

St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Project

8215 Clayton Road
St. Louis MO 63117
(314) 725-7990

Co-Chairs

Jane Donahue
Deaconess Foundation

Faith Sandler
The Scholarship
Foundation of St. Louis

Steering Committee

Stacy Clay
College Summit-St. Louis

Cynthia Crim
Commerce Bank

Melanie Dileo
Citi

Sherry Harsch-Porter
The Porter Bay Group, Inc.

Dave Hilliard
Wyman Center

Tim Hopkins
Missouri Dept of Higher Education

Wendy Jaffe
The Trio Foundation of
St. Louis

Orvin Kimbrough
United Way of Greater
St. Louis

Patrick McEvoy
Bayless High School

Mary McMurtrey
Gateway Center for Giving

Amy Basore Murphy
Greater Saint Louis
Community Foundation

Kathy Reeves
Enterprise Holdings

DeAngela Burns-Wallace
University of Missouri, Missouri
College Advising Corps

Lisa Orden Zarin
College Bound, St. Louis

Funding of the Access Missouri Program is Critical to Missouri and its Students

The St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Project (CAP) is a collaboration of leaders from K-12 education, higher education, college access service providers, business and philanthropy working to improve college access and success for low-income and first-generation students in the St. Louis region. Our goal is that 50% of the adults in the St. Louis region have a postsecondary degree by 2020 – almost double what our percentage is today.

CAP strongly supports full funding of the Access Missouri program. Full funding means that all students who qualify for Access Missouri are able to receive the maximum award amount for which they qualify.

Why Access Missouri is important to Missouri

- By 2018, 2/3 of the jobs in Missouri will require a postsecondary degree.
- This will require an additional 3,400 college graduates each year.
- Missouri can only reach this goal if a substantial number of low-income students are supported in their effort to attend college.
- Low-income students depend on Access Missouri, the state's only need-based financial aid program.
- Access Missouri-eligible students simply cannot afford college without assistance from the state. Two-thirds of Access Missouri students have less than \$4,000 of available family financial support. About one-third have less than \$500.

Investing in Access Missouri is an investment in Missouri. Students with a college degree earn 156% more over their lifetime than those without a degree. This is the tax base our state needs. Research shows that an increase in college degrees increases wages at all levels. Everyone benefits from this investment – tax payers and the state.

Why it is important to fund Access Missouri this year

Financial aid is just one barrier to college but it is one that is easily addressed.

With tuition increases proposed across the state, Missouri is at risk of putting a college education out of reach for tens of thousands of students if it doesn't increase the amount of financial aid available through Access Missouri.

Last year, the Missouri Legislature appropriated \$83 million for Access Missouri, a 13% reduction from the year before. However, the appropriation was substantially cut, reducing award amounts below statute minimum levels. This left tens of thousands of students scrambling to make ends meet so they could stay in college.

Under the current statute, maximum Access Missouri award amounts are \$1,000 for students attending 2-year colleges, \$2,150 for public 4-year colleges and \$4,600 for 4-year independent colleges. However, due to Access Missouri budget cuts, maximum awards for 2010 are \$470, \$1,010 and \$2,160 respectively. And not all students qualify for maximum awards. Just over \$1,000 doesn't go far for a student facing over \$21,000 in expenses to attend our state's flagship institution, the University of Missouri-Columbia.

We urge the Legislature to maintain the \$83 million appropriation to the Access Missouri program so that we can meet our state's workforce needs today and for years to come.

Faith Sandler, Executive Director of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, and Co-chair of the St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Project, can be reached at faith@sfstl.org or (314) 725-7990.