



MEDIA RELEASE

— For Immediate Release —

College Success Arizona Receives National Grant

Funds to be used to educate and inform policymakers on key issues affecting low-income and first-generation students

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Phoenix, Arizona – College Success Arizona, is excited to announce that they have received a federal policy advocacy grant from the National College Access Network (NCAN) in the amount of \$40,000.

Under this two-year grant, College Success Arizona will help inform and educate policy makers and elected officials at the Federal level about key postsecondary access and student success topics. College Success Arizona will work with NCAN and several of its other members from across the country to promote student-focused policies that will improve access, success and attainment rates.

“As College Success Arizona increases its role of informing conversations and policies that lead to greater postsecondary access and success, we must participate at an appropriate level in Arizona and nationally,” said Rich Nickel, President and CEO of College Success Arizona. “These federal policies often have a disproportionate impact on those Arizona students, in Arizona, who do not participate at high enough rates today: high-need, diverse, and first-generation students. To help those students, we must have a voice on important federal issues.”

Along with traveling to our nation’s capital to develop and present policy positions, College Success Arizona will also attend two national conferences and receive extensive training on how to interact with key decision makers. Additionally, the grant will enable several students affiliated with member organizations of the Arizona College Access Network (AzCAN) the opportunity to develop a student advocacy voice around issue that are impactful to them.

Through this grant, College Success Arizona will strive to:

- Simplify and improve the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by reducing the number of questions necessary for verified low-income applicants, and implementing a list of other possible improvements that will change the narrative that FAFSA is overly complicated.
- Promote federal policies that impact the ability for all students, but especially low-income, first generation and diverse students, to gain access and then be successful in their postsecondary efforts.
- Improve student loan repayment options, and encourage development of progressive financing options that allow more students to take advantage of educational opportunities.
- Inform members of Arizona's congressional delegation, and other key members of Congress, about the multiple barriers that high-need students face, and how improved policies, investment in impactful programs, and implementation of progressive strategies will not only help those students, but improve the social and economic future of Arizona.
- Introduce affected students to advocacy and help them identify policy opportunities that exist to improve the lives of students, their families, and the communities they represent.
- Improve the advocacy skills and strategies of College Success Arizona leadership and staff.

"We are thrilled by the opportunity to work alongside our members during this critical time in higher education policy," says Kim Cook, NCAN's Executive Director. "Conversations around the most important issues facing our students are ramping up, and we look forward to contributing to this dialogue by amplifying the student voice."

The grant is funded by a new \$2.5 million commitment to NCAN from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. College Success Arizona is looking forward to working alongside the 16 other sub-grantees throughout the next two years.

About College Success Arizona: College Success Arizona is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization working to significantly increase the post-secondary attainment rate of students in Arizona, particularly for those who otherwise would not be able to attend or graduate. The organization was started as the Arizona College Scholarship Foundation in 2005. For more information about College Success Arizona and its partners, visit www.collegesuccessarizona.org.

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