

College Spark Washington announces nearly \$1.4 million in community grants

College Spark Washington, a private foundation located in Seattle, announced grants totaling nearly \$1.4 million to 11 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 seven times less likely to earn a bachelor's degree than a more affluent peer.

"These 11 grantees represent the most promising college readiness and degree completion projects from nearly 60 applicants to the Community Grants Program," says Steve Pumphrey, Chair of the College Spark Washington Board of Trustee, "and we are delighted to partner with them to improve student success."

This is the first year grantees must focus on a new set of guidelines. Grantees are offered flexibility in how they approach their work but must measure results using at least one of the four indicators of future college success. The four Community Grants Program outcome indicators are:

1. Increasing the number of students that take and pass Algebra by the eighth grade;
2. Decreasing the number of middle school students that trigger two of three early warning indicators: five or more absences per semester; course failure; suspension or expulsion.
3. Decreasing the number of students that require development education in college; and
4. Increasing the number of students that earn their first college-level credit in English or math.

Since 2005, College Spark Washington has granted nearly \$37 million throughout Washington state, with \$12.5 million directed to the annual Community Grants Program.

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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 and began making grants to support its mission in 2004.

Recipients of 2013 College Spark Washington Community Grants

Eleven organizations will receive 2013 grants totaling nearly \$1.4M. Four grant projects address the important aspects of college readiness in middle school and seven grant projects focus on the successful transition from high school to college.

- Bellevue College (Bellevue) – \$150,000 over three years to partner with the Bellevue School District to conduct early college placement testing and provide remediation during high school for students that don't test into college-level courses.
- Bellingham Public Schools (Bellingham) -- \$150,000 over three years to develop an alternative discipline system, increase attendance rates, and develop a system to support more 8th graders taking algebra at Shuksan Middle School in Bellingham.
- Clover Park Technical College Foundation (Tacoma) -- \$149,670 over three years to develop and pilot a system for using high school transcripts to place recent high school graduates in math courses.
- Foundation for Seattle Community Colleges (Seattle) -- \$150,000 over two years to support College Bound Scholarship students in three Seattle high schools with early testing with remediation, navigation services, college-skills classes, and other transition supports.
- Northeast Washington Educational Service District 101 (Spokane) -- \$150,000 over two years to develop and implement a program to provide early college placement testing and remediation during high school for students that do not test into college-level courses.
- Puget Sound Educational Services District (Tukwila) -- \$30,000 over one year to develop an action plan addressing alignment of STEM courses with college requirements, access to college-preparatory classes, and improved advising for rigorous math taking.
- Selkirk School District (Metaline Falls) -- \$99,000 over three years to implement the elementary school AVID model with its middle school students and provide professional development for staff.
- Shoreline Community College (Shoreline) -- \$69,662 over two years to incorporate the Common Core State Standards into the curriculum of its high school completion and Adult Basic Education programs.
- Stevenson Carson School District (Stevenson) -- \$150,000 over three years to provide professional development for middle school math staff and to pilot a mid-year intervention for students at risk of failing Algebra.
- Vancouver School District (Vancouver) -- \$150,000 over three years to provide professional development for staff at Fort Vancouver and Hudson's Bay high school focused on aligning curricular rigor with college-readiness standards and improving skills at working with low-income students.
- Wenatchee School District (Wenatchee) -- \$139,335 over three years to implement accelerated content in pre- Algebra courses at Orchard Middle School coupled with supplemental instructional support built into an extended math period.

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