

Selected Grants Awarded by USA Funds July 1, 2008-Sept. 30, 2008

USA Funds awards grants to advance its nonprofit mission to enhance postsecondary education preparedness, access and success.

Institute for Higher Education Policy

Washington, D.C.

Project Minority-Serving Institutions Symposium Project

Geographic Scope National

Amount \$496,000

The Institute for Higher Education Policy will host a national symposium focused on improving financial literacy among college students. Participants will include senior administrators and staff from minority-serving postsecondary institutions.

Scholarship America

Minneapolis

Project Learning Communities Initiative Management

Geographic Scope National

Amount \$150,000

The Learning Communities initiative seeks to significantly increase the number of youth in selected communities who complete high school and successfully pursue postsecondary education. Learning Communities sites are in Tucson, Ariz.; Orlando, Fla.; Indianapolis; Okolona, Miss.; and Washington, D.C.

Sunnyside Unified School District

Tucson, Ariz.

Project Learning Communities Initiative

Geographic Scope Arizona

Amount \$150,000

The Learning Communities initiative efforts of Tucson's Sunnyside Unified School District focus on helping youth to graduate from high school and prepare for higher education success.

American Indian College Fund

Denver

Project Flame of Hope Gala and Operating Support

Geographic Scope National

Amount \$100,000

The American Indian College Fund provides scholarships and other support for the nation's 33 tribal colleges. USA Funds was the corporate sponsor of the American Indian College Fund's annual fund-raiser for scholarship dollars and provided other support to bolster the fund's efforts.

Purdue Foundation

West Lafayette, Ind.

Project Science Bound USA Parents Program

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$100,000

The USA Parents Program provides parents with the skills needed to support their children enrolled in Science Bound. The Science Bound program is a collaborative initiative that encourages underrepresented Indianapolis Public Schools students in grades seven through 12 to pursue postsecondary education.

Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township Foundation

Indianapolis

Project AVID: Advancement Via Individual Determination

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$80,000

AVID is a rigorous academic program for students who rank in the middle of their classes. The AVID program in Lawrence Township Schools in Indianapolis helps increase students' preparedness for a college preparatory curriculum. Grant funds also support statewide training for counselors and staff.

Indiana Dollars for Scholars

Indianapolis

Project General Support

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$65,239

The mission of Indiana Dollars for Scholars is to expand access to higher education and to encourage the education preparation of Indiana students. The state network includes Dollars for Scholars chapters serving more than 109 Indiana communities.

Riley Children's Foundation

Indianapolis

Project School Program

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$51,000

The school program at Riley Hospital for Children helps children, adolescents and teens with chronic or life-threatening illnesses to be successful in school and prepares them to re-enter their own schools after extended absences.

Jobs for Arizona's Graduates

Scottsdale, Ariz.

Project Classrooms to Careers

Geographic Scope Arizona

Amount \$50,000

JAG helps at-risk youth to stay in school and graduate with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. This program prepares high school students for postsecondary education and career options.

Police Athletic League of Indianapolis

Indianapolis

Project Tutoring-Mentoring and Youth Leadership

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$50,000

The PAL Club seeks to involve at-risk youth in educational, cultural and fitness activities that aim to deter crime, increase self-esteem, and promote positive relationships with law enforcement. This grant encourages mentoring and leadership opportunities for Indianapolis youth.

United Negro College Fund

Indianapolis

Project Indianapolis Masked Ball

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$50,000

USA Funds is a corporate sponsor of UNCF's annual fund-raising event. Over 63 years, UNCF has raised more than \$2.5 billion to help more than 350,000 students attend and graduate from college.

Youth Entrepreneurs of Kansas

Wichita, Kan.

Project YEK Classroom Program

Geographic Scope Kansas

Amount \$50,000

YEK offers students business and entrepreneurial education and experiences that help them become contributing members of society. USA Funds' grant provided entrepreneurial education classroom support for high school youth.

Training Inc.

Indianapolis

Project USA Funds Bridge to Education Program

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$49,500

USA Funds' grant provides career and life skills training to disadvantaged, unemployed or under-employed men and women. Training Inc. equips people to become self-sufficient by preparing them for full-time employment or to continue their education.

Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education

Phoenix

Project "Rapid Guide to Financial Aid" — English and Spanish Versions

Geographic Scope Arizona

Amount \$47,000

USA Funds sponsored ACPE's "Rapid Guide to Financial Aid." This publication provides financial aid-related information to students and parents.

Girls Incorporated of Indianapolis

Indianapolis

Project Operation SMART

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$30,000

Operation SMART builds girls' interest in science, math and technology. The mission of Girls Inc. is to inspire girls to be strong, smart and bold.

La Plaza

Indianapolis

Project Tu Futuro

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$30,000

La Plaza's Tu Futuro program encourages Hispanic/Latino youth, first-generation immigrants and others to finish high school and enter postsecondary education.

Indianapolis Museum of Art

Indianapolis

Project Collaborative Arts Partnership

Geographic Scope Indiana

Amount \$25,000

CAP connects the skills, staff and resources of Indianapolis-area arts and social service organizations with Indianapolis Public Schools students. The program provides after-school arts programming for children age 5-17.

USA Funds Vice President Promotes Three C's Through Girl Scouts

The three C's of cookies, crafts and camping might come to mind when thinking of Girl Scouts. But today's Girl Scouts are much more — and those three C's that represent Girl Scouts now also could be courage, confidence and character.

Deb McCloud, USA Funds' vice president and controller, is committed to seeing that young girls involved in Girl Scouts in central Indiana have the opportunity to experience those three C's of courage, confidence and character, and much more.

McCloud has been with USA Funds for 22 years. Her work with Girl Scouts began almost 17 years ago, when her daughter was a Girl Scout.

"My daughter has since grown out of Girl Scouts, but I never quit volunteering," says McCloud. "It is an organization that does great things for young girls. I was presented an opportunity to stay involved, and I did."

McCloud currently serves as the board chair for the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana. She previously served as the board chair for the Girl Scouts of the Hoosier Council. In 2007 the Hoosier Capital Council merged with four other councils in Indiana to create the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana. The central Indiana organization includes 10,000 adult volunteers and 35,000 Girl Scouts.

As board chair, McCloud is responsible for working with board members and staff to set the strategic plan for the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana. She also oversees governance, policies, operations oversight and fiscal management. Additionally, she often attends the audit and finance subcommittee meetings.

"Above all, Deb truly cares about the girls in central Indiana and always has their best interest at heart," says Deborah Hearn Smith, chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of Central Indiana. "Her position at



Deb McCloud of USA Funds delivers the Girl Scouts promise at a Girls of Distinction Celebration in Indianapolis.

USA Funds and her passion as a committed Girl Scout volunteer make her a wonderful role model for girls. It's been my pleasure to work beside her to serve our organization."

Recently, the Girl Scouts conducted its convention in Indianapolis, and McCloud, the Central Indiana Council and hundreds of local volunteers played a key role in the event. The national group holds its convention once every three years; each of the 109 councils from across the United States and international councils sends delegates.

The Girl Scout Leadership Institute takes place during this time as well. A committee of 22 girls developed this one-and-a-half day program to focus on topics they feel are relevant to the girls. The Girl Scouts in attendance attended several sessions on topics of their choosing, centered on

the theme of "Live Healthy, Lead Healthy." The girls learned that being healthy goes beyond the physical aspect; it also includes mental, emotional and spiritual health.

As the Girl Scouts have evolved, so has the traditional Girl Scouts badge system. Today, girls can earn badges in areas such as computers and science. In Indianapolis, Girl Scouts have access to a Math and Science Center with a full-time teacher on staff to assist the girls through programming and tutoring.

"We are helping girls do things they might not have the opportunity to do otherwise," says McCloud. "The girls are having fun while doing these activities, but they are learning life lessons. Girl Scouts makes girls better. Where else do they learn to believe in themselves and have a safe environment to try new things? I truly believe in the work we are doing."

As if her job at USA Funds and her position with the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana aren't enough to keep her busy, McCloud also has managed accounting for the Diversity Round Table of Central Indiana since 2000. That group promotes diversity in a broad range of organizations.

Additionally, she recently has become involved in an initiative at her church that aims to bring an adult day services center to her community. She attended training through the Indiana Association of Adult Day Services, and will work with a group in her church to bring the program to life.

"My job and my volunteer work definitely keep me busy, but I just can't say no. Luckily I have a very understanding husband who is OK with me giving of my time," McCloud says with a laugh.

Program Enhances College Readiness

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"By the end of Session 2, I knew that there were ways to afford it that I never knew about before," the student continued. "So now I'm going to college."

High school students in Washington who had used Navigation 101 scored 80 percent on a test designed to assess mastery of college access information. Before the implementation of Navigation 101, the students scored at approximately the 45 percent level on the test.

Based on information that the student provides to Navigation 101, the program offers customized feedback on possible career choices, majors and potential postsecondary institutions. The Navigation 101 program then assists the student by listing postsecondary choices that fit the student's interest area and ability level and by describing the options for financial aid.

In addition, Navigation 101 addresses the required high school courses that a student must complete to be eligible to enter specific postsecondary programs. The program also suggests summer activities that will help the student prepare for a particular postsecondary program, as well as options for financial aid.

"Navigation 101 is a groundbreaking program that can make a difference in the lives of students as they prepare for postsecondary education," says Ballard. "Early awareness and preparation are vital to postsecondary education success, and the customized program offered by Navigation 101 is working to ensure student success."

College Access Initiative: Guarantors Make a Difference

By Karen Lanning

Vice President, Communications and Research
National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs



One of the greatest challenges our nation faces is preparing for the largest and most diverse group of high school graduates in history. Opening the door to college not only will ensure their ability to compete in this nation, but the nation's ability to compete in the global economy.

To do that, the country needs a system to educate students about the benefits of higher education, provide early information about financial aid, and offer the support required to ensure that all college-qualified students attend.

The nation's 35 guarantors play a critical role in establishing and implementing this system.

College Access Initiative

For years, guarantors have provided services to students and families at no cost, to highlight the importance of higher education and the financial assistance available to fund it. Based on these efforts, the U.S. Congress in 2006 created the College Access Initiative to formalize the role of guarantors in promoting access to higher education, with special emphasis on low-income and minority students. The initiative also requires the guarantor to compile a listing of the postsecondary education opportunities, programs and publications available in each state it is designated by the U.S. secretary of education to serve.

Guarantors have been pursuing this two-part requirement for the past two years with great success.

A workgroup of guarantors meets regularly through the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs to expand outreach activities to serve more students, families and organizations. The guarantors share information about best practices and effective programs. But the greatest evidence of the success and scope of the College Access Initiative is the way that students are benefiting at the local level.

Reaching students and families

In every state, guarantors provide college access resources and support to students and families through schools, community organizations and local workshops.

Guarantors are filling a local demand that often cannot be met by schools. Many students have limited access to college counseling, with an average student-to-guidance counselor ratio of 474 to 1.

This student-to-counselor ratio is even higher in schools with a greater number of low-income students. To help fill the gap, guarantors provide the following services:

- ♦ Offer detailed Web sites and print materials and conduct workshops about financial aid for college, for school counselors, parents and students.
- ♦ Organize events to help families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- ♦ Operate toll-free hotlines to answer questions about the financial aid process.

Last year, guarantors led more than 13,000 financial aid workshops and events, trained more than 8,000 school guidance counselors, and reached more than 1.2 million students and families.

Guarantors, such as USA Funds, also offer a range of specialized services and programs to meet the needs of the students they serve. Recognizing the importance of strong financial literacy, USA Funds created the USA Funds Life Skills® program used by more than 500 schools to teach students to manage their time and money wisely while on campus and after they graduate.

Guarantors provide programs that promote early awareness of the benefits of higher education, and help underserved students with high potential get the academic and financial assistance they need to succeed. Guarantor-supported college resource centers provide students with hands-on assistance in navigating the hoops required to pursue a college education.

Because guarantors have strong ties to their communities, they can offer services to fill identified needs. Examples include materials and programs targeted to American Indian students, Spanish-speaking families, youth in foster care, low-income and minority students, families in rural areas and adult learners. Many guarantors also provide financial assistance to these students to help them pursue their postsecondary goals. In 2008 USA Funds Access to Education Scholarships® provided nearly \$8 million in awards to help more than 5,300 low-to-moderate-income students nationwide realize their college dreams.

Linking to local resources

To fulfill the second requirement of the College Access Initiative — compiling listings of postsecondary education opportunities, programs and publications — guarantors worked together to create a Web site. The site, www.going2college.org, features detailed information about career planning, college planning and paying for college in every state. The site provides a central location for students, families and educators to learn about every stage in the college planning process and includes a complete listing of the programs, publications and services available in their states.

At a time when pursuing a postsecondary education is more critical than ever, guarantors like USA Funds provide the information, resources and support that students and families need.