well as providing more personal contact focusing on student success.

Many researchers have determined that adolescence (from about 13 to 20 years of age) is the primary period when role identity is formed and the question “Who am I?” is answered. It is during this age when a student can acquire self-certainty rather than self-doubt. He/she experiments with different roles and adopts one—a negative identity such as delinquency or one that is more constructive. With appropriate interventions provided through the CACG, under-resourced students will have a greater chance of adopting a positive identity and know that college will be the best path in helping them reach their life goals.

## ARKANSAS (continued)

### College 101 Seminars

Designed for students who have some access to college-related information and are seeking answers to specific questions—How do I qualify for financial aid? What types of scholarships are available? What is the difference between a two-year college and a four-year university? How do I get admitted to college(s)?

### The Good2Go Group (3Gs)

People have a fundamental need to feel connected or related to other people. In an academic environment, research shows that students who feel they “belong” have a higher degree of intrinsic motivation and academic confidence. According to students, their sense of belonging is fostered by a teacher/facilitator that demonstrates warmth and openness, encourages student participation, and is enthusiastic, friendly and helpful.

The 3Gs project is based on research related to student activities that foster a sense of belonging. These activities will go beyond information dissemination by providing ongoing college-focused activities that are welcoming, positive reinforcement for career and college-preparation, and motivation for students to achieve academic success.

### Freshman Seminar

Because membership in the Good2Go Group will be limited (to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors), a separate activity, Freshman Seminar, is proposed for high school freshman. Higher education institutions have long seen the value of first year orientation-type courses and the idea is catching on in high schools.

The proposed Freshman Seminar will be modeled after Johns Hopkins University’s Talent Development High Schools curriculum. Sessions will address necessary social and academic skills and create an understanding of what will be expected of students for success in high school, college, and the world of work. Students will practice note-taking, time management, student, social and human relations skills they need in their school lives and their “real” lives outside of school.

The goal of each of these projects is to change the existing culture in Arkansas, which is that higher education is only for the segment of the population that has the academic ability, appropriate aspirations and financial wherewithal to seek a college education, into a culture that embraces some form of higher education for all. When this goal is achieved, more citizens of the state will understand the need for all Arkansans to pursue a postsecondary education and believe in the possibilities of aspiring for and achieving a better life by earning a level of training that will enable one to enjoy the American dream. Arkansans will also learn about existing and sometimes under-utilized financial aid opportunities to help pay for higher education and how to access those financial aid resources, both state and federal, that will help the goal of education beyond high school become a reality.

CALIFORNIA (\$15,038,830)

Student Aid Commission  
Janet McDuffie, 916-464-8040

The Administration and Legislature in California are committed to providing educational opportunity by ensuring both student access to and selection of an institution of higher education for students with financial need. Lack of information about postsecondary educational opportunities and low achievement levels are primary barriers to a college education for students from schools that have low eligibility and college participation rates. The State acknowledges the need to consolidate, incorporate, expand and improve the various programs that provide information to students into statewide efforts. The rising costs of higher education, coupled with a shift in available financial aid from scholarships and grants to loans, make loan repayment options an important consideration in a student's decision to pursue a postsecondary education.

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is the principal state agency responsible for administering over \$1 billion in grant, scholarship, loan repayment and outreach programs. The Commission currently administers two unique outreach programs the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) and the California Cash for College (CCFC) Program whose purpose is to increase California students with financial need awareness of the opportunities afforded to them through various state and federal financial aid programs for postsecondary educational opportunities. The Commission also administers various loan assumption programs whose purposes are to increase and retain people in high need areas within California, such as teachers and nurses.

California's purpose for the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program is to:

- 1) Fund successful partnership programs that provide a combination of comprehensive early college access and career opportunity awareness activities to a quarter of a million students in grades 7 through 14, and their families;
- 2) Increase the number of low-income high school seniors that complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and
- 3) Encourage persons to enter and remain in the teaching profession in California in designated high need subject shortage areas by offering to repay student loans for qualified teaching service.

Over half of California's federal share of grant funding will be directed to regional consortia and partnership programs to ensure direct impact in reaching low-income students and families. More than 21 regional partnership programs in high need geographic regions of California will deliver activities to inform students and families of college and career technical education options in and beyond high school and provide assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

## CALIFORNIA (continued)

Cal-SOAP's 15 inter-segmental consortiums will provide services directly to students at middle and high schools designed to increase the availability of information on postsecondary schooling and work opportunities and raise the achievement levels of these students so as to increase the number of high school graduates eligible to pursue postsecondary learning opportunities.

Through CCFC, one-on-one, multi-lingual assistance on the FAFSA will be provided at hundreds of student financial aid workshops targeted to high schools or surrounding communities where there is a high concentration of poverty, where ratios of counselors to students are high, and where financial aid application rates are historically low. Regional coalitions, high schools and campuses involved in California's CCFC FAFSA completion efforts will work with the Commission to obtain FAFSA and state Cal Grant information to assist high schools to identify students who still need to complete or correct FAFSA and Cal Grant applications.

The Cal-SOAP consortiums assist with CCFC workshops in their geographical areas. The Commission also partners with the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges and the California Department of Education to develop statewide messaging regarding postsecondary educational opportunities, availability of financial aid, and career technical education.

The Commission's Assumption Program of Loans for Education (APLE) was established to address the growing shortage of high-quality classroom teachers, and there is a need for qualified teachers throughout California. The remainder of California's federal share of grant funding will be directed to APLE participants by providing loan repayments to teachers who are employed in low performing schools, or who teach in high need subject shortage areas such as math, science and special education. California's matching share of the CACG will also provide APLE loan repayment grants to teachers employed in high need subject matter and low-income/low-performing schools.

California's goals for the CACGP are to significantly increase awareness and availability of college and career opportunity information for underrepresented students and their parents; to increase targeted student and parent knowledge of financial aid programs and opportunities to fund college and career technical education; to assist low-income students and their parents to complete the FAFSA, and to deliver more than \$15 million in loan repayment benefits to teachers in high need subject shortage areas, and in low income/low performing schools.

COLORADO (\$1,651,716)

Colorado Department of Higher Education  
Cheryl Lovell, 303-866-8123

Four major constructs guide the goals and activities of the Colorado College Access Challenge Grant (CCACG) project:

- 1) **CCACG will be data-driven in all aspects of the grant.** CCACG will develop a longitudinal tracking database to monitor: (a) students from scholarship application to degree completion; (b) information services about postsecondary options; (c) financing college, financial literacy, and debt management activities; (d) communication with students by keeping close connections with them to support them both financially and psychosocially throughout their postsecondary enrollment; (e) Free Application for Federal Student Aid completions by Colorado county; (f) scholarship opportunities and make sure these are made available to potential applicants; and (g) professional development needs of middle, high school, and postsecondary counselors to assist them in understanding postsecondary options and financial aid. The project will use data to drive decision-making about both human and fiscal resources. We have added a planning, implementing, and reviewing/evaluating set of activities to each of our tasks. We are aware of the need to use data to guide our activities and also to improve targeting of our services as necessary.
- 2) **CCACG will reach out to major partners and organizations that share intentions to increase access to postsecondary education throughout Colorado.** Partnerships will allow the CCACG to maximize its capacity and to support the work of Colorado Department of Higher Education to close the achievement gap. The project will focus especially on partners that reach typically underserved populations in Colorado and we will convene and connect with appropriate nonprofit agencies utilizing their outreach activities that mutually support the goals of this grant.
- 3) **CCACG will implement transfer transition tools for students.** These tools will allow students to successfully navigate a path among Colorado higher education institutions so they can maximize their academic credits and facilitate educational transfer opportunities.
- 4) **The work of CCACG is predicated on long-term, sustainable goals and activities.** Transforming access to postsecondary opportunities is not an easy task and we have taken a long-term perspective towards the ultimate goal of closing the ethnic achievement gap in Colorado.

CONNECTICUT (\$1,500,000)

Department of Higher Education  
Mark French, 860-947-1856

Connecticut will utilize the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) funds in order to provide a broad array of services designed to increase access to, and completion of, a higher education for underrepresented/underserved students. The programs aimed at achieving this goal are as follow:

### **FAFSA First**

VITA FAFSA Completion Project. The FAFSA First program will provide Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion assistance through the Co-Opportunity, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) tax preparation service. This is a continuation of a successful program which was begun in 2009 under the first round of CACG funding. It is a well known fact that completing the FAFSA can be a significant road-block for underrepresented students who wish to pursue a higher education. Through the VITA FAFSA preparation service, VITA sites in the Hartford area are staffed by a FAFSA completion counselor who works in partnership with the site tax preparers in order to coordinate the completion of the FAFSA based on the completed tax information. The overall goal is to increase the number of students who are able to successfully complete and submit a FAFSA.

High School Counselor Financial Aid Workshop. High school counselors in Connecticut are in need of assistance in understanding the complicated process of assisting students through the process of attaining a higher education. As such, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education (CTDHE) will hold a workshop for high school counselors. This workshop will provide counselors with informational sessions on such topics as college preparedness, admissions, financial aid and other areas related to assisting underserved students to move onto higher education.

Connecticut Student Financial Assistance Pamphlet. Understanding the myriad sources and types of financial aid can be mindboggling for students and families. Therefore, CTDHE will produce a "Connecticut Student Financial Assistance Pamphlet" which will provide students and families a clearly laid out description of the various aid programs they may be eligible for. This pamphlet will be distributed to high schools throughout the state, handed out at various college fairs, mailed to individuals and made available online as a PDF.

### **Community Outreach Team**

Each year there is a tremendous demand for community based information on higher education access and success. In the past community groups and school systems have acquired the information they need through a patchwork system of agencies and speakers. In recent years, many of these groups and school systems have had trouble getting experts to come out and speak as needed. Therefore, CTDHE will for the Community Outreach Team with as a centralized department charged with providing community level assistance in all aspects of college access

## CONNECTICUT (continued)

and completion. The staff of this department will provide training to counselors, speak at financial aid and admissions events for schools, create comprehensive education materials on the topic of access and completion and serve as bridge-counselors between high schools and state colleges and universities.

### **College Access Counselor Education Program**

High School Counselors have many duties and charges, one of which is assisting students with the daunting task of applying to college. Many counselors are finding it more and more difficult to keep up with this assignment, given the increased student load many are faced with due to staff reductions. On top of that, many find it increasingly difficult to stay abreast of the ever more complex task of counseling students on all aspects of college preparedness and access. Therefore, CTDHE will be starting an education program which will provide a post-baccalaureate certificate to students wishing to become college access counselors at the high school level. The target audience for students for this program will be recent college graduates, or current high school counselors. The curriculum, as developed, will cover all aspects of higher education access and completion. The goal will be to place successful candidates in urban and underserved high schools to provide direct assistance to students wishing to pursue a higher education.

### **P-20 Project Manager**

The P-20 Council is a coordinating council formed to leverage available resources to increase both higher education access and completions. The P-20 project manager accomplishes this goal in the following way. The P-20 project manager sets targets for higher education access and completion with the goal of increasing the attainment of higher education credentials among urban and underserved student populations. The project manager also develops systems with partner school districts which will allow for the gathering of data on at risk students progressing towards and through higher education. In addition the project manager is responsible for developing regional partnerships with the goal of supporting the development of programs and policies aimed at increasing student access to, and completion of higher education. The project manager also identifies and develops educator effectiveness deliverables which provide a plan for educators to better prepare students for higher education. Finally, the project manager is the state's representative for the Complete College America initiative.

### **College Ready 21**

Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in the U.S. between poor and non-poor students, and among white students and both African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students. This is most acute at the high school level where white students score higher across all subject areas tested. The Connecticut College Career (CCC) Academy program addresses this achievement gap through engagement of students in innovative STEM coursework that develops core academic competencies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to insure the successful transition from high school to college.

## CONNECTICUT (continued)

The CCC Academy builds on the validated success of the consortium's prior State and National Science Foundation (NSF) funded work and scales up results by creating a College Career Academy targeting urban high school students historically underrepresented in higher education and STEM careers. The CCC Academy's articulated online curriculum is embedded with experiential learning experiences to build college and workforce readiness across all fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Participating students will receive intensive academic intervention as they earn up to 18 college credits through the CCC Academy coursework prior to graduating high school. The CCC Academy develops 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce skills aligned with the American Competitiveness Initiative. The curriculum is developed for a "blended" teaching environment with online materials delivered to students and teachers in the local high school classrooms.

A major enhancement to the CCC Academy sequence will be the development of a new course, College Ready 21 (CR21) that all students must complete by the end of ninth grade. CR 21 will focus students efforts on the creation of a success plan and an ePortfolio that will guide and document student efforts towards attainment of high school credentials and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. The student ePortfolio will also serve as a "student guide book" that will facilitate the college and financial aid application process throughout the four-year academy sequence. The CCC Academy program also features a contemporary Mathematics sequence that focuses student development on a core set of arithmetic, algebra and pre-calculus skills needed for success in College level math courses. Another enhancement to the CCC Academy program will include the utilization of the College Board Accuplacer as a diagnostic instrument to identify weaknesses in student math skills. All CCC Academy students must successfully complete the Accuplacer at a level that insures their placement in college-credit bearing math courses without the need for remediation.

### **Connecticut College Access & Success Program (ConnCAS)**

Each year there is a population of high school graduates who are college focused, yet lack the standard admissions requirements and/or the social skills to succeed in college. To assist these students in overcoming these barriers the State of Connecticut created the ConnCAS program. This program is designed for students from underserved populations who aspire to enroll at one of the state's public universities, yet who are under-prepared for the challenges of college. Each of the five state universities administers a ConnCAS program on its campus each summer. The program provides these students with individual academic counseling and referral services, personalized educational plans, transfer admissions (if needed) and financial aid advisement. In addition, these students are provided the opportunity to participate in peer mentoring, planned trips and cultural activities. The ultimate goal of ConnCAS is to keep these students in school and help them to succeed in reaching graduation and receiving the academic credential they aspire to.

DELAWARE (\$1,500,000)

Department of Education  
Susan Haberstroh, 302-735-4025

The purpose of the Delaware College Access Challenge (CACG) project is to secure funding to implement and sustain initiatives that will increase the number of students, especially underrepresented students such as minorities and first generation college-goers, who enter and successfully complete a postsecondary program of study.

The goals include increasing students' and families' knowledge of: college readiness requirements, planning and selecting a postsecondary institution, the affordability of college including financial aid/scholarship awareness and application, and the application process. We also plan to enhance the capacity of our educators and other partners to provide guidance and motivation through professional development and networking opportunities.

The scope of our project is multi-faceted. Much of our scope of work will focus around the recommendations from the Institute of Education Science *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do* (September 2009) practice guide. The recommendations include:

- Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9<sup>th</sup> grade;
- Utilize assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for college, and assist them in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified;
- Surround students with adults and peers who guide and support their college-going aspirations;
- Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry; and
- Increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid.

Delaware has planned activities that align with these five recommendations. In addition, the state plans to leverage other grant activities such as those already in place with the current CACG grant and those that are new. This should drive increases in our ability to affect college access and success in a more robust manner. These activities include: providing funding for dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities; fund Local education agency's identified programs that support students in promoting access and success in college; provide ongoing training to counselors, teachers, other school support members and business/community partners; provide the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) to all 10<sup>th</sup> graders; fund the continuation of the online delivery of Student Success Plans and conduct a study of its impact; explore the establishment of an Early College Program in collaboration with at least one of our institutes of higher education; expand and increase the three-tiered communications campaign and outreach efforts; and finally provide training and set up support for the use of the newly developed Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) and other modules in our Student Information System (SIS) that allow districts/charter schools to monitor "on-track" to graduate status of students.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (\$1,500,000)

Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
Renee Faulkner, 202-724-7146

Research states that only 70 percent of students nationally complete high school. Of those, only 53 percent enter college immediately after high school graduation and only 35 percent earn a four-year degree. In the District of Columbia (DC), the outcomes are significantly lower: only 57 percent of students graduate high school and only 9 percent of entering ninth graders complete a four-year degree within five years after high school graduation. Considerable research on the topic identifies primary obstacles to college access and success as unmet financial need, inadequate academic preparation, and insufficient information, guidance and encouragement.

The activities that took place under the District of Columbia's previous College Access Challenge Grant revealed that: (1) District public school students are especially susceptible to being deterred by these obstacles; and (2) that local college access providers, guidance counselors, and college administrators play special roles in helping students overcome them. The goal of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education is to strengthen the capacity of college access providers and guidance counselors to:

- 1) Offer accurate and consistent information on financial aid and college financing options;
- 2) Build strong working relationships with one another in an effort to coordinate resources and serve a broader range of students; and
- 3) Increase the number of high school students who graduate ready for college and without need for remedial coursework.

In partnership with sub-grantees the DC College Success Foundation, the University of the District of Columbia and the Posse Foundation, the OSSE will provide the following activities:

- 1) Comprehensive financial aid conferences for college access providers, college admissions staff and middle- and high school guidance counselors that will prepare them to provide more accurate and consistent information to college-goers;
- 2) Financial support and technical assistance to build new and strengthen existing College Access Provider's Collaboratives in public high schools; and
- 3) Rigorous college preparatory summer bridge program for 150 college bound high school graduates that will include free college credits, a campus immersion experience, and tuition assistance.

These activities will be supplemented with direct financial aid outreach to students and relevant research projects and publications.

FLORIDA (\$6,391,555)

Florida Department of Education  
Levis Hughes, 850-410-6810

The overriding purpose of the Florida College Access Challenge Grant (FCACG) project is to help underrepresented Florida students obtain a postsecondary education. Training and education beyond the secondary level rewards the individual with expanded job opportunities and higher wages. An educated workforce that is prepared to meet the challenges of our global economy also benefits the state and the country.

All project activities will be directly related to three broad goals: getting students ready for college, getting them into college, and getting them through college.

It is vital that students begin to prepare and plan for college early, preferably in middle school. The FCACG project activities will ensure that students, parents, and guidance counselors are fully informed about the courses and other requirements for college entrance and that they know how to make full use of the career and academic information and planning tools provided to them.

A major roadblock to entering college is lack of funds. Therefore, most of the funds will be used for need-based grants to students.

Studies have shown that many students do not know how to access higher education. Programs designed to assist students with every step in the process, including career information, academic program selection, completing the admission application, testing, and finding and applying for financial aid will also be available.

Too many students begin college only to drop out within the first few semesters. Information and outreach programs will be provided that offer substantial assistance to help students successfully complete their postsecondary education.

GEORGIA (\$4,170,570)

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia  
Patricia Paterson, 404-463-0105

Georgia's College Access Plan ("Plan"), coordinated through the Governor's Office and Alliance of Education Agency Heads, has a statewide scope with a specific focus on the dual pipeline of: (1) P-12 students who are underrepresented in postsecondary education and their families; and (2) low income adults at risk of not completing college. While most services will extend statewide to all underrepresented P-16 students and their families, some services will be targeted to schools and districts serving large percentages of students and families living below the poverty line applicable to the individual's family size. The project will enhance, link, and disseminate current college access initiatives across partner agencies and organizations and implement new initiatives which fill in gaps related to underrepresented students.

The **goals** of the Plan are to increase postsecondary degree attainment of P-12 students underrepresented in postsecondary education in Georgia and to increase degree attainment of the state's low-income adults with some college credit but no degree.

The **Objectives** of Georgia's College Access Plan are:

- 1) To increase the number of underrepresented students who graduate from Georgia high schools ready, supported, and motivated to go into postsecondary education;
- 2) To increase the number of underrepresented students successfully enrolled and persisting in postsecondary education; and
- 3) To increase the number of underrepresented students, including low-income adults who have some college credit but have not attained a degree, who persist in and complete postsecondary education.

Six activities support **Objective One**, which targets readiness, support, and motivation for underrepresented P-12 students: (1) enhance the college and career information system, including Individual Graduation Plan resources, through GAcollge411; (2) provide pre-service and professional learning related to college access and success to pre-service and practicing school counselors and higher education enrollment professionals; (3) enhance GAcollge411 capabilities to support other grant activities, including Georgia Apply to College Week, Peach State Pathways, Financial Literacy services, counselor training, and planning for programs of study; (4) launch statewide Free Application for Federal Student Aid Initiative and enhance "College, Yes, You Can events;" (5) engage a wide range of community and business organizations to create a college-going culture, disseminate information about going to college, and provide direct assistance in the college planning, financing, application, and enrollment process; and (6) conduct a statewide college completion public awareness campaign.

Five activities support **Objective Two**, which focuses on the successful enrollment and initial academic success of these students in postsecondary education: (1) expand Georgia Apply to College Week at high schools serving high percentages of underrepresented students; (2) provide book grants to high-need Early College students and Move On When Ready students; (3)

GEORGIA (continued)

develop and implement the Georgia Transfer Articulation Cooperative Services (GATRACS) portal to

provide centralized information on transfer and articulation of dual enrollment courses into postsecondary education; (4) launch pilot “Near Peer” program through service learning courses to deploy college students as “college coaches” for high-need seniors; and (5) provide college and career centers at targeted high schools.

Four activities support **Objective Three**, aimed at increasing degree completion of underrepresented adults: (1) develop and implement the GATRACS transfer and articulation portal to provide a one stop information site on articulation opportunities and course transferability; (2) expand the University System of Georgia Adult Learning Consortium to provide enhanced services and programs, including shortened time to degree, for adults returning to college; (3) promote adult college completion through a public awareness campaign; and (4) establish Military Resource Centers and expand military outreach activities.

HAWAII (\$1,500,000)

Charter School Administrative Office  
Roger McKeague, 808-586-3798

The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program funds will provide important resources to the State of Hawaii to increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education. Two major objectives of the grant are:

- 1) Increase the number of high school students in underrepresented regions such as the Waianae coast and West Hawai‘i and the charter schools, that complete the financial aid and college applications, and enroll in postsecondary education; and
- 2) Increase the number of returning adult learners, especially from the underrepresented regions of the Waianae coast and West Hawai‘i, to enroll in postsecondary education and complete a college degree.

To achieve these objectives, the CACG grant will be used to fund activities in these areas:

- a. Development of a College Access Web Portal that will serve as a one-stop information resource to students and families in underrepresented regions and charter schools. The portal will provide modules for career and college exploration, student portfolio management, college application assistance, provide “one-stop” financial aid and scholarship application assistance, college admission test preparation and electronic transcript management.
- b. Outreach activities for Native Hawaiian students and returning adult learners in underrepresented regions and charter schools. Activities may include: college application and financial aid application completion week; academic counseling on college options; increased distance-learning options; and increased partnerships with the business community on recruitment and internship opportunities.
- c. Summer “bridge” programs for students in underrepresented regions and charter schools on student leadership development and transitions to college. Activities may include: programs for students interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics careers; student leadership workshops; and life and study skills development.

The grant funds will be administered by the Charter Schools Administrative Office (CSAO) of the State of Hawaii, a state office that is responsible for the organization, operation, and management of Hawaii’s charter school system. The CSAO will award sub-grants to one or more non-profit organizations and/or state agencies to implement the activities outlined above, and will provide oversight of the grant.

IDAHO (\$1,500,000)

Idaho Board of Education  
Dana Kelly, 208-334-2270

Idaho is the nation's fourteenth largest state geographically, covering approximately 83,000 square miles. However, Idaho is ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in the nation for population, with 1.5 million residents. Thirty-five of its forty-four counties are defined as rural (a county in which the largest town or city has fewer than 20,000 residents). Idaho has a significant number of low-income communities both in rural and metropolitan areas. Many of the low-income communities tend to be areas with lower high school graduation rates and lower postsecondary attendance rates.

Idaho education policy seeks to increase access and academic preparedness for postsecondary education for all secondary students by mandating that all districts provide advanced opportunities for Idaho students and increasing graduation requirements. In an effort to assist districts with these mandates, the State Board of Education (the Board) has partnered with Idaho postsecondary institutions, the State Department of Education (SDE), and individual districts to provide advanced opportunities for students.

Additionally, the Board has incorporated into its Strategic Plan goals and objectives that move toward their vision of a highly educated citizenry. A few of these goals and objectives include providing opportunities for individual advancement by setting policy and advocating for increased access for individuals of all ages, abilities, and economic means to Idaho's educational system; increasing student performance; improving the efficacy of educational resources; and, increasing the educational attainment of all Idahoans. The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program provides an opportunity to advance the Board's agenda by targeting students from underrepresented populations with the information and resources necessary to assist them in preparing for postsecondary options.

Idaho's CACG Program activities include: A statewide Free Application for Federal Student Aid completion event; advanced opportunities including increased access to dual credit courses; an expanded information campaign to include middle school students and the local business community; a near-peer mentor program in select Idaho high schools; expanding campus visits to include parental attendance; professional development for high school, financial aid, and admission counselors; and the development of a college access network. To implement these grant activities, the Board will collaborate with the business community, SDE, institutions of higher education, and school districts statewide.

ILLINOIS (\$4,621,733)

Illinois Student Assistance Commission  
Jacqueline Moreno, 847-948-8500

The Illinois Board of Higher Education's "Public Agenda for College and Career Success" asserts that the story of education and economics in Illinois is a "tale of two states." One Illinois is educated and flourishing economically, while the other is underserved educationally and struggling financially. This bifurcation in Illinois creates a "prosperity gap" which is directly correlated to the large and widening disparities in educational access and completion across race/ethnicity, income, and geographical area. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) works to narrow this prosperity gap through the programming in place within the division of College Access and Outreach.

The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) will continue to help fund ISAC's statewide corps ("ISACorps") of near-peer mentors who reached more than 50,000 students and families in 2009-2010. The recent college graduates will reside in each of the 39 community college districts in Illinois. Mentors in each district will collaborate to raise college awareness and improve college planning, preparation, application, and completion. These goals will be met through the implementation of college awareness and preparation activities, for example: establishment of *What's Next Illinois* accounts; guided career exploration; events for parents without college experience; financial aid nights; Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) completion workshops; career advisement; consumer education; the construction of long-term college and career plans; and essay-writing and personal statement workshops.

Mentors will continue to be responsible for reaching their communities through events around the district at a variety of times and days, including weekends and evenings. They will also work to develop and maintain strong working relationships with: high schools' college advising staffs; the admission office at the nearest four-year college; the financial aid office at the local community college; the middle school; trusted community-based organizations; other state agencies; and major employers in the area.

There are three major additions to the existing mentor program that are key initiatives for the 2010 fiscal year. First, every eighth grade student in Illinois will receive information about ISAC's college planning and preparation services. Because eighth grade test-scores are powerful predictors of college enrollment rates of all races/ethnicities and both genders, it is crucial to raise awareness early. Through inter-agency partnerships, ISAC will mail information about transitioning to high school and planning for college and career success to the home of each eighth grade student. Students will receive information about the services available to them, and their families through ISAC, including: ISACorps near-peer mentors; the *What's Next Illinois* suite of college and career preparation Web tools; early awareness events in their area; and the college and career planning specialists available to them online and by phone.

## ILLINOIS (continued)

The second addition to the program for 2010 will be the staffing of a call center by near-peer mentors. A small call center staff will supplement the successful work of the existing on-the-ground ISACorps. Recognizing the geographic diversity of our state, as well as the many

ILLINOIS (continued)

significant competing priorities and time commitments for our highest need students and families, a centralized bank of highly trained near-peer counselors available by phone, email, and online and accessible during business and non-business hours will help to ensure that no Illinois student or parent is unable to receive the benefits of our program simply due to distance and/or scheduling. The call center will also allow us to promote a centralized point of contact through which interested students can find out more information about the program and mentors in their area. Thousands of high school students received information and/or direct assistance through walk-in hours at high schools, libraries, and other community centers during the first year of the program. Additionally, more than 2000 students voluntarily opted to participate in ongoing mentoring opportunities. With the addition of a toll-free call in number and near-peer staffing, we also hope to increase the participation rates in each of the aforementioned categories.

As of June 25, 2010, 75.5 percent (14,062 students) of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) seniors completed a FAFSA. The likelihood that these 14,062 students enroll in a four-year college is much higher because of this completion. However, only about one-third of CPS seniors who aspire to complete a four-year degree enroll in a college that matches their qualifications. ISAC's third major new initiative for the program in 2010 involves a small group of near-peer mentors working with underrepresented students in the CPS system to identify and apply to colleges and universities that best match their academic preparation and interests. By providing strategically-designed, research-based services, the mentors will collaborate with CPS staff to support high school seniors and juniors as they search for and apply to postsecondary opportunities. As a subset of the ISACorps, CPS student interventions will include general outreach presentations, working group sessions, postsecondary engagement (i.e., recruitment presentations), and direct counseling. Outside of school, two parent service specialists will foster strong parent networks and equip parents and community members with the tools and knowledge to support college planning and preparation. Through this unique combination of in-school and out-of-school supports, the program aims to: (1) increase student awareness of key stages in an informed college search; (2) increase the rate of application to and attendance at matching schools; (3) establish measures to identify students at risk of failing to complete college search and application benchmarks; and (4) engage parents and other community members using a replicable strategy for strengthening college-going cultures.

In addition to the three major new initiatives for the program in 2010, the statewide expansion of an existing aspect of the program will be put into place in January 2011. After the successful partnership between ISAC and CPS (the largest school district in the state) in which FAFSA completion data was used to increase FAFSA filing rates by CPS students from 64 percent in 2007 to 81 percent in 2009, the program was expanded in 2010 to include the second and third largest school districts in the state, Elgin (U46) and Rockford respectively. In 2011, data will be available for all high schools in Illinois, and all school districts in Illinois will have the ability to

ILLINOIS (continued)

opt into the program. As cited previously, FAFSA completion has been found to directly correlate with college attendance. Early FAFSA completion helps to ensure that the highest need students can take advantage of all need-based programs for which they are eligible before funds are depleted.

INDIANA (\$2,440,928)

Commission of Higher Education  
Jason Bearce, 317-464-4400

The State of Indiana is committed to the following reality: to thrive as a state and as individuals, all Hoosiers will need to achieve a depth and breadth of education never seen in the state's history. Indiana currently ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for college-going rates. What is far more problematic than being in the middle of the pack is that in Indiana, of those students who enter four-year institutions, less than a third complete college in four years and just over half finish in six years. In Indiana's community colleges, only about fourteen percent of students graduate within three years. Clearly, Hoosiers are attending postsecondary institutions, but they are not completing their programs. Indiana will work through existing infrastructures to build and add sustainable capacity to prepare increasing numbers of students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education—while placing an emphasis on low-income populations.

In an effort to best plan and strategize a comprehensive use of the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) funds, Indiana has organized its project by three populations of students at each stage of the education pipeline: K-12, college and adult. For these main audiences, the CACG funds will focus on three core messages (planning, preparing and paying for college) and support these audiences through three primary areas: communications and campaigns, online support, and on-the-ground support. Communications and campaigns will offer a broad approach to sharing information (e.g., public awareness and information, engaging campaigns, creating guides and publications) while online support will work to engage constituents at a closer level (e.g., trainings, financial aid tools). On-the-ground support will consist of more hands-on support programs at local levels (e.g., advising, mentoring, transition planning).

Though efforts will be coordinated by Learn More Indiana (LMI), an outreach partnership of collaborating state agencies responsible for education, financial aid, and workforce development that includes the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE), Indiana's plan would not be complete without corresponding support from the other partners in Learn More Indiana: the Governor's Office, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), the Indiana Department for Workforce Development (IDWD) and the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI). LMI is working to extend these efforts to the local level through Indiana's College Success Coalition, a growing network of organizations and individuals working to promote a college-going and completion culture in Indiana.

IOWA (\$1,500,000)

Iowa College Student Aid Commission  
Michael Anderson, 515-725-3406

Iowa's College Access Challenge Grant project seeks to enable access to postsecondary education and promote a college-going culture among low-income and underrepresented students across the state by achieving the following objectives:

1. Increase college-going expectations, academic preparation, and planning for college among low-income and under-represented students in Iowa.
2. Increase career awareness and career preparation, particularly among low-income and under-represented students.
3. Improve financial literacy among low-income and under-represented students in Iowa in order to help facilitate college access.
4. Improve the capacity of educators, counselors, and administrators to assist students and parents with planning, preparing, and paying for college.

With support from the College Access Challenge Grant, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission will fund and coordinate the following activities and services:

1. Provide all students in Iowa with access via the IHaveaPlanIowa Web portal. Web portal resources promote college-going expectations, assist in curriculum planning and other academic preparation, provide practical information for college planning, and provide career information and career decision-making assistance. The portal also provides information to students and families on postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, and financing; career planning and preparation; and other information that promotes financial literacy and debt management. The portal enables Iowa school districts to meet the requirements of Iowa law (§279.61) which requires districts to guide 8th grade students in creating personal plans for completing high school and preparing for postsecondary success; the IHaveaPlanIowa Web portal hosts the system designated by the Iowa Department of Education for implementing this law. The Web portal promotes awareness of educational opportunities, helps to recruit students into postsecondary options and, by reinforcing academic readiness, ultimately supports postsecondary educational attainment.
2. Provide all students in Iowa, including low-income and under-represented students, with access to an online financial literacy media platform via the IHaveaPlanIowa Web portal. This media platform shall provide interactive instruction in financial literacy topics and student loan default prevention. The media platform offers a means for districts to deliver key aspects of the Iowa Core Curriculum, including a challenging and meaningful financial literacy curriculum. Iowa law requires all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools in the state to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum, which outlines the essential concepts and skills for students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

IOWA (continued)

3. Coordinate and fund in-person outreach activities and events for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in or completing college. Iowa CACG staff will develop and coordinate outreach activities throughout the state. Activities shall include, for example, evening conferences at Iowa schools focusing on financial aid and college preparation during which program staff will present information directly to students and families. The grantee will also provide media kits for communicating with students and families to every public and non-public high school and middle school in Iowa; this includes some 650 schools.
4. Coordinate and fund in-person professional development opportunities for educators, including school guidance counselors, financial aid administrators, and college admissions counselors in order to improve their capacity to assist students and families in planning, preparing, and paying for college. Iowa CACG staff will develop and coordinate professional development opportunities. Support for professional development opportunities shall include, for example, funding registration and travel costs for Iowa educators to attend training in family economics and financial education delivered by experts in the field. Iowa law requires that districts work with students to develop an 8th grade plan and for Iowa teachers to provide planning assistance to students.

KANSAS (\$1,500,000)

Kansas Board of Regents  
Diane Lindeman, 785-296-4749

The project plan for the state of Kansas will be the continuation of programs and activities that were developed during the initial implementation of the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) during FY 2008 and FY 2009, with the addition of new projects in the areas of access and persistence that will compliment the goals of training, education, and early awareness in the original project plan.

The training aspect of the project plan will be the continued expansion of the fall counselor training workshops sponsored by the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (KASFAA). During FY 2008 and FY 2009, the CACG funding enabled the addition of new sites (primarily in remote rural and lower socioeconomic areas of urban areas), and the inclusion of middle school counselors and TRIO colleagues as training participants. The FY 2010 project plan will include the addition of a TRIO program counselor on the training team, specific targeting of alternative school programs, and a more concentrated marketing campaign that focuses on the benefits of how the training can assist counselors in successfully guiding their low-income, first generation students through the financial aid process.

Educational, and financial, awareness is a key aspect of the College Goal Sunday (CGS) programs that are coordinated by KASFAA. In February each year, nearly 200 student financial aid administrators volunteer their time at sites throughout the state to provide information about student financial aid and assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). During FY 2008 and FY 2009, the CACG funding enabled the expansion of the number of sites available to Kansas students and their families, as well as provided increased marketing and outreach to increase awareness of the event. The FY 2010 funding will enable the further expansion of CGS sites, with continued focus on areas where there are greater numbers of low-income, first generation students.

In addition to the CGS event, educational awareness will also focus on funding a new project that will promote awareness of postsecondary education and financial literacy. This project will be housed at Wichita State University, the only four year public college located in a large metropolitan center of the state. The project plan will have a dual focus: conducting outreach activities for secondary school students and their parents regarding the benefits and practical financial considerations of higher education and the design and development of a financial literacy curriculum that will be available to middle school and secondary guidance counselors, college financial aid staff and college admissions counselors that will provide education and training to help these individuals assist students and parents with meeting admission entrance requirements, applying to college, applying for financial aid, and succeeding in higher education. The goal would be to implement this program at other postsecondary institutions in the state with subsequent CACG funding.

KANSAS (continued)

Early awareness initiatives are important in increasing the number of low income and at-risk students pursuing postsecondary educational opportunities by encouraging them at an early age.  
KANSAS (continued)

During FY 2008 and FY2009, a large percentage of CACG funding was used to enhance existing TRIO programs in the state. The primary focus was on middle school students, specifically the Talent Search programs. The FY 2010 funding will expand support to other TRIO programs as well (i.e. Gear Up and Upward Bound). In particular there will be an emphasis on working with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who can be followed over the next few years as they matriculate to postsecondary educational institutions.

Training, education, early awareness, access and persistence are the key elements of the Kansas project proposal for the use of CACG funding for FY 2010. By building on the success of the programs that were implemented in the initial CACG funding, and as the new funding is enhanced to develop new program initiatives, we will successfully meet the CACG program objectives.

KENTUCKY (\$2,051,545)

Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority  
Susan Hopkins, 502-696-7379

The objectives of the Kentucky College Access Challenge (CACG) Grant project outreach services are to: inform students about the many opportunities to continue their education beyond high school; give information to students and families to assist them in making informed decisions on planning, preparing and paying for college or technical school; increase students' and families' knowledge of postsecondary education financial aid options and increase the number of Kentucky students accessing higher education and applying for financial aid assistance. To these ends, we will provide the following through a combination of CACG funds, state appropriations and other monies:

Regional Outreach. Outreach counselors will promote higher education opportunities by participating in career fairs, college nights, financial aid/financial literacy workshops and other events; disseminate Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) information, media packets, and publications; assist students and families in completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); participate in media interviews; and make personal, on-site visits to those able to assist KHEAA in providing information about higher education opportunities.

College Info Road Show. KHEAA's mobile classroom, the College Info Road Show, will visit middle schools, high schools, adult education centers, public libraries and other sites, providing college access and financial aid planning services directly to student and families in their own communities. Equipped with satellite Internet access, laptop computers, indoor and outdoor projection units and screens, the road show will use state-of-the art technology to connect students with the information they need to research, pursue and succeed in a variety of postsecondary options.

One-Stop Website for Career Exploration and College Planning. KHEAA's newly enhanced [kheaa.com](http://kheaa.com) Web site will supply information to students and families to help them plan, prepare, and pay for higher education. The site will be used by students in grades 6-12, parents, college students, adult students, school counselors and others. Users will follow age-specific planners/timelines; conduct interest inventories; explore careers, educational requirements and anticipated salary ranges through Kentucky's Workforce Development Cabinet; prepare for standardized tests; learn when, where and how to apply for state and federal student aid; run free scholarship searches; take virtual college tours; find colleges that match their preferences and link to college applications online.

Age-Appropriate Publications. KHEAA will produce a variety of age-appropriate publications designed to provide students, parents and college access mentors with the timely information needed at each grade level. The resources will provide an introduction to making good grades, careers, high school graduation requirements, extracurricular activities and clubs, and the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program; information on preparing for

## KENTUCKY (continued)

college, bonus high school courses, test dates, test-taking tips, and an introduction to student financial aid; information on virtual learning options, admissions information, how to compare

schools, and a college planning timeline; an introduction to major financial aid programs, tips on how to get student aid, financial aid questions and answers, tax information, Websites, and how to complete the FAFSA; and information about colleges, technical colleges, trade schools, majors, costs, how to get enrolled, and financial aid opportunities.

Personalized College Planning Customer Care and FAFSA Completion Services. CACG monies will be used to staff and train customer service representatives to walk students through the college admissions and financial aid processes. Call center counselors will be able to provide families with detailed information and will be available to help them interpret the results of their individual College Costs and Planning Reports.

Financial Aid Tips of the Month/Money Tips for Students. KHEAA's will prepare/produce newspaper articles and radio public service announcements on financial literacy/financial aid topics. Articles will be time-sensitive, designed to make students and families aware of when, during the financial aid and admissions cycle, they should be performing certain tasks. Updates and videos will be posted to our Facebook and Twitter pages.

Newsletters. Targeted newsletters will be sent periodically throughout the academic year to middle and high school counselors, adult education providers, TRIO and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) personnel, social service offices and others. Time-sensitive newsletters will be sent parents of students included in our Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) database. (This listing encompasses students from every certified high school in the Commonwealth.) Using the KEES database, additional newsletters will be sent to recent high school graduates. This publication will provide support to those enrolled in postsecondary education and remind those who have not yet enrolled that they can, and should, do so.

College Coaches/Near Peer Mentors. New Initiative: Based on an official recommendation from Governor Beshear's Higher Education Work Group, KHEAA has partnered with the Kentucky Campus Compact to fund/develop a program that would place current and recent college graduates in high schools as "near peer" college mentors. These college coaches would provide more direct assistance to help students and families complete the FAFSA form and access all sources of aid.

LOUISIANA (\$2,221,573)

Louisiana Board of Regents  
Heather Poole, 318-484-2184

The 2010 regular session of the Louisiana legislature ended with the passage of the Granting Resources and Autonomy for Diplomas (GRAD Act), which provides colleges and universities increased autonomy and flexibility in exchange for a commitment to meet clearly defined performance goals, including boosting college graduation rates. Louisiana's GRAD Act implementation will further enhance the goals and objectives of the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG). Funds from the CACG will be used to: (1) increase underrepresented students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary education benefits and opportunities, planning and preparing for college and career, financial planning and availability of and procedures for federal and state student financial aid programs; (2) increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education; and (3) provide counselor/advisor support and professional development incorporating strategies to prepare all students for success in accessing and completing postsecondary education. CACG goals will be incorporated into existing programs, while leveraging existing partnerships and outreach efforts furthered by the GRAD Act, in addition to leveraging existing national partnerships that support P-20 initiatives.

Scope: To coordinate outreach activities to students and their families, including:

- Support for existing marketing activities;
- Efforts to reduce the need for developmental education;
- Informational workshops to students and parents;
- Regional College Access/Success Coordinators (Transfer Coaches);
- Summer learning camps on college campuses;
- Individual and family counseling sessions; and
- Professional development support to school counselors and access providers  
Streamline postsecondary applications (financial aid/scholarship and admissions).

Goals/Outcomes:

- To increase the number of students and families in the targeted areas who have received information about, and understand the availability of, federal and state student financial aid;
- To increase the number of students enrolling in college after high school;
- To increase the number of students that transfer between community colleges and senior institutions;
- To increase the number of qualified students in the targeted areas who receive Pell and the state's need-based financial aid program;
- To increase partnerships between postsecondary institutions and high schools to improve student preparation;
- To increase the number of students taking advantage of dual enrollment courses; and
- To decrease the number of students requiring developmental education upon entering college.

MAINE (\$1,500,000)

Finance Authority of Maine  
Angela Dostie, 207-623-3263

The purpose of the Maine College Access Challenge Grant (MCACG) program is to promote access to and the completion of postsecondary education. To accomplish this purpose, MCACG will focus on three key components:

1. Providing college access and completion services and programs;
2. Offering grants to organizations providing college access and/or completion services; and
3. Funding scholarships for low-income students to enroll in early college courses.

College access and completion services and programs will consist of a variety of activities; however, increasing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rate is crucial. The Institute for College Access and Success reports that one in four low-income dependent students do not apply for financial aid because they missed the deadline. Currently less than 40 percent of all Maine high school seniors file the FAFSA by May 1, which is the deadline for the Maine State Grant. More than 23 percent of college students file after the May 1 deadline. The goal is to increase and decrease these respective percentages, using the following approaches:

- Increase the number of FAFSA labs and workshops available to students; and
- Create a FAFSA reminder program for students already enrolled in postsecondary programs.

Other activities to promote college access and completion include:

- Providing financial education to elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, colleges/universities, adult and non-traditional students;
- Participating in financial aid information sessions and workshops;
- Distributing information via paper publications, online and in-person events;
- Translating financial aid materials for English language learners and their families;
- Providing debt management information to college students, with a focus on at risk students;
- Participating in the improvement and expansion of a college access network for the purpose of sharing best practices, exchanging information and collaborating with college access providers;
- Providing and participating in training and professional development opportunities for school counselors, college access advisors and financial aid administrators.

Sub-grants will be made available to schools, organizations and agencies through a competitive grant process. Eligible applicants must work with low-income, first generation or disadvantaged students to provide information and conduct outreach activities for students to access and

## MAINE (continued)

complete postsecondary education. In addition, all applicants must adhere to the criteria established by the College Access Challenge Grant program legislation. As part of the

recipients' reporting requirements, best practices will be identified and shared with other recipients and organizations in the state.

Scholarships will be provided to low-income students to assist them in paying for college courses while still enrolled in high school or pursuing a General Education Development (GED). A recent study conducted by the Mitchell Institute revealed that 80 percent of students who participated in early college enrolled in college within a year after graduation, compared to only 60 percent overall. Participating students will be required to file the FAFSA. The students' matriculation into college will be monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

Data collection and analysis is a key component to measuring the success of the MCACG. The current higher education database will be enhanced in order to:

- Create a program modeled after the U. S. Department of Education's FAFSA completion project so that high schools will know the percentage of their seniors who complete the FAFSA;
- Maintain a list of the students assisted by MCACG programs and services and determine the numbers who enroll in and complete college; and
- Be compatible with the longitudinal data system being created by the Maine Department of Education, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

## MARYLAND (\$1,500,000)

Higher Education Commission  
Melinda Vann, 410-260-4578

Maryland will use the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program funding to augment Maryland's state and philanthropic resources dedicated to raising awareness of the benefits of postsecondary education and to provide the opportunity for every Maryland citizen who can benefit from postsecondary education to participate in it.

The Maryland College Access Challenge Grant (MCACG) project will deliver services to middle school, high school, and college students across the state. While the proposed services and activities are varied, they share common goals, targeted to low income, underrepresented, and/or at-risk students, to increase awareness of the benefits of postsecondary education; provide understanding about the availability of and how to obtain financial aid; and the development and implementation of interventions that support college persistence.

The activities to achieve these goals include:

- 1) Development of a strategic statewide five-year college outreach communication plan that effectively targets low income and underrepresented students;
- 2) A Speakers Bureau that connects business leaders with middle schools in high need school districts to raise students' college ambitions by sharing real world information about skills and educational needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- 3) A multi day conference for current Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) students, now in their senior year, to provide support for Free Application for Federal Student Aid and college application completion and career planning;
- 4) Workshops, publications and Website resources specifically tailored to support high school students with learning disabilities apply to, finance, and transition to college;
- 5) A series of activities focused on informing low income and underrepresented student populations about how to obtain financial aid for college including – the Maryland Public Television airing of *You Can Afford College*, expansion of College Goal Sunday across the State, and on demand, customized financial aid presentations to community organizations and schools;
- 6) A sub-grant program to support regional coalitions of higher education institutions, other non-profit organizations, and local high need school districts to develop sustainable college outreach programs and services for middle school students;
- 7) An online instructional Life Skills program that offers at-risk, postsecondary students advice for managing their time and money wisely while on campus and after graduation;
- 8) Retention and debt management workshops to help college administrators establish effective intervention strategies to increase persistence and graduation rates; and
- 9) A competitive sub-grant program to support research based retention interventions for at-risk college students.

MASSACHUSETTS (\$1,703,211)

Department of Higher Education  
Aundrey Kelley, 617-994-6937

Massachusetts proposes a two part project, the first part of which will include continued development and support of the Massachusetts College and Career Web Portal - YourPlanforCollege, which was funded in part through Massachusetts' 2008 College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project. We propose to use new CACG funding to sustain the level of service currently available through the portal, enhance the portal to extend services to middle school educators, students and families, and adult learners.

Under the second part of the project, Massachusetts proposes to organize and execute a Regional Partnership initiative that will be implemented in six geographic areas across the state to provide comprehensive college access and persistence services aimed at promoting student success. The partnership initiative will focus on serving areas with the highest concentrations of first-generation, minority and low-income students and families, as well as areas with the lowest college going rates within each of the six regions. Our goal is to dramatically enhance the ability of our under-served students to be prepared for, enter, and succeed in college. The project will focus its efforts on four broad areas:

- (1) Increasing the academic preparation of students so they can enter the college of their choice, with a specific focus on serving disadvantaged and under-represented students;
- (2) Increasing college access by enhancing students' and families' knowledge of college options and financial aid, especially need-based federal and state aid;
- (3) Increasing the persistence of students in college by providing them with education and support at key transition points, particularly prior to college entry and between the first and second years of college; and
- (4) Increasing student and family capacity to manage education debt responsibly and successfully upon college graduation.

MICHIGAN (\$4,268,548)

Department of Education  
Mary Ann Chartrand, 517-373-4013

Two primary actors will play a central role in Michigan's comprehensive college access strategy: Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan College Access Network (MCAN). CACG funding will be used to catalyze the creation of a new unit within the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) dedicated to college access outreach into K-12 schools and communities. This unit will administer the College Access Challenge Grant Program. It will implement specific statewide college access strategies, including the Michigan College Access Portal (MichiganCAP) and the KnowHow2GOMichigan public awareness campaign. MCAN is the state's coordinating body for college access and success policy and programs. MCAN primarily serves local college access networks through coordination, professional development, and technical assistance.

Together, MDE and MCAN will implement the state's strategy by: (1) connecting Local College Access Networks to college access resources (MichiganCAP, KnowHow2GOMichigan, and grant support), and (2) strengthening its partner initiatives within these local college access networks (Achieving the Dream, the Michigan College Advising Corps, the College Positive Volunteerism Project, and the Promise Zone Project). MDE and MCAN will also work with Dr. Nathan Daun-Barnett to evaluate the impact of these strategies on postsecondary educational attainment in our state.

Michigan College Access Portal (MichiganCAP): MCAN is developing a Web-based portal to help students and families plan, apply, and pay for college. The Michigan College Access Portal (MichiganCAP) contains modules that allow students to communicate electronically with their counselors, research the affordability of postsecondary education, discover scholarship opportunities, compare colleges based on desired characteristics, and apply to colleges electronically. Michigan used CACG funds to develop MichiganCAP and will use future CACG funds to maintain, improve, and market it. The portal will go live in September 2010 at [www.michigancap.org](http://www.michigancap.org).

KnowHow2GOMichigan Public Awareness Campaign: In 2009, MCAN was selected by the Lumina Foundation to become one of only 15 KnowHow2GO states, largely due to Michigan's emphasis on network building. MCAN is charged with implementing this multi-year, multi-media public awareness campaign developed by Lumina in partnership with the Ad Council and the American Council on Education. MCAN implements the "on the air" campaign by working with media partners to place the KnowHow2GO public service announcements in media markets throughout the state. Furthermore, MCAN facilitates the "on the ground" campaign by helping local college access networks embed the campaign messages into the fabric of their college access programming. MCAN maintains the state-customized interactive Web site at [www.KnowHow2GOMichigan.org](http://www.KnowHow2GOMichigan.org) and participates in a national network of campaign partners via the KnowHow2GO Learning Community. CACG funds will be used to customize and produce national campaign materials for use in Michigan by local college access networks.

## MICHIGAN (continued)

Local College Access Network (LCAN) Grant Program: MCAN will sub-grant a specified sum of CACG funding to “local college access networks” (LCANs). LCANs are community-based college access/success initiatives committed to increasing the college participation and completion rates within its geographically-defined community through a coordinated strategy. MCAN has already sub-granted more than \$250,000 to 17 communities to plan and start these community-based strategies as well as provided each LCAN with hands-on technical assistance, program development, and professional development. Each LCAN must design plans to implement the Michigan College Access Portal and KnowHow2GOMichigan public awareness campaign. Through the CACG, MCAN will continue to provide planning (\$8,000), startup (\$50,000), and expansion (\$25,000) grants to local college access networks throughout the state through a competitive RFP process.

Achieving the Dream College Completion Innovation Fund: MCAN will provide subgrants to Michigan community colleges involved in the national Achieving the Dream initiative to fund innovative strategies to help more students earn postsecondary credentials. *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count* is a multi-year national initiative to improve student success at the nation’s community colleges, particularly for students of color and low-income students. MCAN will provide funding to start or scale up research-based interventions that help more students persist through degree completion. Currently, 17 of Michigan’s 28 community colleges are participating in the Achieving the Dream initiative.

Michigan College Advising Corps: The 2010-2011 school year will mark the inauguration of the Michigan College Advising Corps, a new member of the National College Advising Corps. Following in the tradition of Teach for America and certain AmeriCorps programs, the University of Michigan’s Center for Educational Outreach has recruited and is training a diverse group of recent University of Michigan college graduates to work full-time as college advisers in underserved high schools throughout Michigan for one to two years. These advisers will assist high school students in navigating every aspect of the college selection and enrollment process. In addition, they will work with school administration and staff to foster a college-going culture within their schools and communities. The goal of MCAC is to increase the number of low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students entering and completing higher education in the state of Michigan. CACG funding will be used to scale up MCAC from its current eight members to 24 corps members in the 2011-2012 school year and beyond.

Michigan Campus Compact College Positive Volunteerism Project: Michigan Campus Compact (MCC) seeks to give underrepresented K-12 students access to college-positive mentors by marshaling the energy and enthusiasm of current college students. MCC will offer approximately seven reimbursement sub-grants of up to \$20,000 to campuses committed to working on an integrated approach to college student service, and access to higher education. Sub-grants will be awarded to MCC member institutions for faculty and/or staff to support or pilot partnerships between higher education institutions and LCANs. Through these grant programs, student leaders will be developed and trained as College Positive Volunteers (CPVs) and educated as access resources for youth and potential adult learners regarding higher education.

## MICHIGAN (continued)

The Promise Zone Project: Through CACG funding, Public Policy Associates (PPA) will provide support and technical assistance to the ten Michigan communities that were granted Promise Zone designations in 2009. This work will focus on helping each community create and execute a sustainable development plan for its universal college scholarship program and to implement a comprehensive strategy to enhance the college readiness of its students, including academic preparedness, knowledge of the college-going process and the soft skills needed for success in higher education. Sub-grants will be made to each of the ten communities to fund, on a matching basis, a Promise Zone coordinator position. PPA will work with each community to recruit, hire, train and supervise the individuals who will hold these positions. PPA consultants will make frequent visits to the Promise Zone communities and will conduct professional development activities involving the ten Promise Zone coordinators on a monthly basis.

## MINNESOTA (\$1,500,000)

Minnesota Office of Higher Education  
Nancy Walters, 651-259-3907

Need for the College Access Challenge Grant is based on the impediments to postsecondary success faced by students in middle and high schools from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Statewide, during the 2009-2010 school year, 36 percent of public school students qualified for free or reduced-price meals, eight percent had limited English proficiency, and 25 percent were students of color. Minnesota's population is rapidly becoming more diverse, and the U.S. Census is predicting the number of students of color in Minnesota will grow quickly over the next few decades. According to the Minnesota Demographic Center, the numbers of Latino, black, and Asian Minnesotans are projected to more than double over the next 30 years, with a total growth projection of 112 percent. National indicators suggest Minnesota's achievement gap is among the largest in the country.

Guided by the particular needs of Minnesota's students identified as the emphasis of College Access Challenge Grant activities, program funding for 2010-2011 will focus on:

- 1) Enhancing the college planning and advising capacity in middle and high schools by school counselors so that more students receive clear and consistent counseling regarding college planning and career preparation by:
  - Providing professional development for school counselors to increase their understanding of comprehensive counseling programs to support increased student ability to prepare for college.
  - Funding continued training and licensure at selected schools of Web-based counseling software that supports management of academic and postsecondary planning and advising. The Web-based systems are accessible to students and parents.
  - Supporting user groups and a mentor/mentee network for the delivery of training and resources to effectively implement the Web-based counseling and academic planning tools.
  - Providing "data retreats" for school counselors to increase their understanding, analysis and use of data collected through standard student assessments and subsequently guide students toward academic readiness.
  
- 2) Increasing the number of low-income students and families who have a working knowledge of postsecondary education opportunities, planning for postsecondary education, and financial aid by:
  - Supporting the development of a framework for delivering workshops on financial aid and college preparation in target communities. Enhancing services for the state's Get Ready/GEAR UP program by providing students with additional college field trips, a career focused seminar and a

## MINNESOTA (continued)

transition to high school event for middle school students, and college orientation activities for parents.

- Coordinating outreach activities for targeted communities to include the Latino and African American communities to provide accurate, complete information about college preparation, access, and financing.
- 3) Increasing the number of low-income third- through 11th-grade students who have the opportunity to participate in academic enrichment activities to prepare for college admission and success by:
- Providing after-school academic tutoring programs in Get Ready/GEAR UP high schools.
  - Supporting attendance at summer academic enrichment programs for at least 300 third- through 11th-grade students from low-income families.
  - Increasing the number of outreach projects able to provide academic programming needed to increase college access and the potential for success of Minnesota's underrepresented students.

MISSISSIPPI (\$1,850,911)

Institutions of Higher Learning  
Marsha Watson, 601-432-617

The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) will provide a continuum of services to make college more accessible to all Mississippians and to help more college students complete degrees.

IHL will offer college planning, academic preparation and financial literacy comprehension workshops to students and their parents in 19 targeted school districts (33 middle schools) in the Mississippi Delta and in Southwest Mississippi. We will expand our existing collaboration with the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) and Mississippi State University (MSU) as a means of increasing the number of workshops available to our targeted school districts and to make information available to disadvantaged students beyond the target districts in areas such as the Okolona Learning Community. Counselor-led school teams will receive financial literacy training from the Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE). The Mississippi Scholars program, offered through the Public Education Forum, will provide community-based mentoring services in our targeted school districts. High school students and their families will receive FAFSA completion assistance through College Goal Sunday events. We will offer professional development opportunities to school counselors, including opportunities explicitly designed for middle school counselors that better equip them to provide college and career counseling to students and their families. Our heretofore successful statewide college access media campaign will be enhanced and refreshed. We will distribute expressly designed college planning material, in the form of booklets and toolkits, to the target schools and to schools across the state.

To help students continue towards degree completion, IHL will deploy a Web-based transfer tool that will ensure a seamless transfer path for community college students into four-year institutions. IHL will also partner with USA Funds and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges to launch a statewide retention initiative aimed at developing plans for improved retention practices at each of the state's 23 public colleges and universities.

To better guide the project, IHL will convene a project advisory committee. As a result of all of these efforts, we expect significant increases in college access Website visits, increases in college prep curriculum enrollments, increased FAFSA completions, and ultimately higher postsecondary enrollment and completion rates.

MISSOURI (\$2,249,306)

Missouri Department of Higher Education  
Leroy Wade, 573-751-2361

The purpose of the Missouri College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project activities is to: (1) Providing effective information to students and families on postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, and planning; (2) Providing actionable information to prospective students and their families on financing options, including activities that promote financial literacy and debt avoidance and management; and (3) Assisting prospective and continuing students in the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The scope of Missouri's proposed program includes two primary areas of focus. First, the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) will conduct a subgrant process designed to build and strengthen existing outreach activities implemented to assist students and families in preparing for postsecondary education. In addition, the MDHE will promote and support efforts to establish a multi-organization statewide college access provider network to help coordinate the broader integration of these efforts across all regions. This will include continuing the sponsorship of a statewide conference of organizations and individuals working in this area.

Second, the MDHE will directly provide a range of services and activities designed to improve the financial literacy of Missouri's secondary and postsecondary students. These services include organizing and delivering events and disseminating information designed to educate parents and students about planning for, both academically and financially, and paying for postsecondary education. This effort will also include the creation and distribution of financial literacy information to students, families, financial aid officials, high school counselors and business teachers. Finally, the MDHE will establish a statewide financial literacy task force to develop a shared plan for action on this issue.

The MDHE consistently pursues an inclusive approach to the development and implementation of its policy initiatives. In the case of the activities funded by this grant, the department will build on its current relationships in these areas and actively solicit participation, input, and involvement from a wide range of organizations. This will include state agencies and elected officials, local and regional not-for-profit and philanthropic organizations, secondary and postsecondary education providers, and private businesses.

Ultimately, the goal for all of these projects is to increase the number of students, particularly those who have been underserved in the past, who view postsecondary education as a viable option for their futures. Perceived barriers can be overcome and students can learn that such obstacles are not insurmountable.

MONTANA (\$1,500,000)

Department of Labor & Industry Workforce Services  
Michael Cooney, 406-444-2648

Montana will utilize the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) funds to build collaboration within the education and workforce systems to foster a post-secondary education culture. By designating the Montana Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) as the lead state agency we will build upon an already strong partnership, and enhance the linkages between education and the workforce system. DLI will administer the CACG grant and implement the agenda detailed herein, and utilize its resources and strong partnerships with the Montana University System (MUS) and other education partners to help better prepare our workforce for economic recovery following “the Great Recession”.

The goals of Montana’s CACG will be:

1. Fund the Montana Career Information System to engage underrepresented students and families, school counselors, and college admissions officers in new ways of addressing college preparation, access and success;
2. Educate and train our One-Stop System Providers in completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) so that they may increase the number of students, especially non-traditional and displaced workers, assisted in completing the FAFSA;
3. Coordinate and provide need based scholarships for 2-year certifications with the workforce system by having the DLI-WSD utilize funds from the CACG project to facilitate distribution of scholarships;
4. Enhance the capacity of a career internship program in the DLI’s Office of Community Service to allow low-income students to gain work experience during their college years while increasing the affordability of post-secondary credentialing; and
5. Expand and promote Online College Access through iTunesU to advance enrollment, retention and relevancy to a new generation of learners.

The Montana College Access Challenge Grant (MT CACG) project is reflective of Montana’s strong commitment to access, affordability, productivity and lifelong learning.

NEBRASKA (\$1,500,000)

Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary  
Katherine Green, 402-471-0026

The Nebraska College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project will provide funding to one Access College Early (ACE) program and several other sub-grantee projects through a competitive grant process.

The goals of the Nebraska College Access Challenge Grant Program (NE CACG) include:

- 1) Increase the number of low-income high school students taking college courses while still in high school;
- 2) Increase the numbers of college courses each low-income student takes during academic year;
- 3) Increase the college-going rate of low-income ACE students; and
- 4) Make subgrants to non-profit organizations to offer college access services.

**Access College Early (ACE) program** - The purpose of the Access College Early (ACE) program is to assist low-income high school students pay for taking college credit courses while still in high school. The courses may be dual enrollment courses where the student receives college and high school credit for the same course or the courses may be taken for only college credit.

Currently, the ACE program consists of state funds (\$275,250) and CACG funds (\$100,000). With increased funding from CACG, \$250,000 of CACG funds will be designated to the ACE program. This will allow more low-income students to apply for and receive awards to pay for college courses and will allow low-income students to enroll in more than one course per semester. The increased funding should allow between 250 and 300 more students to apply than in 2009-10 (1,410), but also provide funding for two to three college courses per semester per student.

NEVADA (\$1,500,000)

Higher Education Policy Commission  
Adam Green, 304-558-0655

The State of Nevada is one of twenty-two states that has committed, under a pact with Complete College America, to dramatically increase college completion rates in order to meet state and national education needs to remain globally competitive and achieve President Obama's 2020 goal. To achieve this goal, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) will focus its College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) efforts to dramatically increase the percent of new college entrants, particularly for underrepresented students (low-income, first generation, students of color) in the state.

The Nevada CACG will focus its activities on four goals: (1) create a college-going culture in Nevada through a strategic statewide media campaign; (2) increase college knowledge to encourage students to enroll and complete a quality postsecondary certificate and/or degree; (3) increase college participation, financial literacy and career readiness at high schools with significant numbers of low-income or high-need students; and (4) pilot accelerated associate degree programs (12-15 months) that target first-time college students who are low-income and underrepresented in postsecondary completion rates at two-year Nevada public postsecondary institutions.

Goal 1: Create a College-Going Culture in Nevada: To build Nevada's college-going culture, the current GoToCollegeNevada.org media campaign will be continued. A portion of the 2010 Nevada CACG will sustain and expand the GoToCollegeNevada.org media campaign. The activities will focus on enhancing college and financial literacy knowledge, particularly for underrepresented populations. Specifically three areas will comprise the media campaign: (1) Public Service Announcements; (2) enhance GoToCollegeNevada.org to include a "Choose Your Own Career" portal to prepare and guide students through their secondary schooling; and (3) incorporate additional social networking modalities such as Facebook, Twitter and others. Outcomes will be tracked based on student participation (i.e., Web hits), community and school outreach efforts, and inquiries from educators, families and students.

Goal 2: Increase College Knowledge: A portion (46 percent) of the Nevada CACG will be used to provide sub-grants. The propose of Nevada CACG sub-grants will be to fund projects that provide college awareness, college financial literacy, and career planning activities for high school students. To be eligible for the sub-grant, applicants (institutions or educational non-profit organizations) must provide services to designated high schools with a 50 percent or lower college-going rate. Sub-grant applicants will be eligible to apply for up to \$60,000, depending on the scope of activities and the number of students to be served, and up to \$150,000 for larger collaborative partnerships of organizations working with five or more schools and serving a large number of students. Grantees will be expected to provide a 1:1 match and the match may be in-kind or cost share. Specific activities and outcomes are explained in Section III of this application and will be included in the sub-grant application.

## NEVADA (continued)

The NSHE System Sponsored Programs Office (SSPO) will administer the Nevada CACG sub-grants. Applicants will be required to submit proposals and offer detailed methodology including measurable goals and outcomes. Notices will be distributed fall 2010 with a two-month deadline and proposals will be reviewed by the NSHE CACG Advisory Committee (see Section II, question 1). Selection will be made based on the strength of the proposal in carrying out CACG goals and objectives, the availability of measurable goals and outcomes and associated data, the efficiency of the proposed budget, and commitment of cost share support on the part of the applying organization. A progress report will be due two months prior to the CACG Annual Progress report, so that sub-grantee activities may be included. Awardees will be required to fulfill the grant requirements and submit an annual progress report 30 days after their project period expires. CACG program staff will conduct annual site visits that will include an audit of expenditures.

Goal 3: Increase College and Career Readiness in Nevada High Schools: Recent research and policy briefs (i.e., Pathways to College Network, IHEP) highlight the gap between low- and high-income student college enrollments. Of critical importance are students' career and college readiness in high school. Readiness involves the development of key skills. Ready high school students continuously update a meaningful postsecondary plan, one based on a solid understanding of personal attributes, work ethic, a diversity of career choices, and an up-to-date awareness of labor market realities. Ready students also proactively acquire and present a portfolio of credentials supportive of their future plans, and continuously develop those credentials through high school courses, certificated training, summer jobs, school activities, and volunteer work. To address this critical area, a portion of the Nevada CACG will provide, to up to ten Nevada high schools, a grant to implement a comprehensive version of the Navigation101 program. Navigation101, by Envictus Corporation, is a school improvement strategy to increase college and career readiness for students through a comprehensive discipline of study. This resource will teach 9-12 grade students about high school course selection, career planning, postsecondary education options, and financial aid. Schools identified as having 50 percent or lower college-going rate will be invited to apply. As part of the implementation and monitoring process, professional development for high school leadership and counselors will be included. The grant review process will be similar to what was outlined under Goal 2.

Goal 4: Pilot or Expand Accelerated Associate Degree Programs: Accelerated degree programs offer community colleges students the chance to complete postsecondary degrees in a short amount of time. Accelerated associate degree programs provide students with the tools they need to quickly complete an associate degree and enter the workforce or enter a bachelor's degree program. Typically such programs offer block scheduling, intense career counseling, financial support, student services support to assist full-time enrollment and completion of a program in half the time. Nevada public two year postsecondary institutions will be eligible to apply for a sub-grant that will pilot or expand accelerated associate degree programs (12-15 months) that will increase completion rates, particularly for first-time college students who are low-income and underrepresented in postsecondary completion rates at two-year Nevada public postsecondary institutions.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE (\$1,500,000)

New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission  
Kathryn Dodge, 603-271-2555

The overarching goal for the projects to be funded under the College Access Challenge CACG Grant is to increase the enrollment in postsecondary education within 12 months of a student's high school graduation. This aligns with a major goal of the governor's P-16 initiative. While the goal is to increase access for all students, CACG projects will target under-represented populations, e.g., foster children, first-generation, minorities and low-income as measured by eligibility for a Pell grant. We will build upon existing infrastructure to deliver programming, resources and direct services and avoid duplication of effort by encouraging a collaborative partnership of state-wide non-profits and state entities that focus on education at all levels. The agency best able to provide a particular service will do so. Services, both to students and educational professionals, will be enhanced, where currently available, and begun where none currently exists.

The scope of the projects will fall into three areas: (1) college aspirations - improving access to and familiarity with college planning information for all students and parents, with emphasis on underserved populations; (2) capacity building - making the application process smoother and more accurate for students, secondary, and postsecondary institutions through implementation of an electronic transcript and working with education professionals at both the secondary and postsecondary level to promote not only access to postsecondary education, but success once access is attained; and (3) academic preparation - increasing the percentage of students who are prepared to complete college level material.

The specific foci of the individual partners are: (1) increase college aspirations through early awareness programming, college, career planning and financial aid programs for K-12 students and parents; standardized test prep and FAFSA completion for high schools with low college-going rate and low-income students by providing incentives for participation; special work with foster children (NHHEAF Network Educational Foundation-Center for College Planning); (2) increase access the postsecondary education for minorities, refugees, immigrants, and ESOL students through college access conventions, college fairs for ESOL students, informational booths at festivals targeting minority populations, financial aid workshops at minority-serving community centers and churches and developing and maintaining a scholarship database for under-represented students (NH College and University Council's Diversity Initiative); (3) increase the number of high schools participating in the NH Scholars Initiative and the number of students at those schools who undertake a rigorous high school curriculum, better preparing them for success in postsecondary education, enhancing business partnerships to send a common message to students regarding the need for both high skill levels and additional training/education to succeed in today's and tomorrow's workplace, and expanding the professional development opportunities for middle and high school guidance professional (NH College and University Council's NH Scholars Initiative); (4) increase the awareness, both of students and educators, of the competencies required to successfully complete entry-level college

NEW HAMPSHIRE (continued)

mathematics resulting in a decrease in placement in remedial math courses and an increase college persistence and success at the community colleges (Community College System of NH –

Mathematics Learning Communities); (5) focus on both access and success in postsecondary education through increased opportunities for professional development for K-12 guidance counselors, college financial aid and college admissions professionals and the promotion of financial literacy and debt management activities for student and parents (Campus Compact of NH); (6) enhance the existing NHTransfer.org database to allow students have their transcripts provided from participating high schools and postsecondary institutions to any participating institution thus enabling a course-by-course review of transcripts, decrease in the time and expense at both the sending and receiving institutions and decreasing the chances of error resulting for entering data manually (University System of NH, Community College System of NH, NH Department of Education); and (7) create an integrated public awareness campaign, targeted at high school juniors and seniors, in partnership with NH's degree-granting postsecondary institutions, the Postsecondary Education Commission, the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and local TRIO programs to promote the value of pursuing higher education by focusing on affordability, scholarships and financial aid, the quality and diversity of New Hampshire's institutions and the programs that our institutions, the state and charitable organizations offer in support of college access for our low-income and under-represented students (NHHEAF Network Educational Foundation-Center for College Planning).

## NEW JERSEY (\$2,191,189)

State of New Jersey  
Iris Duffield, 609-292-4310

The purpose of the Tools for College Access program (New Jersey's implementation of the College Access Challenge Grant) will be to increase students' and parents' awareness about college financing and preparation options. Tools for College Access (TCA) will act as a catalyst for coordinating the many existing state, university, and federal programs that deliver similar services. The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education (CHE) will serve as the grant administrator for Tools for College Access, which will be a partnership between and among the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund, institutions of higher education, and schools and districts in underserved areas of the state including urban centers and rural regions. This project will work to increase college awareness and preparedness through three initiatives, as described below.

Financial Aid Awareness and Outreach: Through subgrants, the TCA program will offer Financial Aid Awareness presentations and FAFSA Completion workshops. These events will make financial aid administrators and counselors available so students and parents can receive information about going to college and financial aid, including how to get a FAFSA PIN and complete the FAFSA online. The goal of these events is to significantly increase the number of underserved students, especially twelfth grade students, and their parents/guardians who: (1) demonstrate an increased understanding of their options for financing a college education; (2) demonstrate an increased understanding of the role of the FAFSA in financing college; and (3) complete the FAFSA and enroll in college within one year of high school graduation.

College Experience, Motivation, and Preparedness: TCA will take a two-pronged approach to providing high school students with experiences that will improve student preparedness for college and motivate them to obtain a degree. Currently, juniors and seniors in New Jersey are offered opportunities to take college courses for credit while still in high school. Tools for College Access will expand these opportunities by subcontracting with New Jersey colleges and universities to engage in partnerships with local schools and districts to increase the numbers of high school students who take college courses. By increasing students' interest in college and exposing them to the demands of college-level assignments, the project also expects to decrease the need for remediation once enrolled in college.

To expand the pool of students taking advantage of dual enrollment opportunities, TCA will also pilot a new summer component that will prepare students for the rigors of college course work. Feedback from the currently funded dual enrollment programs has indicated that such an expansion would be beneficial and would also allow CHE to build on existing strengths. The approach would be a blended model emulating the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund, which provides academic and counseling support, and Governor's School, which offers an intensive academic college experience.

## NEW JERSEY (continued)

CHE will give grants to New Jersey colleges and universities to develop three-week campus-based programs to promote a community of learners. The Aim High Academies (AHA) will be summer

programs, both residential and nonresidential, for students who have completed their junior year in high school. AHA will be a mechanism to provide an array of precollege educational enrichment activities for low income residents. The colleges and universities hosting AHA programs will design and develop their own curriculum allowing for different institutional characteristics. Strong emphasis will be placed on problem solving, leadership training, and team interaction. While each program will be unique, the same goals of ensuring completion of secondary school and increasing college admission, retention and graduation rates will apply to all. It is anticipated that exposing these students to higher level experiences, such as the ability to participate in research, or interact with faculty outside the classroom, will result in a more motivated student with a stronger desire to attend college.

Degree Completion Spotlight: According to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), New Jersey has over 1 million adults who have completed some college but no degree. Based on initial positive results from the first round of CACGP funding, New Jersey will focus resources on assisting students who have left college in good standing to return and earn degrees. This initiative, called the Disengaged Adults Returning to College (DARC) grant program, will provide resources for subcontracted higher education institutions to identify and contact such students and make counseling and financial aid advising available to them. Once the total number of students is identified, the project will set a goal for the number of adults who will re-enroll in credit bearing courses during the two-year grant period.

NEW MEXICO (\$1,500,000)

New Mexico Higher Education Department  
Karen Kennedy, 505-476-8409

New Mexico continues to focus on improving the lives of underrepresented students by preparing them to further their educational and professional goals. The initial 2008-2009 College Access Challenge Grant funding provided New Mexico with the opportunity to launch and complete two iterations of New Mexico's high school, college and career Web portal; Carve Your Path.

The development of Carve Your Path 3.0 is led by the New Mexico Higher Education Department and the New Mexico Public Education Department with the collaboration of the New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, College Success Network of New Mexico, and the New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation.

Through our collaborative efforts, Carve Your Path has emerged as the centralized source for students to explore different educational and career options in the state. Furthermore, with the administration of the College Access Challenge Grant, New Mexico has continued to expand partnerships between various state level agencies and organization, established the College Success Network, expanded College Goal Sunday, and consolidated and aligned the professional development efforts for secondary and postsecondary counselors and advisors in order to provide improved guidance for underserved students.

With continued funding from the College Access Challenge Grant, New Mexico will focus on four key areas:

- Marketing and Outreach;
- Program Development;
- Professional Development; and
- Access to Funds.

Marketing and Outreach - New Mexico plans to implement marketing and outreach activities that will specifically target underrepresented students and families with high achievement gaps by aligning college access activities within the state. New Mexico hopes to accomplish this goal by building on existing resources that have been developed through the previous CACG efforts. The comprehensive outreach campaign initiated under this grant will be centered on the information that the state has gathered through Carve Your Path. We plan to provide on-site, in-person workshops, FAFSA completion assistance, financial literacy programs, debt management education, and media campaigns that will incorporate various modes to reach our target population.

Program Development - New Mexico's College Access Challenge Grant will continue program development in the Carve Your Path 3.0 system. The development of Carve Your Path 3.0 will

## NEW MEXICO (continued)

allow for the creation of honest, data-driven software applications that assist with the college and career investigations of students, families, counselors, and leaders across New Mexico. The

development process will involve students across disciplines to the maximum extent possible. The development of Carve Your Path 3.0 will also involve the creation of a P-20 investigation database. In addition, an interactive query tool will be developed enabling students to investigate a variety of career and related educational options so that college access becomes a real opportunity.

New Mexico will leverage and improve existing partner agency's longitudinal data systems and create a P-20 (Pre-Kindergarten through Career) database. This will allow state level decision makers with much needed data to draft policy that will significantly improve the condition of our underrepresented and low-income students in New Mexico. In addition, the creation of a P-20 database will allow further development and linking of student level information with the Carve Your Path system. The third iteration of Carve Your Path will interact with the P-20 database to allow students to make decisions, and allow counselors and parents to guide the students on educational and career choices by interfacing with the student's actual educational records.

Recently, New Mexico's Advisor Institute (postsecondary) and Counselor's Academy (secondary) initiatives have merged with the support of the New Mexico School Counselor's Association. Based on this merger, New Mexico plans to implement an improved professional development opportunity for its counselors and advisors. Through the administration of the CACG, the State plans to create a comprehensive professional development framework delivered through multiple modalities centered on Carve Your Path 3.0. This framework has the potential to serve as a statewide standard and as a resource for all counselors and advisors in New Mexico. Subsequently, this will ensure when students are given college and career guidance it is done through informed perspectives regardless of where the student attends school in New Mexico. Enhancing how counselors and advisors are trained will improve college and career readiness among students who oftentimes do not receive appropriate and necessary information about educational opportunities.

### Access to Funds

Access to funding is one of the greatest obstacles for students to overcome when planning and paying for college. As part of the Carve Your Path 3.0 experience that links students to potential funding, the CACG will focus on incorporating into the student portfolio centralized e-sponsorships that connect students with donors through an incentivized, academically focused, and accomplishment-based gift aid program.

The Health Loan Repayment Program, a loan forgiveness service that provides financial assistance for underrepresented New Mexico students with the intent of incentivizing them to return to their communities, is one of the most successful repayment programs in the state. Most counties in New Mexico are rural/frontier, underserved, and underrepresented areas. The opportunity to provide additional funding for the Health Loan Repayment Program is a CACG

NEW MEXICO (continued)

priority. The Carve Your Path 3.0 portal will be one of the vehicles to disseminate information about the program.

NEW YORK (\$7,601,629)

Higher Education Services  
Patricia Thompson, 518-473-0414

The New York College Access Challenge Grant (NY CACG) project will conduct and support initiatives that are measurable, replicable statewide, and sustainable for long-term results. The project goals and objectives will include:

1. Increasing the number and percentage of CACG-eligible individuals who are prepared to enter and succeed in college through information and support programs.
2. Identifying replicable best practices for the delivery of information and creation of support structures to assist disadvantaged students in entering and succeeding in college;
3. Increasing the capacity of schools, agencies and local community organizations to support CACG goals/objectives through statewide professional development training;
4. Facilitating student and family access to financial aid, financial literacy and college and career information through development of a public Web-based resource portal; and
5. Establishing procedures and systems for the effective administration of New York's CACG funds to promote best value decisions and ensure administrative integrity.

Goals for participating NY CACG populations will include:

1. Increase college and career options awareness among program participants by 15 percent;
2. Increase college attendance and progress towards completion rates among program participants by 10 percent;
3. Increase participant understanding of college costs and the availability of financial aid opportunities by 15 percent; and,
4. Increase online filing of the FAFSA by five percent.

New York successfully utilized its initial two-year CACGP grant to lay the foundation for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to increasing college enrollment and completion among disadvantaged students through development of intervention strategies and enhanced information resources. For 2010, the NY CACG project will:

- Identify target populations;
- Develop, test, implement, and measure the effectiveness of strategies and services designed to enhance high school graduation and college success rates;
- Monitor and report on progress toward overall program objectives and goals;
- Aggressively promote awareness of college admission requirements, college affordability, and an understanding of available federal, State and institutional aid;
- Target and actively assist CACG-eligible students in completing the FAFSA at workshop events held during New York's State-designated Student Financial Aid Awareness Month;
- Expand participation among CACG-eligible students in College Goal Sunday by establishing additional event sites, and continue availability of participant scholarships;
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Internet-based resource for CACG-eligible students and their families, CACG partners and sub-grantees, and middle and high school

NEW YORK (continued)

counselors and educators that provides information and links to state and federal grant and aid programs, financial literacy and career exploration programs, and New York State colleges and universities;

- Survey colleges across the State to identify and assess college and pre-college level services being provided to at risk students and replicate best practices from programs with demonstrable results; and
- Provide professional development for middle and secondary school counselors, and college financial aid officers and admissions counselors to improve their capacity to assist CACG-eligible students.

NY CACG partners will work with HESC to deliver direct services to students and families which may include SAT and GED prep programs; high school mentoring programs; facilitating ongoing communications and interactions between local colleges and targeted middle and high schools to promote increased expectations of college attendance; high school advisement, including providing information to students and families on postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, planning and career preparation; understanding the connection between careers and curricula and advising students on good study habits; pre-freshman summer institutes to help incoming college students successfully transition to college; peer-to-peer mentoring by upper division college students for CACG qualified freshmen and sophomores; and need-based scholarships to fund academic preparedness for CACG qualified adults and students.

NEW CAROLINA (\$3,827,447)

University of North Carolina General Administration  
Bruce Mallette, 919-962-4907

The North Carolina College Access Challenge Grant Program (NC CACGP) will expand and enhance the scope of college access efforts in North Carolina through a strong collaborative partnership among the state's education agencies: The University of North Carolina General Administration (UNC GA) as the lead agency, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI), and the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA). All partner agencies will work together to support the Office of the Governor's "**Career and College – Ready, Set, Go!**" initiative to increase the number of students graduating high school, attending college, and completing a degree from a community college, public senior institution, or private college or university. This statewide initiative directly aligns with the objectives and goals of the College Access Challenge Grant Program and is a foundation for sustainable partnerships among North Carolina's education agencies.

The emphasis of the 2010-2011 NC CACGP is college access and readiness. Programs will focus on professional development for high school counselors; financial aid training for college administrators; student and parent outreach; career and college planning curriculum development for students, parents, and counselors; and infrastructure support of the State's college access portal, CFNC.org. The program will continue to support activities and services that were part of the 2008-2010 NC CACGP (P378A080017) as well as provide support for additional initiatives that extend the scope of statewide college access efforts.

The NC CACGP will include programs in accordance with the following authorized services and activities specified by the Department of Education for the College Access Challenge Grant:

- **Provide information to students and families on postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, planning, and career preparation:**
  - Enhance the Electronic High School Transcript System on CFNC.org (UNC GA)
  - Enhance the Online Transfer Articulation System on CFNC.org (UNC GA)
  - Enhance the College Preparatory Database (UNC GA)
  - Establish Articulation Agreements Disciplinary Review Panels (NCCCS)
  - Provide CFNC.org Infrastructure Support (NCSEAA)
  - Perform Title I/District Parental Outreach (NC DPI)
  
- **Provide information on financing options, including activities that promote financial literacy and debt management among students and families:**
  - Enhance Financial Literacy on CFNC.org (NCSEAA)
  - Develop Toolkits for Financial Literacy (NC DPI)

NORTH CAROLINA (continued)

- **Conduct outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in or completing college:**
  - Conduct College Application Week Activities (UNC GA)
  - Perform College Readiness Advising through the Carolina College Advising Corps (UNC GA)
  - Evaluate and Expand the Minority Male Mentoring Program (NCCCS / UNC GA)
  - Enhance and Expand the Independent College Access Network (NCICU)
- **Assist students in completing the FAFSA:**
  - Expand FAFSA Day Activities (NCSEAA)
- **Implement professional development for guidance counselors at middle and secondary schools, and financial aid administrators and college admissions counselors at institutions of higher education:**
  - - Conduct the College Access Conference (UNC GA)
    - Develop a CFNC.org Certified High School Program Pilot (UNC GA)
    - Develop Career Readiness Curriculum for Parents, Students, and Counselors (UNC GA)
    - Perform Training and Outreach to College Professionals on CFNC.org Tools (UNC GA)
    - Conduct Professional Development for NCCCS Financial Aid Professionals (NCCCS)
    - Develop Paying for College Training Modules on CFNC.org for Counselors (NCSEAA)
    - Conduct Statewide Training for Middle and High School Counselors (NC DPI)

## NORTH DAKOTA (\$1,500,000)

Bank of North Dakota  
Wally Erhardt, 701-328-5654

The North Dakota College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project will be coordinated by Student Loans of North Dakota (SLND), a state agency administered by Bank of North Dakota (BND). The four main goals and objectives of the program are to increase college access services to low-income populations, improve students' and parents' awareness of college as an option, expand students' and parents' knowledge of college financial aid options, and broaden collaborations between all North Dakota college access resources under the umbrella of North Dakota College Access Network (NDCAN). These goals and objectives will be accomplished through a combination of activities and services that include partnerships with organizations, program implementation, sub-grants to nonprofit agencies, and college access marketing. This range of initiatives is expected to elevate secondary student involvement in college preparation activities, increase underrepresented student enrollment and retention in postsecondary education, and improve interactions among college access organizations.

In an effort to increase college access services, SLND will offer CACG sub-grants to organizations, such as those hosting TRIO programs, that work directly with low-income populations to stimulate college enrollment and completion. SLND also will implement a program to provide dual credit enrollment scholarships to enable low-income high school students to take college-level courses. These scholarships will be a resource that allows eligible students to earn college credits while still in high school and thereby increase the likelihood of enrollment in postsecondary education after graduation. SLND will promote the dual credit enrollment program; collect, review, and approve applications; disburse funds; and conduct follow up assessments to determine student outcomes after high school completion. Other activities to reach this goal may include support of adult education programs and research of mentorship programs for future initiatives.

To improve students' and parents' awareness of college as an option, SLND will use North Dakota CACG funds to sponsor RUPrepareND, an online college exploration and preparation system managed by North Dakota Career Resource Network (NDCRN). NDCRN provides training to school staff, students, and parents on how to utilize the system to create student profiles, assess career interests, explore college options, plan for postsecondary education, and practice ACT testing. Currently many school districts, especially those in areas having high levels of low-income families, do not have the wherewithal to utilize RUPrepareND to its full potential. Therefore, SLND and NDCRN will partner with the Center for Technology and Business to conduct Crash Course workshops with parents and students in disadvantaged communities to increase awareness and usage of the system. In addition, SLND also will promote college access through publications, Web site improvements, and an extensive media campaign. Materials will be created that specifically appeal to low-income and American Indian populations.

Understanding financial aid options as well as how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are critical to college access. Students' and parents' knowledge in these

## NORTH DAKOTA (continued)

areas will be expanded through partnerships and sponsorships with programs such as College Goal Sunday which specifically targets low-income families, North Dakota Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NDASFAA) school counselor workshops and financial aid information nights, and College SAVE 529 plans. SLND staff has played leadership roles in each of these successful programs since their inception and through the CACGP will assist them to increase outreach to underrepresented populations.

SLND will work to broaden collaborations among all North Dakota college access resources under the umbrella of the North Dakota College Access Network (NDCAN). Through these collaborations the CACGP will provide opportunities for professional development, communication, and networking through conference support, meetings, committee work, and newsletters. SLND also will research and document all North Dakota college access resources to develop an inventory to be available on the NDCAN Web site. The inventory may be used to identify overlaps and gaps in services for future recommendations.

OHIO (\$4,381,431)

Board of Regents  
Charles Shahid, 614-644-5959

The Ohio College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project will be used to support Ohio's higher education goals by supporting the following specific objectives:

**Dual Enrollment:** Increase the awareness, particularly among low-income students and their families, of *dual enrollment opportunities* that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school, and understand their own capacity to succeed in college level coursework. Increase the capacity of school districts to engage in successful high school/college collaborations that facilitate greater dual enrollment. Success in this effort will be gauged by measuring the number of students (disaggregated by socio-economic status and racial/ethnic status) participating in dual enrollment and the number of students that enter college having already earned college credit while in high school.

**Improved and Coordinated Messaging:** Students and their families in Ohio can have difficulty finding the right information that is meaningful and user friendly. Dozens of Web sites offer assistance – and yet many still require students and their families to have extensive knowledge to find the right information. Among Ohio resources that play a role in providing low-income and first-generation students with college knowledge include KnowHow2GOOhio, which provides basic information to students in an inspirational, student-friendly language and the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS), which allows students to build a portfolio of coursework, resumes and more. Students, however, are pointed from one site to the next with the promise of more and better information – but are often left unfulfilled. Ohio will use a portion of its College Access Challenge Grant to design a strategy to streamline these systems and provide more relevant and actionable information, thus creating more consistent, effective and impactful communications. Part of this work will target increasing awareness of the results of these efforts, particularly among low-income students and their families. The system will include components that highlight: (a) dual enrollment options and the procedures to follow in order to take advantage of dual enrollment opportunities; (b) information that stresses the importance of taking nationally standardized college entrance examinations (ACT/SAT); and information about *low-cost pathways* to postsecondary credentials (adult career technical education centers, community colleges, university regional branch campuses). Also, Ohio has nationally recognized statewide articulation and transfer policies and practices that simplify and guarantee substantial transferability of college-level coursework completed at various points of entry. CACG funding will also be used to convey information about articulation and transfer to students as a key element that supports going to, and succeeding in college. The success of this work will be gauged by increased enrollments (disaggregated by socio-economic status and racial/ethnic status) among these low-cost entry points.

**Persistence, Retention and Completion:** Funding from this grant will be used to increase outreach and intervention strategies that contribute toward increased persistence, retention and

## OHIO (continued)

completion of students at-risk of not completing their post-secondary education. An important element of the outreach strategy will be to deploy, for all students, a robust Web-based

functionality (currently under the working title of the Ohio Student Success Gateway) that will allow students to understand the transferability of credits and the identification of degree and credential completion options and pathways. The site will also be able to provide career exploration information for postsecondary students that compliments the system developed in the second objective (above). The system will include assistance related to college success and completion. Additionally, the State recognizes that there is a need for the human touch to achieve this objective – namely interaction with counselors, advisors, mentors and other individuals with whom a student may interact. Funding will also be utilized to ensure direct services are provided to college students to ensure they are returning for their sophomore year and graduating. Success in this objective will be gauged by an improvement in retention rates measured in terms of semester to semester and year over year.

OKLAHOMA (\$1,694,526)

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
Debra Stuart, 405-225-9168

The purpose of using the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program funds is to expand existing initiatives that will significantly increase the number of students from underrepresented groups who matriculate, persist and complete degrees in higher education. This expansion will insure that students and families living in poverty are reached and supported. Despite concerted efforts to generate more college graduates, some Oklahomans are still falling through the cracks, including first-generation college students; lower than average income; ethnic backgrounds of Hispanic, African-American, and Native American; transfers among institutions; and working adults.

The activities funded will promote the following goals: (1) to increase the completion rates of students who have started and not completed a college degree; (2) to increase the college-going rate of high school students through use of a student information portal (OKcollegestart.org); (3) to improve the college preparation of students from underrepresented groups by providing counselor professional development and by providing information to students and parents regarding benefits and financing options; and (4) to improve success of students attending college.

The CACG activities are sustainable because the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education has established a foundation of meaningful accomplishments over years. Also, Oklahoma higher education has a consistent, data-driven public agenda supporting the pressing needs of Oklahoma: (1) prepare more students for college; (2) graduate more students from college; and (3) increase the educated workforce. Partners in these efforts have been other state agencies and national organizations. In addition, OSRHE will organize and support other organizations through the Oklahoma College Access Network (OK-CAN).

While numerous activities will be conducted to achieve these four goals, seven specific activities will be supported by CACGP funds.

- (1) Scholarships will be provided to Pell-eligible students as an incentive to complete their baccalaureate or associate degrees.
- (2) To improve the existing bachelor's degree completion program and develop an associate degree completion curriculum, professional development will be provided to college staff using consultants from CAEL, NCAT, and Online Quality.
- (3) A field-based Coordinator, Student Portal Program Planner, and staff assistant will be hired to provide professional development for all middle school and high school counselors to use upgrades to the student information portal, Okcollegestart.org, especially targeting school districts in the 19 high poverty counties and three urban school districts identified in Oklahoma. They also will collect and provide counselor and student feedback to the vendor for new or improved student portal services. Working with the vendor, Xap, Inc., this professional development activity will focus on specific

OKLAHOMA (continued)

- (4) issues related to the use of OKcollegestart.org as it improves student to college planning and financial resources.
- (5) The maintenance contract with Xap, Inc., vendor of the student information portal (OKcollegestart.org), will be continued.
- (6) Based on the success of the previous two years, 10 retreats will be sponsored for inexperienced counselors across the state and experienced counselors from the 19 counties and three urban school districts with poverty rates of greater than 16 percent, the Oklahoma average. The same counselors will attend a summer institute including national consultants with expertise in issues related to working with students living below the poverty line. The counselor institute will focus on sharing ideas and building a network of support for counselors working in areas with high numbers of children in poverty. The Ruby Payne Group will provide expertise and materials. ACT staff will provide OK EPAS tools and ACT reports demonstrating how those data can be used to assist schools and individual students for test preparation and college readiness. There will be time dedicated to meeting and sharing with others, building the “Professional Learning Community” of counselors, working together to improve the quality of counseling programs across the state. Thirdly, counselors will be provided funding to attend the Regional ACT Symposium.
- (7) To support the new statewide college access network in Oklahoma (OK-CAN), air time will be purchased to run cable commercials across the state that build awareness of financial aid resources and emphasize the importance of completing the FAFSA.
- (8) To improve success of students attending college by using national consultants and piloting data-driven plans at urban community colleges to improve retention of students from underrepresented groups and to close the gap between their success in college and other groups. The planned retention activities address developmental education, first-year persistence and financial aid.

OREGON (\$1,500,000)

Oregon University System  
Joseph Holiday, 541-346-5729

The Oregon College Access Challenge Grant (OR CACG) project will focus on increasing the number of Oregon K-12 students who attend postsecondary education by expanding the capacity of programs which provide pre-college enrichment opportunities so they can serve greater numbers of students with high quality programming. There are two primary components of this approach:

**(1) Expand ASPIRE:** Pre-college academic preparation and enrichment programs available to rural and other under-served communities are vital to get students familiar and comfortable with college expectations. One program with a demonstrable record of success is ASPIRE (Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone). Created by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC), ASPIRE began with four pilot schools in 1998 as a program to encourage students who do not typically think of themselves as college bound. Today, ASPIRE is in 115 middle and high schools across Oregon, engages 1,516 volunteers, and reaches more than 11,000 students from all walks of life. An additional 61,093 student contacts were made through drop-in assistance, workshops, and classroom presentations. Oregon's 2010 CACG proposal seeks funding to **expand ASPIRE from 115 sites in the state to 165 sites** during this grant period, increasing all students reached by 30-40 percent by year 2 of the program implementation. ASPIRE will involve Educational Service Districts in order that more small schools can participate through sharing of a site coordinator, and to target current areas with fewer ASPIRE sites, such as Eastern Oregon. Additionally, the CACGP grant will support summer institutes for public school counselors and volunteer mentors from rural communities, and assist students in completing the FAFSA. Expansion of ASPIRE will increase college-going rates among currently underserved Oregonians, and will increase the number of these students seeking and obtaining financial aid and scholarships. ASPIRE students lack awareness of their options, have limited financial resources, or their cultural and family expectations do not include postsecondary education. The program also extends and enhances the reach of high school counselors, a great need in Oregon which has a student/counselor ratio of 440 to 1.

ASPIRE has learned that sites need a designated employee who will recruit, train, and coordinate the ASPIRE volunteers, form partnerships with local colleges, and help create the relationships with school staff and administration that will integrate ASPIRE permanently into the school culture. Initially it was thought that high school counselors would fill this role, but that is usually not the case due to counselors' existing workload and other responsibilities. The ASPIRE coordinator is thus the lynchpin to a successful program. Stable funding for the ASPIRE coordinators is a partnership between the sites and OSAC, with each providing half of the funds necessary, ensuring commitment from the site and providing needed program sustainability.

Community members, including parents, retired educators, and first-generation college graduates make up the ASPIRE volunteers and are comprehensively trained as ASPIRE Advisors to help students understand and map a vision of their career and educational goals, setting them on the

## OREGON (continued)

pathway to achievement through one-on-one mentoring. These activities include academic enrichment and preparation, scholarship search and application process, career exploration, and college choice.

### **(2) Partner with existing and new college enrichment programs to increase their capacity to serve more Oregon K-12 students through a sub-granting process.**

This second major component of Oregon's 2010 CACG proposal creates a system to partner with pre-college outreach programs/organizations with a demonstrated history of success, or new initiatives that lack sufficient funding to get underway. Sub-grant program priorities will be middle and high schools with high populations of under-served, first-generation, and low-income students, as well as schools/students from designated rural and urban areas which fit the above criteria. Partnering with existing programs and institutions allows the Oregon CACG to quickly support/create a college-going culture by providing students and families with the tools and knowledge necessary to successfully transition from secondary education to college. The proposed program will: (1) significantly and quickly increase the number of students entering postsecondary education; (2) improve their academic preparation for college, and thus increase their ability to persist and complete a degree; and (3) increase the capacity of Oregon public K-12, and public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education to support students' success.

This approach will enable Oregon to make progress in increasing its college-going rate among the most underserved populations in the state, meeting the knowledge and skill requirements of the current and future economy, and ensuring growth and community success in every corner of the state. As seen in studies completed by the Oregon University System (OUS) — after controlling for disparities in high school GPA and SAT scores — there is no statistically significant difference in the odds of college graduation of African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, and White freshmen. Through high expectations of all students, the availability of pre-college preparation programs, and in-college support, all Oregon students can enter and succeed in postsecondary education. These partnerships will increase the capacity and reach of existing (and in some cases new) pre-college academic enrichment, outreach, and preparatory programs for underserved Oregon students including in- and out-of-school time and summer bridge programs that help students be academically and otherwise prepared to enroll in and succeed in college. These programs can be based in middle or high schools, community colleges, OUS institutions, private nonprofit colleges or universities, or community based nonprofit organizations, and would work in collaboration with at least one other education and/or community partner. Programs must include offerings that are culturally appropriate to students from diverse backgrounds, and include linking career aspirations to students' educational learning plans; and partner with other institutions, such as a high school, tribal entity, or community-based organization partnering with a college or university. Programs must increase the number of students enrolled in and who complete these pre-college programs, and who enroll in college after high school graduation, with parental involvement preferred.

PENNSYLVANIA (\$4,167,672)

Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Sandra Edmunds, 717-787-5041

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), through the College Access Grant (CACG) Program, will partner with Project GRAD USA (GRAD USA) and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) to deliver coordinated college preparatory services that have both depth and breadth. Depth will be provided through intensive services delivered by GRAD USA to 28,513 students in twelve low-income and below-proficient high schools and their feeder middle schools. Through this model, GRAD USA will provide a full-time, on the ground, college access presence in the chosen school districts.

Breadth will be provided by PHEAA through a statewide CAPS (Creating Access to Postsecondary Schools) program impacting up to 24 additional secondary schools across Pennsylvania; providing financial aid information to the entire state, and working with statewide college counseling and financial aid associations in a coordinated fashion. Through partnership with PHEAA in this manner, Pennsylvania is able to efficiently impact the entire state and create long term partnerships between colleges and high need school districts.

Among its many accomplishments in the prior College Access Challenge Grant, PDE, in partnership with PHEAA and GRAD USA, provided 38,436 direct services to 5,968 students across the seven focus high schools and their feeder middle schools; reached 1,412 students through tutoring; presented 244 financial aid workshops for 13,900 parents across Pennsylvania; and conducted 21 College Tours and Forums assisting 2,827 students. PDE's Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education will again ensure CACG implementation, effective program delivery, and quality control, as well as support buy-in of the targeted districts and postsecondary institutions.

## RHODE ISLAND (\$1,500,000)

Rhode Island Office of Higher Education  
Deborah Grossman-Garber, 401-456-6010

The overarching, long-term goal of Rhode Island's engagement with its 2010 College Access Challenge Grant will be to increase by substantive numbers the proportion of Rhode Island students—youth and returning adults—who successfully enter, persist, and ultimately complete a postsecondary degree that will lead them to productive engagement as citizens and well-paid workers within America's vibrant democracy. This mirrors President Obama's national education goal, one that has been articulated over the last several decades with increasing urgency by scores of federal agency taskforces, academic professional organizations, and well-funded national initiatives.

The timing is right. Currently, only 43 percent of Rhode Island's young adults, ages 25-34, possess a postsecondary degree of any type. We know that increasingly those industry sectors of our economy that are experiencing sharp growth will require a college education or credential—the demand for higher level skills in the workplace is outpacing the supply even today. National workforce projections predict that 60 percent of all available entry-level American jobs over the next ten years will require a college degree or certificate. This makes for a very large gap between upcoming workforce needs and available labor supply. Without strategic intervention, Rhode Island and the rest of the nation will fall woefully short.

As a member of the national Complete College America Alliance, Rhode Island will be setting numeric goals to significantly increase the number of students accessing and achieving a college degree over the next decade. Not only will we be determining what those metrics will be for our population overall, but we also will be strategically disaggregating our data to ensure we address expanding student access and success in college for those who historically have been under-represented. Metrics and data, if they are disconnected from those who establish policy and administer programs, could prove relatively meaningless. Therefore, we will leverage the many partnerships that already exist in Rhode Island to bring about necessary programmatic and policy reforms.

Students will not pursue a college degree if they don't understand its long term benefits or believe it is 'unaffordable' for them. Through such partnership efforts as the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority's student Web portal, WaytogoRI, the College Crusade, and the college planning centers managed by the Rhode Island Student Loan Authority, multiple strategies are being utilized to address these issues. Our challenge is to ensure that our efforts are not only more strategic in focus, but are also more systemically connected so that they address both student needs and potential structural barriers to achieving our goals.

To support and leverage policy and program alignment, the Governor is presently establishing a College Access and Success Work Group (CASWG) comprised of senior level staff from multiple state agencies and organizations including: the Governor's Office, the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education, the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority, the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Rhode Island Student Loan

## RHODE ISLAND (continued)

Authority, the General Assembly, the College Crusade, KIDS COUNT, the Rhode Island Foundation, Providence Plan, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, and representatives from each of Rhode Island's three public institutions of higher education (the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island). This Work Group will be chaired by the Office of Higher Education and guided by the following principles:

- Advancing student-focused strategies that can achieve the greatest impact;
- Articulating goals based on existing data and having measurable outcomes;
- Assuring systemic, systematic, sustainable, and scalable approaches to college access and success that address student needs; and
- Creating a collegial and collaborative community of all key stakeholders.

The CASWG will be responsible for informing the proposed Gap Analysis and Data Summits identified in this grant application. It will be tasked with informing all of the efforts of our state's College Access Challenge Grant and will report to all relevant governance bodies such as the Governor's PK-16 Council, the Board of Governors for Higher Education and the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (See Appendix A: Letter of Invitation).

We propose to target approximately half of first-year CACG funds on structural issues, including conducting an environmental scan and thorough data analysis, establishing college planning tools for adults connected to workforce development, and expanding professional development for educators through statewide data summits and communications strategies; the other half of first-year CACG funding will directly support students through continued funding for scholarships to our neediest students and expanding peer counseling and advisory services through The College Crusade of Rhode Island.

The College Crusade of Rhode Island (CC) has documented measurable outcomes that demonstrate the organization's success in supporting students to both enroll and persist in college. CC serves more than 3,500 middle and high school students in Rhode Island's four largest urban communities (Providence, Woonsocket, Central Falls, and Pawtucket). It provides a multi-pronged approach to meeting student needs, is tracking the outcomes of its students longitudinally, and is achieving measurable success (See *Attachment 3: The College Crusade of Rhode Island Program Matrix by Grade Level*). A key to the organization's effectiveness is the supportive environments that are created through its peer advisory networks that sustain positive, long-term relationships for students. The Crusade places a team of 21 full-time middle and high school advisors in RI's urban districts, implementing a program that is grounded in youth development principles; supports students' academic, social and personal development; and establishes a structure that provides for regular contact with a strong peer group over an extended period of time.

RHODE ISLAND (continued)

The organization has had a direct impact on increasing college access and retention for program participants. In 2009, 60 percent of Crusaders who graduated from high school went immediately on to college. This is almost one and a half times the rate for students in our urban districts (42 percent), and even exceeds the rate for all Rhode Island students (55 percent). The college retention rate for Crusaders is equally remarkable. Preliminary results from a higher education retention study being performed by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University indicate that the college retention rate for Crusaders in the Class of 2006 exceeds the rates for minority students at our three public postsecondary institutions—and even exceeds the rates for all students at the state’s four-year colleges.

**One-Year Retention Rates at Rhode Island’s Public Colleges\***

	<b>Crusaders</b>	<b>Minority Students</b>	<b>All Students</b>
Community College of Rhode Island	55.3 percent	54.9 percent	61.8 percent
Rhode Island College	88.9 percent	72.1 percent	75.6 percent
University of Rhode Island	100 percent	84.7 percent	80.6 percent

\* Almost three-quarters of Crusaders enrolled in higher education attend one of these three institutions.

If Rhode Island is successful in increasing college enrollment of our under-represented student population, we also must consider how to support them to degree completion. A component of our CACG grant application therefore proposes to extend the Crusade’s highly successful advisory model to post secondary education so that student progress is followed on an on-going basis and connections are made to such existing programs as TRIO within institutions.

In summary, Rhode Island will utilize the resources available through the College Access Challenge Grant program not only to provide effective services to our under-represented students, but also to continue to develop and drive data-based decision-making across our education systems.

## SOUTH CAROLINA (\$1,917,048)

South Carolina Commission of Higher Education  
Derrah Cassidy, 803-737-9758

Today's global knowledge economy is driven by innovation and requires a highly educated, highly flexible and adaptive workforce. To ensure South Carolina's competitiveness and to realize a prosperous future for all citizens, the South Carolina College Access Challenge Grant (SC CACG) Program remains committed to implementing grassroots, community-based initiatives statewide. All proposed programs are based on the principal belief that college success is possible for students who prepare academically and graduate from high school. The SC CACG program plans to continue the work from the first two years of the CACG program and expand the scope and breadth of the state's college access initiatives.

In collaboration with other state agencies, private industry, and non-profit organizations, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will develop and implement a comprehensive campaign to disseminate information about access to postsecondary education for all South Carolina residents. A central focus is the establishment of the South Carolina College Access Network (SC CAN). SC CAN is an important step in South Carolina's goal to educate students, parents, and community leaders about the tools, services and resources available to assist with successful transitions from high school to postsecondary education. Ultimately, SC CAN will take a leadership role in showcasing existing statewide college access programs and using Geographic Information System (GIS) data to identify areas of the state that are underserved in the area of college access.

SC CAN and its programs will work to remove barriers, both real and perceived, to postsecondary education by providing information on the importance of education beyond high school graduation. In addition, services will include career planning, financial literacy, college admissions, and retention in a postsecondary education setting. The proposed programs and services will offer opportunities for students and parents to receive information in a variety of media, and an emphasis will be placed on students from low-income families.

The project includes the following initiatives:

- Convening leadership teams to formally establish the South Carolina College Access Network with the purpose of improving access and success in postsecondary education;
- Providing a yearly College Access Conference to disseminate information and offer training for all College Access stakeholders in the state of South Carolina;
- Expanding the College Application Week and College Goal Sunday format with additional sites across the state;
- Increasing the activities of the state's 12 Regional Education Centers by providing additional support focused on data and resources for school counselors across the state;

## SOUTH CAROLINA (continued)

- Collaborating with the South Carolina Council on Economic Education to help K-12 students develop grade-appropriate understandings of the relationship between financial literacy and college readiness;
- Collaborating with Southern Regional Education Board and the *Go Alliance Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative* to create and deliver professional development materials for middle and high school counselors that improve their effectiveness in preparing students from low-income families for college;
- Updating the School Counselor Resource Manual created during the first CACG. The manual describes all resources, activities, courses, and other applicable support available to school counselors across the state. The manual will be available online and in hard copy at every middle and high school in the state;
- Collaborating with South Carolina Education Television to provide a series of programs designed to educate school counselors on postsecondary advisement. The goal of the programs will be to provide intensive training in advisement curriculum strategies for school counselors who are working with diverse, low-income students. The videos will be showcased on the [www.SCCANGO.org](http://www.SCCANGO.org) Web site under the best practices section and will provide a forum for discussion for educators about proven, effective college access strategies;
- Continuing (from Years One and Two) the South Carolina Higher Education Awareness Readiness Transition (HEART) Award program with the South Carolina Department of Education. The HEART Award recognizes excellence in school counseling by identifying South Carolina school counselors and schools with proven records of accomplishment in promoting higher education awareness;
- Launching a statewide, multimedia advertising campaign focusing on the accessibility and affordability of postsecondary education in South Carolina;
- Establishing an online, Web-based college and career Web portal for all South Carolinians to access information on how to plan, prepare, apply and pay for college in collaboration with other public agencies that are providing similar services;
- Complementing the work of college access professionals (middle and high school counselors, financial aid administrators, and admissions personnel, etc.) by providing collateral materials on various college planning topics for workshops, presentations, and classroom lessons. Electronic copies will be available on the SC CAN GO Web site;
- Establishing grassroots, community-based college awareness initiatives to include placing salaried outreach coordinators in two pilot regions of the state where the greatest

## SOUTH CAROLINA (continued)

financial need exists along the poverty-stricken I-95 corridor. The coordinators will work closely with local middle and high schools to organize and facilitate community-based college and career outreach events. The outcomes drawn from these pilot programs will be used as models of best practice and, ultimately, replicated around the state;

- Providing dual enrollment opportunities for high school seniors in pilot counties with the Technical College of the Lowcountry and Florence Darlington Technical College; and
- Coordinating a statewide Middle School College Access Subgrant Program designed to provide middle schools funding for travel and access to postsecondary institutions. Preference for subgrants will be given to middle schools that serve high poverty and first generation college students.

SOUTH DAKOTA (\$1,500,000)

Department of Education  
LuAnn Werdel, 605-773-3783

The South Dakota College Access Challenge Grant (SD CACG) project is structured to meet the following three goals: (1) increase underrepresented students' and families' awareness about postsecondary education; (2) increase underrepresented students' and families' access to grant aid and increase understanding and completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and (3) increase counselor and mentor awareness and knowledge of financial aid and the college application and acceptance process.

SDCAC will work with a diverse set of partners in both K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to provide authorized activities to underrepresented students and families across South Dakota. Special emphasis will be placed on American Indian students and families. Recent data from the South Dakota Board of Regents and Census 2000 indicate American Indians in South Dakota are significantly underrepresented in higher education and a disproportionate percentage is classified as living in poverty.

Activities will focus on college and career counseling; advising and mentoring; college visits; and workshops on post-secondary options, preparation, and financial aid. In addition to implementing systematic professional development for guidance counselors to improve their capacity to assist students and parents to better understand the college admissions and financial aid processes, the South Dakota Board of Regent institutions will conduct orientations and coordinate higher education transition and retention services on individual campuses and system-wide. The SD CACG project will also include a need-based scholarship component.

TENNESSEE (\$2,716,766)

Higher Education Commission  
Kathleen Tone, 615-741-7565

Political and social will, experience, knowledge development, and renewed means place Tennessee in a unique position for progress, innovation, and impact across all levels of education. In 2010, Tennessee clearly expressed its commitment to bettering the lives of all residents through improved educational systems and outcomes. Tennessee not only successfully won the bid for a Race to the Top federal grant award, but policymakers, stakeholders, and education professionals made significant commitments to forwarding educational outcomes and human capital development through passage of the First to the Top Tennessee Act and the Complete College Tennessee Act.

Additionally, 2010 marked a milestone year for Tennessee in its college access and success experience and network. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission's (THEC) Office of P-16 Initiatives continues to successfully operate the state's GEAR UP, College Access Challenge, and Lumina KnowHow2Go grant awards. Through such grants, THEC maintains statewide partnerships with community-based and locally operated college access and success programs. Through this CACG application, THEC looks to capitalize on such successes by providing specific statewide and direct services to students and educators across the state by enhancing CollegeforTN.org and creating a College Mentor Corps.

### **Enhanced Statewide Services: CollegeforTN.org**

THEC's objectives for CollegeforTN.org continuation and enhancement include: (1) ensure all Tennessee students have access to career exploration and standardized test preparation resources; and (2) expand use and implementation of CollegeforTN.org statewide with the intention of improving access to higher education. CollegeforTN.org, the state's college access Web portal, provides a system of career, high school, college and financial aid planning resources to all Tennessee students. Tools found on the site include an online college planning guide, high school course planner, career assessments, college admissions test preparation, financial aid planning, virtual postsecondary campus tours, and online college applications. As of June 2010, nearly 240,000 students actively used the resource and created CollegeforTN.org portfolios.

THEC proposes the use of CACG funds to meet the career exploration and college admissions test preparation needs of Tennessee students and educators. The site offers comprehensive career planning tools that allow Tennessee students to develop career goals and match those goals to higher education opportunities. Educators may use the CollegeforTN.org Professional Center to track student assessment results and career interests to ensure that students develop appropriate higher education and high school course plans. The test preparation resource features tutorials, practice sessions, timed sample tests, vocabulary building tools and test-taking tips, to aid in improving student test results.

Tennessee also plans to use CACG funds to maximize the use of CollegeforTN.org through a formal and comprehensive professional development program that will leverage the site's

## TENNESSEE (continued)

resources to increase academic preparation, enhance postsecondary aspiration, and increase the rate of successful student transition to higher education. THEC staff, including two new Training and Outreach Specialists, plan to conduct trainings and build relationships with school systems and educators through presentations, one-on-one visits, school assemblies, classroom workshops, online tutorials, and phone-based technical assistance. The training team will also focus on strengthening higher education institutions' participation in CollegeforTN.org via increased online application and electronic transcript exchange implementation statewide.

### **College Mentor Corps**

The Complete College Tennessee Act provided the state with policy-driven means for altering the trajectory and focus of Tennessee's public higher education; the legislation calls for further and formal development of a community college system and focuses higher education intention on college completion. Such Tennessee policy is a catalyst for a more refined focus on college access and success. Tennessee intends to capitalize on this momentum and use the CACG to coordinate and further the Tennessee College Access and Success Network, a network created with funding from the Lumina KnowHow2Go state re-grant and supported by future Race to the Top funding. The CACG provides Tennessee with a vehicle to turn good policy into relevant and transformative college access and success focused practice.

Based on national and statewide college access and success program models, Tennessee's proposed College Mentor Corps program enhances the scope activities of Tennessee's College Access and Success Network member organizations. THEC intends to sub-grant to a minimum of four TCASN member organizations to create a statewide College Mentor Corps. The objective of this program is two-fold: (1) make college accessible to more of Tennessee's high school graduates through college access and success focused mentoring; and (2) facilitate the transition between high school and community college, and community college and four-year institutions, thereby aiding in college retention and completion.

Sub-grant organizations will partner with community colleges to enhance or establish Offices of Transitions at each main campus; in partnership, sub-grant organizations and community colleges will work to build the College Mentor Corps program which best addresses the needs of low-income high school seniors in each institution's service area. Sub-grant organizations will employ a program coordinator to hire and oversee a staff of recent college graduates serving as the Mentor Corps. Each mentor will work closely with approximately 100 low-income high school seniors residing in the community college service area and students currently enrolled at the same institution. The work of the trained mentors with high school seniors will focus on college access initiatives such as academic preparation, FAFSA completion, college application completion, and scholarship applications; their work with current college students will focus on student success initiatives such as student retention, college completion, and student transfers from the two-year to four-year institutions.

## TENNESSEE (continued)

The proposed College Mentor Corps program enables the formal establishment of a college access and success focused bridge between secondary and postsecondary organizations and institutions across the state; by dissolving geographic barriers and establishing common college access and success mission-oriented goals, the proposed program allows high school students, current college students, and recent college graduates to connect with one another and navigate the P-16 educational pipeline.

### **Conclusion**

Tennessee is openly committed to education innovation and reform focused on the improvement of academic capacity, institutional access, and degree completion. The CACG program outlined above addresses the college access and success needs of low-income, high-need students and families across the state. CollegeforTN.org offers unique and timely resources to every student, school, and educator in the state. The College Mentor Corps program bridges the gap between high school and college through the development of young-adult to student, student to student, and mentor to mentee relationships. While the educational needs in Tennessee may be high, the will and capacity to improve our human capital and economic development is unmatched.

TEXAS (\$11,845,689)

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Judith Loreda, 512-427-6545

A Texas College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Advisory Group will meet quarterly to ensure that those implementing each component of the plan are exploiting all opportunities to complement, enhance and align programs. State-level representatives of GEAR UP and regional TRIO programs will be invited to become a part of this advisory group to maximize the synergy among federally- and state-funded college access programs in the state and to learn from their experiences. Philanthropic and corporate partners with a demonstrated interest in college access/success issues will also be invited to join this group as critical friends.

The goal of the CACG program in Texas is to build statewide support for a college-going culture, and—ultimately—to increase the number of degrees and credentials earned by underrepresented students in postsecondary education. Closing the Gaps (CTG) goals are: (1) enrollment of 1,650,000 students in 2015; and (2) for 210,000 degrees or other postsecondary certificates to be earned in 2015. Annual goals are disaggregated by ethnicity, by level of degree, and for critical fields (e.g., STEM, teaching, nursing) identified in the CTG plan.

A change in attitudes toward college and improved knowledge of the steps required to get into college will lead to a change in intermediate behaviors (college exploration, FAFSA completion, college application completion) leading to enrollment. Academic support such as tutoring, along with mentoring and other activities designed to improve the “soft skills” for college success will improve persistence in college. Outcome metrics vary by activity, and include: (1) results of telephone surveys; (2) FAFSA completion numbers; (3) college application numbers; (4) college enrollment numbers; and (5) student persistence data. There are four objectives:

- I. Improve parents’ and students’ knowledge about the college and career exploration, application, and financial aid processes.
- II. Increase parents’ and students’ belief that college is a viable, desirable option.
- III. Increase the number of underrepresented students who apply to college, complete the FAFSA, and enroll in college.
- IV. Increase the number of students who persist in college and graduate.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The components of the CACG plan are interconnected and complementary; each component builds upon and leverages the work of another. The tone and message of all activities are drawn together by the Generation Texas (GenTX) college and career awareness campaign. For example, the “ground campaign” of near-peer college advisers and work-study mentors assigned to high-risk high schools will carry the GenTX brand and personify the college-going message disseminated via community events and other grassroots activities.

The plan balances efforts to improve persistence in college with activities to facilitate access. Outreach to and services for high school students transitioning to college is complemented by

## TEXAS (continued)

outreach to those who are GED completers and students who have “stopped out” of college with a substantial number of credits earned (55 in community college or 100 in universities) but no credential completed.

A balanced mix of approaches is employed: outreach that is broadly disseminated online or through online media is complemented by local community events; even more intensive one-on-one outreach is provided by GenTX advisers and Work-Study Mentors at schools with low college-going rates. Bridging programs will make the transition more successful for under-prepared students, and comprehensive student service systems will be provided on campuses that serve significant numbers of underrepresented students at risk of not completing college. Additionally, “final stretch” need-based grants will reduce financial barriers for low-income students who have already demonstrated persistence through the first half of their college career.

GenTX. It has been said that “thought is the seed of action,” and social marketing research has borne this out. Knowing what to do is not enough: attitudes and beliefs must change before behavior is changed. GenTX public awareness campaign has been developed to stimulate a grassroots movement of underrepresented students and their families. In order to stimulate this “movement,” GenTX employs media, online outreach, local events with schools and partners, and the provision of printed materials and community toolkits. A brief video developed to introduce the vision of GenTX is available online at [www.GenTX.org](http://www.GenTX.org).

Web Portal Enhancement. Collegeforalltexans.com Web site currently serves 3,000 to 7,000 visitors per month, peaking in January and February as students apply to Texas colleges online. Content will be expanded to include training in the “soft skills” needed for college, and to address the needs of additional, “non-traditional” sectors, including returning military and other adult learners. Web-based financial literacy training will be added. Decisions regarding additional changes, such as integration with other sites, are pending the results of a one-year pilot managed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that is currently underway.

College Advising Corps. The University of Texas at Austin (Institute for Public School Initiatives) is establishing a program to place recent college graduates as full-time “near-peer” advisers in high schools with low college-going rates. The program was initiated with 2009 CACG funds, and with that, 15 advisers have been selected and will be trained and placed for service by August 2010. The University of Texas at Austin is implementing the National College Advising Corps model. Funding from the 2010 CACG will provide for the planning and infrastructure development for recruitment and deployment of 120–180 advisers from multiple institutions of higher education in years 2011-2015.

Work-Study Mentoring Program. Work-Study Mentorship programs support 10 to 80 mentors at each of the 32 grantee institutions for a total of approximately 500–700 mentors annually statewide. These students earn \$10 an hour for their work in college access centers in partnering high schools to promote a college-going culture. Collectively, these student mentors serve approximately 87,000 students annually at high schools across the state.

## TEXAS (continued)

Comprehensive Student Service Systems (AVID) \$220,000 CACG and \$628,000 state match. AVID has been very effective in preparing secondary school students to be successful in college, particularly economically disadvantaged Hispanic and African American students. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is partnering with AVID to determine if it can have the same success at the postsecondary level. Campuses participating in the four-year pilot agree to create an institution-wide advisory committee to plan and coordinate services that include a year-long Freshmen Experience course, content-area tutors for participating students, and development of an AVID Center. This pilot, which begins summer 2010, includes eight campuses that have committed to participating in the project for four years; the pilot will expand to include 16 campuses in 2011.

Comprehensive Student Service Systems (early alert, tutoring). Institutions with high Hispanic and African-American enrollment will compete for grants to support “early alert” systems tied to interventions (such as tutoring) to boost student success.

Adult Degree Completion. The Adult Degree Completion initiative will deploy a targeted marketing campaign to reach 222,843 students with 55 hours or more who have “stopped out” and are at risk of not completing college. An online transfer mapping system will be developed to assist and facilitate re-entry for these adults to complete a degree or certificate. A first-year pilot with six to eight consortium schools will be expanded in subsequent years to a statewide online transfer mapping system to facilitate the re-entry of these students and completion of their postsecondary education.

Bridging Programs. THECB directly administers state-appropriated funding for Higher Education Intensive and Bridging Programs, to decrease the need for developmental education and increase student persistence and success. Students at risk of not completing college receive rigorous academic instruction in the subject areas of English/Language Arts, mathematics, and/or science. Programs target four groups of at-risk students: (1) GED completers transitioning to higher education; (2) 11th and 12th graders not college-ready; (3) first-year students at risk of dropping out of college; and (4) recent high school graduates who are not academically college-ready.

Web-based professional development for counselors. TEA will add college access professional development to “Project Share,” the agency’s newly developed e-learning platform supporting professional learning communities of educators across the state.

Need-based student grant aid. In accordance with the *Accelerated Plan’s* emphasis on college completion, “Final Stretch” need-based grant aid will be awarded to students who have completed 60 hours toward a degree. There are currently 8,000 Pell-eligible STEM majors in Texas with over 60 hours. Therefore, to help meet goals for STEM degree completion, half of these awards will go to STEM students.

UTAH (\$1,500,000)

Utah State Board of Regents  
Melissa Miller-Kincart, 801-366-8492

The Utah State Board of Regents, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA) were thrilled to learn the College Access Challenge Grant Programs (CACG) had been extended through the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act. The State Board of Regents (the Board) serves as the state agency in Utah with jurisdiction over public higher education and has been re-designated by Governor Gary R. Herbert to again apply for and administer these monies. The CACG has assisted the Utah State Board of Regents and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in moving forward on a number of activities and initiatives aimed at increasing the number of low-income and underserved students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. We acknowledge our work in improving access and success for all students in Utah would have been greatly hindered without federal support the past two-years, as a result of one of our state's most severe budget crises. This federal grant has been instrumental in helping the Board maintain capacity and momentum toward increasing academic and financial preparation so more Utah citizens might more fully participate in postsecondary education. The goals and activities outlined in this proposal will provide our agency and partners a wonderful opportunity to build upon the work we have begun and be more intentional in efforts over the next five years.

## **Background**

In the spring of 2009 the Utah State Board of Regents adopted three strategic goals to answer the call of Governor Herbert in assisting the state to produce a talent force ready to meet the needs and demands of the global, knowledge-based economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Board of Regents has committed to work collaboratively with the various Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institutions to:

1. increase the rate of student participation (high school graduates and returning adult learners) in postsecondary education programs;
2. increase the rate of student completion in their chosen field of training or study, and
3. increase the level of economic innovation through research, technology transfer, and by nurturing individuals and companies that create new knowledge.

To align with the Utah State Board of Regents' goal of increasing participation and to provide statewide coordination, support and collaboration among the Utah System of Higher Education institutions, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in July of 2009 established a new "Outreach and Access" unit. This unit is led by an assistant commissioner and is charged with coordinating and supporting Utah's colleges and universities in improving college participation through new and existing programs and strategies, in partnership with K-12 educators and community partners; with an intentional commitment to helping Utah's growing underserved populations prepare for and succeed in college. This unit oversees and manages a number of statewide programs and initiatives, which includes: The Regents' and New Century

UTAH (continued)

Scholarships, Utah Scholars Initiative, College Access Challenge Grant, USHE Participation Task Force, Outreach and Access THINK TANK and deepening college and university use of the UtahFutures Web portal.

The 2008-2010 College Access Challenge Grant has served as a catalyst advancing the Board's participation agenda and for unifying many of our academic and financial outreach efforts and programs for postsecondary education at the state level primarily by:

1. Strengthening the Advising Capabilities of Public College Admissions and Financial Aid Counselors, Public School Guidance Counselors, and College Access Program Staff;
2. Expanding Early Awareness of College and Accessibility of College Access Information through Successful College Access Web Portal supported by a consortium of agencies in the state that maintain an interest in educational and career resource development and access; and
3. Sustaining the Utah Scholars Initiative (USI) as well as encouraging institutions of higher education to develop or strengthen programs to support these students through a sub-grant program.

As we look to the coming year and beyond the Board, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and UHEAA plan to pursue the following three objectives with their respective activities:

1. To provide information to students and families on postsecondary education: benefits, opportunities, planning, financing options including activities associated with financial literacy, FAFSA completion, default prevention and outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in or completing college.

Activities will include: Hosting regional financial aid evenings as a part of the Utah High School Tour, college open houses at each of our colleges and universities targeting junior and sophomore high school students, and FAFSA Completion events; UtahFutures training and enhancements; creation and dissemination of Utah college guide and other publications and materials; deepening and expanding the Utah Scholars Initiative; launching a statewide marketing campaign on how to prepare and pay for college.

2. To develop and deliver professional development events and resources for guidance counselors at secondary schools, as well as financial aid administrators, college admissions, recruitment staff, access and outreach personnel at institutions of higher education to improve knowledge and capacity to better assist them in their roles in working and increasing students and parents understanding of:

(1) Admission requirements and application deadlines and processes; (2) Financial aid and scholarship opportunities and procedures; (3) Academic and financial preparation to

## UTAH (continued)

improve postsecondary success; and (4) Activities such as tutoring/ mentoring, and support instruments and models to assist students' in preparing for and succeeding in college.

Activities will include: UtahFutures and financial aid trainings, delivery of statewide secondary counselor conference, support of the Utah Women and Education Project, as well as the University of Utah's Educational Psychology Departments partnership with AMES high school.

3. To expand and enhance the statewide infrastructure in Utah which will foster partnerships among federal, state, local agencies, community based organizations, businesses and public and higher education to significantly increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and who are successful in postsecondary education.

Activities will include: Sub-grants to strengthen college and universities access and outreach programs, join the National College Access Network and the WICJE CACG network to seek their support and assistance in creating a Utah College Access Network and searchable database of all our access programs and resources, as well as repurposing and strengthening the tracking and reporting parameters the Utah Centennial Opportunity Program for Education (UCOPE).

These activities will be developed, strengthened and delivered in partnership with the following state agencies, programs and education entities: The Utah System of Higher Education (eight public colleges and universities personnel) and the three not-for profit institutions Brigham Young University, Westminster College, and LDS (Latter Day Saints) Business College, Utah State Office of Education, Utah Council (Statewide Admissions and Recruitment personnel), Departments of Work Force Services and Vocational Rehabilitation, Utah Association of Financial Aid Administrators, UtahFutures Steering Committee, Utah Scholars partner school districts, business and community volunteers, Utah Women in Education Project, University of Utah's Educational Psychology Department, Statewide GEAR UP, Utah College Advising Corps, AVID, MESA, and TRIO programs.

## Conclusion

Over the past two years the CACG has helped us strengthen many of our existing efforts at the state level, and has built a collaborative foundation for programs and services. Furthermore, it has accelerated the dialogue regarding needed enhancements and expansion to reach more Utah students. Coupled with this enhancing this work our proposal focuses on building statewide infrastructure. Strengthening access and outreach programs through sub-grants, creating a Utah College Access Network, as well as repurposing our state need-based aid are critical steps in significantly increasing the number of low-income and disadvantaged students who enter and who are successful in postsecondary education.

VERMONT (\$1,500,000)

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
Scott Giles, 802-654-3740

The five main goals of the Vermont College Access Challenge Grant (VT CACG) project are:

- Provide opportunities that promote increased knowledge and postsecondary education options for Vermont students in grades 7-12;
- Provide opportunities that promote increased knowledge of financial aid resources and the application process;
- Increase the number of middle school and high school professionals trained in the following areas:
  - Postsecondary aspiration building with low-income students; and
  - Career and college planning.
- Increase the number of school and agency professionals' attendance at financial aid trainings; and
- Improve statewide career and college aspirations through use of data and evaluation.

The VT CACG project will use four primary strategies to reach the grant objectives. These will include:

1. Workshops and Services for Students and Families;
2. Social Networking;
3. Training for School Professionals on Career Development and Financial Aid; and
4. Evaluation

VIRGINIA (\$2,240,031)

State Council of Higher Education  
Joseph Defilippo, 804-225-2629

Enhancing access and affordability through improved coordination of information and advocacy are two primary objectives of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's (SCHEV) six-year higher education strategic plan, *Advancing Virginia: Access, Alignment, Investment*. SCHEV will utilize CACG funding to support its efforts to make progress toward achieving these objectives. Virginia's FY 2011 CACG application as described here builds on efforts begun in the first two years of the CACG program, "Information is Key to Access and Success," in coordination with Governor McDonnell's stated priorities for higher education, most prominent among which is the goal of producing 100,000 more degree recipients in Virginia within the next 15 years. This application outlines a program that focuses on information dissemination with special emphasis on provision of services to underserved populations to aid their access to postsecondary educational opportunity and financial aid.

Thus, the following focus areas continue and build on prior foci:

- Focus Area 1, Access Provider Middle School Advising Program will expand services provided to middle school students through two existing partners, Access College Foundation and the Virginia Community College System, in order to increase students' and families' knowledge of potential careers and access to postsecondary education options and financial aid.
- Focus Area 2, Research will support professional research that will be used in subsequent years to support areas of access need; two studies described here will be used to develop specific sustainable statewide access programs in FY 2012 and beyond. (A) A follow-up to the 2010 SCHEV CACGP Access Provider Study will examine disparities of student performance and college-going plans between high and low achieving school districts with high populations of low-income students. (B) A new research study will examine postsecondary opportunities and models for Virginia adults, and assess costs and logistics of establishing a statewide program to enhance adults' access to postsecondary education leading to the baccalaureate.
- Focus Area 3, Career Planning System will utilize the expanded functionality of the Virginia Education Wizard career planning system to increase underrepresented students' and their families' knowledge of potential careers and access to postsecondary options and financial aid.
- Focus Area 4, Collateral Campaign will continue to produce and disseminate free "I am the One" incentive materials that motivate students to value and take responsibility for their dream of going to college; this effort will be supplemented by a study to determine effective media outreach.

VIRGINIA (continued)

- Focus Area 5, Counselor Professional Development will provide professional development opportunities for middle- and high-school counselors, and college financial aid and admissions administrators to learn about effective models for mentoring and working with students from low-income families.
- Focus Area 6, Super Saturday FAFSA Workshops will provide “Super Saturdays” at central site locations in 40 low-income areas to provide information and assist students and parents in filling out the FAFSA form.
- Focus Area 7, Access and Financial Aid Education Programs will be conducted to promote enhanced knowledge in students and families from low-income and under-represented groups on the following topics: a) career planning and the importance of postsecondary education, b) academic planning and pre-college course selection; c) application and admission process, d) financial aid and funding sources.
- Focus Area 8, Access Provider Programs will provide services to students and their families through the activities of three existing partners. (A) Project Discovery will provide services to economically challenged students and their families through its current statewide network of 21 locations and will establish three new programs in six new locations. (B) The Greater Richmond Area Scholarship Program, Inc. will continue and expand advising services at schools with high populations of low-income students. (C) The Virginia College Access Network will perform research and outreach to provide Access Toolkits to organizations with an interest in providing access services to students and families in underserved areas.

WASHINGTON (\$2,084,539)

Higher Education Coordination Board  
Weiya Liang, 360-753-7884

The Washington College Access Challenge Grant Program consists of four activities:

1. Support the Washington College Bound Scholarship;
2. Increase college awareness and financial aid opportunities for low-income, underrepresented students and families through targeted activities statewide and increase FAFSA completion rate;
3. Work with non-profit organizations and other college access and success programs to deliver services to both K12 and postsecondary students; and
4. Develop a statewide Website and/or portal for an information delivery system.

The goals for the Washington CACG project are:

1. Increase the number of students from low-income families who are prepared for, and will succeed in college and careers; and
2. Facilitate strategic partnerships to leverage funding and resources that provide direct intervention services to students from low-income families.

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will work with existing statewide organizations and other similar programs to deliver college access and success information and services. The state plans to develop tools that will benefit low-income students and their families, invest in the creation or revision of college access and success materials, and support the development of a Web site and/or portal that will provide a one-stop shop for state college and career preparation needs. The College Access Challenge Grant aligns well with the state's Higher Education Strategic Master Plan, in which it calls for an expansion of college access programs to reach increasing numbers of students identified as at-risk for not completing high school and continuing to postsecondary education.

## WEST VIRGINIA (\$1,500,000)

Higher Education Policy Commission  
Adam Green, 304-558-0655

Previous College Access Challenge Grant funds awarded to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's (HEPC) were used to create the College Foundation of West Virginia (CFWV.com) — a one-stop Web portal designed to promote preparation and access to postsecondary education statewide, especially among the impoverished, underserved areas of West Virginia. Thus, the centerpiece of this effort will be the maintenance and enhancement of CFWV. This portal will allow the state's postsecondary institutions to reach students and help them prepare for college by providing an interactive medium through which students can explore postsecondary educational and career opportunities as well as learn which institutions best fit their needs and how to finance their education. Additional funds will be used to add a "learning styles inventory" to the portal as well as seven new online West Virginia Community and Technical College applications.

The 2010-11 College Access Challenge grant funds will allow the HEPC to introduce a systematic approach to provide professional development/training opportunities for guidance counselors at middle and secondary schools, financial aid administrators, college admissions counselors, and other individuals that provide college access guidance to West Virginia citizens. Moreover, HEPC—with support from the College Access Challenge Grant Program—will continue and enhance its unified outreach and marketing designed to inform students, parents and educators of the availability of the college-planning resources provided by CFWV and to promote a college-going culture in the state. And finally, funds will be used to engage in a rigorous college access program and policy environmental scan. This work will allow West Virginia and the HEPC to produce a detailed statewide report that will include policy recommendations on how to best establish and sustain efforts associated with the CACG program as well as other access initiatives.

By uniting these efforts, the CACG Program will aid West Virginia in achieving the following six project goals:

- Goal 1: To increase students' knowledge pertaining to the college application process, the choices of institutions available in West Virginia, and the available financial aid options.
- Goal 2: To increase the proportion of high school graduates who are applying to West Virginia colleges and universities.
- Goal 3: To increase the proportion of high school students who are applying for available financial aid.
- Goal 4: To conduct numerous outreach activities, produce and distribute college access materials, and continue a statewide college access marketing campaign.

WEST VIRGINIA (continued)

- Goal 5: To conduct scholarly research focused on how West Virginia can increase the number of students pursuing education and training beyond high school.
- Goal 6: To implement professional development/training designed to increase the college- and career-guidance skills of guidance counselors at middle and secondary schools, financial aid administrators, college admissions counselors, and other individuals that provide college access guidance to the citizens of West Virginia.

WISCONSIN (\$1,638,380)

Department of Administration  
Harald Jordahl, 608-261-7520

The purpose of the State of Wisconsin's College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project is to motivate Wisconsin high school students to attend college and to help them prepare for college both academically and financially. The average school counselor to student ratio in Wisconsin is 1 to 454, significantly above the ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association of 1 to 250. In Milwaukee, the state's largest urban center, the ratio is almost 1 to 1,000. During tough economic times, schools have had to make tough decisions, which are often felt at the counseling offices. That is why it is so important to provide critical support to both students and counselors regarding the necessary knowledge to access higher education and for government, higher education entities, non-profit and community based organizations to provide this knowledge in a coordinated manner.

The demand for services, as well as the strides the state has made in the coordination of these services, provided under Wisconsin's 2008-2010 College Access Challenge Grant reinforces the need for the program to continue. Students and families from over 130 high schools were served in year one of the CACG, increasing to 227 schools in year two. This increase of 95 schools, combined with feedback received from parents and school counselors, shows that the CACG program is successfully meeting a significant need in the state of Wisconsin. However, even more can be done and the goals and objectives below outline how the Wisconsin CACG will expand services offered during the 2010-2011 grant year.

The goals of Wisconsin's CACG project include increasing awareness among students, families, school guidance counselors, and college access mentors regarding post-secondary education opportunities, federal and state financial aid options and scholarship opportunities, the college application and admissions process, the importance of and process by which to apply for federal financial aid, and the availability of free assistance to prepare for the SAT and ACT exams. The project will also facilitate and offer hands-on assistance to students and families as they complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Finally, the project will help build the college access network in Wisconsin by providing support, mentoring and collaboration with successful college access and awareness programs throughout the state.

Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation (Great Lakes) will once again conduct and coordinate the services to meet the goals and objectives outlined for the 2010-2011 grant year. Great Lakes' team of ten college access outreach staff will provide on-site services to counselors and students at Wisconsin high schools and college access organizations which serve a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The schools and communities most in need of this project's services will be identified based on school participation data and feedback from the 2008-2010 CACG program and data from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and college access organizations throughout the State.

## WISCONSIN (continued)

In addition to on-site services at target high schools and college access organizations, the team of college access outreach staff will provide college planning and preparation materials and services to students and families throughout the State of Wisconsin, as well as training to school guidance counselors and other college access mentors at college access programs and community-based organizations, regarding state, federal, and local resources available to help students plan, prepare, and pay for college.

In order to best serve the students and families in the state of Wisconsin, Great Lakes' College Access Advising team will collaborate with college access organizations throughout the state to create a coherent network of services and message regarding the importance of higher education throughout the state. This collaboration will take the form of sub-grants for needed and successful programming, such as to University of Wisconsin-System for coordination of the KnowHow2GOWisconsin initiative, various college campuses across the state for pre-college program replication, and the Wisconsin Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators for coordination of Wisconsin College Goal Sunday and High School Counselor Drive-In Workshops. It will also involve supporting the newly created Wisconsin Covenant College Access Network Council and partnering with other statewide college access organizations, such as the Wisconsin Covenant and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, college financial aid offices, and local and community-based organizations throughout the state.

By building these partnerships across the state, the grant will capitalize on ideas and resources, foster a coherent network of providers, avoid duplication, and provide the highest quality services to students and families in Wisconsin. These collaboration efforts directly support the State of Wisconsin's, as well as the College Access Challenge Grant's, objectives to increase college access and success.

## WYOMING (\$1,500,000)

University of Wyoming  
Becky Vinzant, 307-766-6440

Each of Wyoming's eight institutions of postsecondary education (seven community colleges and the University of Wyoming), the Wyoming Department of Education, the Wyoming Community College Commission, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education are partnering under the CACG grant to provide educational pipeline and college preparedness and success services to Wyoming students with a focus on low-income students and students at-risk of not entering college or being retained in college.

Administrative oversight and budgetary functions are centralized under the University of Wyoming's office of the Vice President for Student Affairs with assistance from the office of Student Educational Opportunity which manages several U.S. Department of Education TRIO and GEAR UP grants. Grant support and compliance functions will be provided through the office of the Vice President for Research and the office of Sponsored Programs.

Wyoming has devoted significant resources to early awareness and academic and personal preparation for college admissions among middle and high school students as well as providing generous merit and need based college aid under state scholarships. However, the state's demographics are such that both institutional and targeted student-level resources are needed to promote a "college going culture" that reaches and supports families and students who are at a socioeconomic disadvantage in terms of college access and persistence. Wyoming has a low adult educational attainment rate overall with only 23 percent of adult residents holding a Bachelors Degree and the number of low-income families and children is increasing. In the last year, the rate of students eligible for free/reduced lunch climbed 15 percent with 35 percent of students now eligible for the program. In addition, Wyoming has a unique demographic profile with only 500,000 residents occupying a large geographic area. Given this sparse and highly dispersed population, "outreach" programs such as services to small rural schools, the availability of distance learning and remote communications options, and the widespread placement of TRIO and GEAR UP staff across the state is a requisite, rather than optional or "value added," means of serving our population.

CACG grant initiatives are organized as "educational pipeline" services. We will provide intensive early awareness, career planning, and college preparation services to students in 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades with a focus on students unlikely to aspire to or enter postsecondary education, information to low-income families and students who wish to access no-cost or low-cost college preparedness programs, assistance with FAFSA completion, GED testing support for high school dropouts as well as non-credentialed adults who wish to qualify for college admissions, and programs for academically underprepared high school seniors bridging between high school and college. At the postsecondary level, we will provide need-based aid for low-income high school graduates entering college as Pell-eligible students, needs analysis and direct student services to freshman and other college students who are at risk of not persisting including TRIO-eligible and Veteran students, support for "distance learners" who are place bound and have limited

## WYOMING (continued)

access to traditional student services, and targeted services to nontraditional/adult students who wish to enter or reenter college degree programs.

We are proposing two pilot programs - a Wyoming Advising Corp which will provide direct student services to needy high schools and staffing for a Veterans Student Center at the University of Wyoming for which we will collect primarily benchmark data in the first year of operation. All other initiatives are tied to measurable objective attainment rates related to student access of college success resources, college and career planning services for middle and high school students that result in college entry, direct student services for low-income students and families and rates of college entry or reentry, FAFSA completion rates, post-programming academic preparedness for college entry and college level coursework, completion of college applications, and college going and college retention rates among a number of populations with a focus on disadvantaged students.

## AMERICAN SAMOA (\$1,169,126)

American Samoa Community College  
Kathleen Kolhoff, 684-699-2182

As the only institution of higher education in the Territory, the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) is ideally suited to administer and implement the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project. The college has established admissions, counseling and financial aid offices and these resources will be fully available to project participants. The college also houses an Upward Bound Program (designed for a small number of high school students) and a larger GEAR UP program, currently serving more than 800 high school juniors who will remain in the project cohort through high school graduation. Both of these programs have developed and implemented activities that will be adapted to this project in support of college entry and success for the CACG participants and their families.

CACG will be housed on the ASCC campus, with office, classroom, tutoring center and meeting space available for on-site project activities. A small full-time staff (project director, academic counselor and financial aid counselor) will coordinate activities as well as provide direct services to students. Math and English instructors, drawn from the ASCC faculty, from the public and private schools and from the community, will be contracted on a per course basis, using ASCC's established class contracts. All positions, full-time as well as adjunct, will be filled following ASCC's Human Resources regulations and paid through a restricted grant account through the ASCC Business Office in accordance with established contract policies and payroll procedures. Students employed as tutors will follow the same procedures used for College Work Study and non-Pell Grant locally-funded campus employment. Student and family contacts will be documented using the model already implemented by the Upward Bound and GEAR UP programs on campus. Data will be collected throughout the project using, among other measures, participant evaluations modeled on the ASCC faculty/class evaluation forms. Data will be analyzed by the ASCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness using SPSS software and regular reports will be disseminated to all partners.

The English and Math instruction, as well as the SAT preparation, will be adapted from established developmental curricula and from standardized test preparation resources. High school students will not earn college credits for these courses, but should be able to score higher on college entry placement tests.

Middle school and high school counselors will be eligible to enroll in ASCC classes to improve their skills, with appropriate academic credit awarded and transcribed, and to participate in in-service workshops, with this credit transcribed according to ASCC Adult Continuing Education Unit guidelines.

The American Samoa Community College has the capacity, organizational structure, financial management capability, staff and resources to develop and implement this project effectively.

GUAM (\$1,500,000)

Guam Community College  
Joanne Ige, 671-735-5516

Guam Community College (GCC) proposes a College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP) to serve **2000 participants** that are from the underrepresented and low-income population. This grant is to develop and implement the CACGP project by accomplishing a goal and four objectives. The goal is: To significantly increase the number of underrepresented and low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and the objectives are:

**Objective 1:** Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for CACGP students during the project period;

**Objective 2:** Increase CACGP students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing during the project period;

**Objective 3:** Implement student professional development training to enhance and develop leadership skills and non-traditional careers knowledge during the project period; and

**Objective 4:** Implement faculty, administrators and staff professional development training to enhance and develop leadership skills and non-traditional careers knowledge during the project period.

The activities and services will include after-school and summer academic programs, tutoring, mentoring, academic advising, counseling, educational field trips, student professional development leadership and career exploration summer bridge sessions, college/career advisement for students and parents, access to multimedia computers and online interactive educational material, and parental involvement in activities. These activities and services will build a foundation of services by conducting classroom instruction to participants after school hours (Mondays – Fridays), Saturdays, and summer session (Mondays – Saturdays). The academic areas will include: reading, writing, English, math, computer science, laboratory science and foreign languages. Personal, career and academic counseling will be provided in order to address motivational problems and prepare participants to enroll in postsecondary education. The project will also provide social, educational activities that will enhance appreciation of the arts, improve social relationships and build group identification and support. Additionally, financial aid and career planning workshops, and completion of admission applications and financial aid application to a postsecondary institution will be provided.

The partnerships for the CACGP grant will include: Guam Department of Education (GDOE – includes K-12 grades), University of Guam (UOG), Department of Youth Affairs (DYA), Guam Department of Labor – Agency of Human Resources Services (DOL-AHRD), Guam Housing & Urban Renewal Authority (GHURA), Department of Public Health & Social Services (DPHSS),

GUAM (continued)

Superior Court of Guam, Guam Mayors Council (GMC), and various banking institutions (i.e., Bank of Guam, Coast 360 Federal Credit Union, First Hawaiian Bank, Bank of Hawaii, etc.).

As the state appointed agency for Guam, GCC is requesting the amount of **\$1.5 million dollars** to implement this grant and servicing 2,000 students. GCC and its partners will contribute in-kind contribution at an estimated cost of **\$450,052.20** for this project.

The target population to be served for this project will be from seven middle schools (grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>) and five high schools (grades 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) under the Guam Department of Education, private schools and Department of Defense Education Activity (middle and high schools) and GCC Secondary Programs.

## NORTHERN MARIANAS (\$1,500,000)

Northern Marianas Community College  
Leo Pangelinan, 670-234-5498

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is one of the most distant and remote areas in the world located in the Pacific Ocean and separated from major U.S. metropolitan centers by as much as 3,300 miles. The CNMI indigenous population of Chamorro and Carolinian heritage account for approximately 79 percent of the total Pacific Islander population that reside on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The U.S. Census 2000 reports provide clear evidence of the substantial educational achievement gap between Pacific Islanders and other racial groups throughout the United States. For example, the college completion rate (bachelor's degree or higher) is 13.8 percent for Pacific Islanders between the ages of 25 years and older as compared to 27 percent among the White population for the entire United States. In the CNMI, only 12.7 percent of the population ages 25 years and older report earning a bachelor's degree or higher.

Graduating high school students in the CNMI consistently perform below standards and benchmarks and underachievement at the high school level permeates through college in the form of disproportionately high enrollment among first-time, first-year college students in remedial math and/or English coursework. Poor academic performance, lack of readiness for college, and cultural factors all contribute toward discouraging students and their families from developing a positive attitude and approach to higher education. Results of an exit survey distributed to the graduating class of 2008 from Marianas High School, the largest public high school in the CNMI, revealed that less than half of students surveyed indicated they had plans to attend college.

The majority of students who enroll at the Northern Marianas College (NMC), the CNMI's only public institution of higher education, continue to come from low-income households. The NMC Office of Financial Aid estimates that about 70 percent of the NMC student population avail of a Federal Pell Grant to support their cost of college attendance. Of these students, at least 85 percent were deemed eligible for the maximum Pell Grant award because a combination of their income levels and household size indicate that their families cannot afford to provide any financial assistance toward the cost of education.

The mission of the CNMI College Access Challenge Project (CACP) is to promote the value of higher education and prepare low-income, Pacific Islander students for admission to College and success through their first-year of enrollment. CACP is committed to building meaningful working relationships with its CNMI partner agencies to deliver programming, resources and direct services to increase access to and preparedness for higher education among underrepresented students from throughout the CNMI public school system.

Puerto Rico (\$433,146)

University of Puerto Rico  
Dr. Ana Helvia Quintera, 787-765-9250

In August, 2008, the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), the designated state agency, received a College Access Challenge Program award. After receiving the award the UPR entered into an agreement with the Puerto Rico Department of Education to develop a series of activities and services that seek to increase the number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students who enter and remain in postsecondary education.

Through the proposal we have: (1) developed an age-appropriate Internet portal ([exito.upr.edu](http://exito.upr.edu)) to motivate students to continue post secondary studies and answer their questions about what to study and how to prepare and finance their studies; (2) conducted outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in college via the Cyber Space STEM Outreach project, Summer Immersion Camps; (3) developed online courses and Opencourseware materials to improve students' college preparation; (4) assist students in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); (5) implement professional development for guidance counselors at middle and secondary schools to improve their capacity to assist students and parents with issues pertaining to college admissions, college preparation, and financial aid requirements; and (6) develop a program to articulate the information system between the University of Puerto Rico and the Department of Education. This articulation will provide the university with the academic data of those students with potential for successfully pursuing college education. This will allow the UPR to implement a process where students could be invited to join the university instead of submitting an application.

Even though we develop activities to tackle the access challenge, new angles of the problem are revealed, as well as new possibilities arise. For example, the gap encounter among the expectations that university professors and school teachers have about the high school curriculum and vice versa. We also have found that a great number of students from distress areas see college education as an unattainable goal.

**The goal of this proposal is to** promote that universities develop a network of collaboration with high school counselors, teachers and continuous education personnel toward enhancing the possibility that underrepresented groups have access to post secondary education.

**The main objective of this proposal is to** allow enlarging the quantity of students that benefit from the above activities by strengthening the network of collaboration. Also to develop new strategies to enrich the activities mentioned above, by minimizing obstacles that are limiting the possibilities of underrepresented students accessing to college.

The proposed strategies are: improving the communication between the school counselors and the university personnel so as to minimize the gap in the support given to the underrepresented students; promote a challenging high school curriculum by developing educational materials that emphasize the development of "key cognitive strategies" which are emphasized in college and are missing in many high schools' courses; and develop strategies to motivate students from distress areas to aim to college education since their elementary school.

VIRGIN ISLANDS (\$1,500,000)

University of the Virgin Islands  
Miriam Osborne Elliott, 340-692-4188

As the only accredited American historically black college or university (HBCU) in the Caribbean serving a significantly diverse cultural, socioeconomic and linguistic population, the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) is poised to significantly increase the number of underrepresented students who have access to, enter and persist in postsecondary education.

In collaboration with the Office of the Governor, the Virgin Islands Board of Education, and the University of the Virgin Islands will strengthen capacity in the United States Virgin Islands by working with middle and secondary school educators, local non-profit organizations and the mass media to enhance the territory's families' awareness about the benefits of attaining a college education and methods of accessing and financing higher education in general. Targeted interventions will be implemented to address the disparity in the categories of students most underrepresented in accessing postsecondary training. Through the use of directed marketing approaches, community workshops and seminars on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, (FAFSA), online educational and career enhancement tools and supporting the professional development of counselors, UVI will be effective in reaching the intended populations of this grant. Grant funding will be allocated to the Virgin Islands Board of Education to provide enhanced scholarship opportunities for recent high school graduates. Through its marketing efforts, UVI will encourage students and families to apply for these and other scholarships which support their higher education goals in keeping with the guidelines of this funding project. The activities of this project will be conducted within the parameters of the stated objectives of the grant and in keeping with Title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C section 1141 and the vision of the University of the Virgin Islands.

PALAU (\$1,500,000)

Palau Ministry of Education  
Masa-Aki Emesloch1, 680-488-2952

The purpose of the Palau College Access Challenge Grant (PCACG) project is to help underrepresented Palau students obtain a postsecondary education. Training and education beyond the secondary level rewards the individual with expanded job opportunities and higher wages. It also rewards Palau, with an educated workforce that is prepared to meet the challenges our global economy presents. All project activities will be directly related to three broad goals; getting students ready for college in any postsecondary program, getting them into college, and getting them through college.

The Palau College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) project is a community collaborative effort to increase the number of students from low-income families in Palau who enroll, remain, and succeed in college. Administered by the Palau Ministry of Education, the project counselors and community partners aim to increase college enrollment among public high school graduates by ten percent and decrease attrition among this same group by ten percent. The project draws on the expertise and resources of key social, educational, and other community non-profit service providers, including Palau Community College, all high schools, Belau, Family, Students, and Community Association, Business Education Alliance. The Palau CACG project will expand existing student support services and activities available within the community to include: (1) college information sessions for students and families about higher education and financing options; (2) financial aid and FAFSA form completion workshops; (3) professional development for system-wide guidance counselors and student support personnel; (4) career and college fairs; (5) math, English, SAT and ACT enrichment classes; (6) academic summer camps and students leadership development; (7) four college exposure tours; (8) need-based financial aid; (9) outreach activities for at-risk students and Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP). It is vital that students begin to prepare and plan for college early, preferably in middle school. Palau's College Access Challenge Program Grant activities will ensure that students, parents, and guidance counselors are fully informed about the courses and other requirements for college entrance and that they know how to make full use of the career and academic information and planning tools provided to them. The Palau Ministry of Education, Palau Community College, Workforce Investment Act, Belau Family, Students, and Community Association, Business Education Alliances, will offer such information for students and parents via printed, Web and counselor training activities.

A major roadblock to entering college is lack of funds. Therefore, the bulk of the grant will be used for need-based grants to students. The admission process itself can also be daunting, so programs designed to assist students with every step in the process will also be available. The Palau Ministry of Education will make need based grant awards to students in collaboration with Office of Student Financial Assistance at Palau Community College, and the Office of the Palau National Scholarship Board.

PALAU (continued)

Too many students begin college only to drop out within the first few semesters. Information and outreach programs will be provided that offer substantial assistance to help students successfully complete their postsecondary education whether at Palau Community College and other institutions of higher education in Guam, Hawaii, and the U.S. Mainland where Palau students apply to attend. The Palau College Access Challenge Grant project will be under the directorship of the Minister of Education, Mr. Masa-Aki N. Emesiochl. Mr. Emesiochl has long experience in administering and implementing various federal grants and will be most qualified to provide overall directorship and guidance in the implementation of project activities. Mr. Emesiochl's salary is covered by local funds. In addition, two full-time assistant directors will be recruited to facilitate the implementation of program activities. Salaries of these two key personnel will be born by PCACG project.

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