

## **College Spark Washington announces nearly \$1 million in grants; elects new business and education leaders to board of trustees**

College Spark Washington, a private foundation located in Seattle, announced grants totaling \$948,277 to 12 organizations across Washington to support college readiness and retention for low-income students.

The transition between high school and college can be challenging for any student but is especially difficult for low-income students. Research shows that one out of five low-income students is prepared for college level work compared with over half of middle and upper-income students. And even when a low-income student gets into college, he or she is six times less likely to earn a bachelor's degree than a more affluent peer.

"These 12 grantees (see page 2) represent the most promising college readiness and degree completion projects from nearly 50 applicants to the Community Grants Program," says Gus Kravas, Chair of the College Spark Washington Board of Trustees.

Since 2005, College Spark Washington has granted more than \$31 million throughout Washington state, with nearly \$11 million directed to the annual Community Grants Program.

The foundation also announced the election of three new trustees: Trevor Greene, Principal of Toppenish High School, Dr. Jean Hernandez, President of Edmonds Community College, and Bob Gilb, a former Microsoft executive and Captaris Corporation board member, now retired.

"We are pleased to have three distinguished education and business leaders join the College Spark Board of Trustees. Each of these leaders brings a unique set of skills and knowledge that will benefit the foundation's work and mission. I look forward to accomplishing great things with them," says Kravas.

"I also want to thank Charles Riley and Richard Rutkowski for their many years of service to College Spark Washington and their dedication to ensuring higher education access and success for Washington's low-income students."

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*[College Spark Washington](#) funds programs across Washington state that help low-income students become college-ready and earn their degrees. Grantees include community-based organizations, K-12 schools and districts, community and technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, educational nonprofits, and public agencies. College Spark began supporting access to higher education in 1978 by managing student loan programs. In 2004, the loan operations were sold and an endowment created supporting its grant-making mission.*

## Recipients of 2012 College Spark Washington Community Grants

Twelve organizations will receive 2012 grants totaling \$948,277. Seven grants focus on college readiness and five on retention/degree completion.

- Abeo School Change (Seattle) – \$76,635 over one year to provide professional development for staff at Options High School, an alternative public school in Bellingham, focused on aligning curricular rigor with college-readiness standards.
- Central Washington University Foundation (Ellensburg) -- \$45,300 over one year to develop a mandatory writing intervention for low-income, mid-degree students with low academic success.
- Community Schools Collaboration (Sea Tac) -- \$50,000 over one year to plan and pilot an out-of-school time algebra readiness program for students in the Highline and Tukwila school districts.
- Edmonds Community College (Edmonds) -- \$213,238 over three years for the Center for Efficacy and Resiliency to offer professional development for staff at Scriber Lake, an alternative public school in Edmonds.
- Grays Harbor College (Grays Harbor) -- \$29,792 over two years to develop and pilot a system for using high school transcripts to place recent high school graduates in math courses.
- Green River Community College (Auburn) -- \$58,312 over two years to develop and implement a rubric for placing incoming students in English classes based on analysis of high school transcripts.
- Highline Community College (Des Moines) -- \$50,000 over one year to plan a campus Latino Higher Education Resource Center to increase higher education access, persistence, and achievement for Latino families in South King County.
- Lake Washington Institute of Technology (Kirkland) -- \$50,000 over one year to design and pilot a new course that integrates allied health content into developmental English classes.
- League of Education Voters Foundation (Seattle) -- \$80,000 over two years to bring attention to “zero-tolerance” discipline approaches in Washington schools.
- Mary Walker School District (Springdale) -- \$120,000 over three years to develop and implement 10 online Advanced Placement courses through the Rural Alliance, a local digital cooperative that includes 42 school districts.
- Neighborhood House (Seattle) -- \$100,000 over two years to integrate college readiness curriculum into their existing array of education and youth development programs.
- Spokane Falls Community College (Spokane) -- \$75,000 over three years to improve the alignment of math course content between the Spokane Falls Community College and Spokane Public Schools.

More information about College Spark Washington’s Community Grants Program can be found at <http://www.collegespark.org/page/44/Community+Grants+Program>.