



**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Executive Summary**

OMB No. 1894-0003
Exp. 06/30/2017

PR/Award # (11 characters): **P378A140002**

(See Instructions)

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (Commission or CCPE) provided funding to two scholarships programs it operates and nine sub-recipient projects with CACG funds in award year 2014-2015.

Commission Project: Access College Early (ACE) scholarship program

The Commission administers the Access College Early (ACE) program. The main objective of the program is to enable low-income high school students to take college credit courses while still in high school. These courses may be dual enrollment courses, where the student receives college and high school credit simultaneously, or the courses may be taken solely for college credit.

In the State of Nebraska, high school students qualifying to take college courses while still in high school must pay for their college credit out of their own pocket. The Commission believes there are thousands of low-income and underrepresented Nebraska high school students who are financially burdened by or prevented from enrolling in college courses while in high school. For academic year 2012-2013, Nebraska's public low-income high school graduates went on to college at a rate of 56.6% as compared to the public non-low-income cohort that year attending college at a rate of 77.7%. Heese, J. Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report. *Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, 2015*, 63. The ACE scholarship program addresses this inequality and provides a pathway for low-income high school students to enroll in college through dual enrollment. For 2012-2013, public low-income high school senior ACE recipients went on to college at a remarkable rate of 86.1% as compared to the public non-low-income high school college-going rate for that same year of 77.7%. *Id.* at 107. As one can see, the ACE program is incredibly successful at equalizing college-going rates, or actually increasing them, between income levels.

Not only does dual-enrollment encourage college enrollment, the Commission believes high school graduation rates can be increased through its ACE scholarship program. Data from Nebraska's Department of Education State of the Schools Report (data retrieved on May 13, 2015) indicates that for cohort year 2014, low-income high school students graduated from high school at a 82.43% rate as compared to non-low-income students in that same cohort at a rate of 93.86%. While this theory is new and the correlation between dual-enrollment participation through the ACE program and

high school graduation rates has not yet been completed, the potential results are promising given that ACE recipients attend college at a higher rate than public non-low-income students and therefore did in fact graduate high school.

The ACE program first began in the fall of 2007 with approximately \$50,000 in state funding and totaled 295 awarded scholarships. For state fiscal year 2014, ACE was appropriated approximately \$685,000 in an effort to keep up with need. The Commission for academic year 2014-2015 has awarded 1921 scholarships with these matching funds and federal CACG funds. The need for this financial assistance is apparent and continually growing.

Commission Project: ACE Plus scholarship program

The Commission created the ACE Plus scholarship program during the 2010-2011 CACG grant year and it is solely funded by CACG. The program picks up where the ACE program ends by providing scholarships to college students who previously received an ACE scholarship. The main objective is to encourage former ACE students to attend college full-time after high school graduation and to help them complete a postsecondary credential. The ACE Plus program provides a \$500 award for a student's freshman year and a \$1,000 scholarship award for their sophomore year. For the academic year 2014-2015, CCPE utilized approximately \$283,000 in CACG funds to award 377 ACE Plus scholarships (188 first-year awards and 189 second-year awards). This represents an increase in the total number of awards as compared to last year and a more equitable distribution of awards between first-year and second-year students. For that same academic year, the ACE Plus program was unable to meet the needs of 69 applicants totaling \$48,000. With the loss of CACG funds next year, the program will cease to exist unless the State of Nebraska replaces the funding.

ACE Plus recipients not only performed exceedingly well in high school but also found much success in their first year in college. For academic year 2014-2015, 72.9% of ACE Plus recipients earned a high school GPA of 3.5-4.0 with another 18.6% in the 3.0 to 3.4 range. Heese, J. Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report. *Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, 2015*, 113. When these former ACE recipients, who received an ACE Plus award, completed their first year in college an incredible 79.9% of them had over a 3.0 GPA, with 50.8% earning grades in the GPA range of 3.5-4.0 for academic year 2014-2015. *Id.* An important objective is not only the college access portion but the college completion rate. Our first cohort of ACE Plus recipients was anticipated to graduate college in May 2014. As the college completion data becomes available, CCPE will analyze it to ultimately see how this program could possibly affect college completion rates.

Sub-recipients:

The Commission awarded sub-grants to nine entities totaling \$766,290 for the final 2014-2015 grant year. Specific details on these sub-grantees can be found in the project status section, but generally these sub-grants focus on a variety of activities to serve the low-income population in Nebraska and increase their college-going and college graduation rates. The Commission is happy to report many different geographic areas are being

served by these sub-grantees, from the urban areas of Omaha and Lincoln, to the tribal area of Ho-Chunk, to the western rural areas of Chase County, Valentine, and Scottsbluff. In such a large state, it is important to not forget the underserved rural areas, so starting in the 2013-2014 grant year three new sub-recipients, Chase County, Valentine, and Scottsbluff, began their CACG program to address low college-going rates of their low-income students. The Commission is excited to see the progress in these programs in CACG's last year of funding.



**U.S. Department of Education
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Project Status Chart**

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SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

1. Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Through the use of need-based aid increase the number of low-income or underrepresented Nebraska students enrolling in or remaining enrolled in postsecondary education.

| 1.a. Performance Measure | Measure Type | Quantitative Data | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------|---|-------------------------|-------|---|
| Number of Nebraska low-income high school students receiving scholarships to take college courses while in high school through federal and matching funds during the 2014-2015 academic year. * | | Target | | | Actual Performance Data | | |
| | | Raw Number | Ratio | % | Raw Number | Ratio | % |
| | | | / | | | 1921 | / |

| 1.b. Performance Measure | Measure Type | Quantitative Data | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------|---|-------------------------|-------|---|
| Number of Nebraska low-income students receiving scholarships to postsecondary institutions through federal funds during the 2014-2015 academic year. * | | Target | | | Actual Performance Data | | |
| | | Raw Number | Ratio | % | Raw Number | Ratio | % |
| | | | / | | | 377 | / |

*These performance measures align with our performance measures in our 2014 grant application.

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

Continued on the next page...

Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program:

The ACE program is administered by Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) and provides scholarships to low-income high school students to take college courses while still in high school. During the 2014-2015 grant year, the Commission provided \$271,890 in CACG funds to the ACE program. The State of Nebraska has appropriated approximately \$685,000 to the ACE program for 2014-2015. ACE is on track to again exceed the previous year’s total award numbers. Incredibly, the college-going rates of ACE scholarship recipients have been higher than, or about equal to, the college-going rates of non-low-income graduates of the state’s public high schools.

ACE Plus Scholarship Program:

This scholarship program expands the ACE scholarship program by providing college scholarships to former ACE recipients. The program is intended to encourage former ACE students to attend college full-time after high school graduation. Full-time students who received an ACE scholarship while in high school are eligible to receive a \$500 scholarship award for their freshman year and a \$1,000 scholarship award for their sophomore year.

The Commission has allocated \$237,500 in 2014-2015 CACG funds for ACE Plus for academic year 2015-2016. The funds are scheduled to be expended during summer 2015. For the 189 students who received ACE Plus scholarships for their second year of college in academic year 2014-2015, 80% had 3.0 or higher grade-point averages (GPAs) after their first year of college, and about 51% had first-year GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

| Objectives: List the approved objectives from your grant application or work plan. Where applicable, provide baseline data. | Activities: List the activities that have been conducted to meet the objective. | Results: Has the objective been met? If not, what progress have you made in reaching the objective? | Actions required: Are you planning to make changes to the grant in response to the results? |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Access College Early (ACE) Program 1. Increase the number of low-income high school students taking college courses while in high school.</p> | <p>Worked with high school counselors to encourage them to identify low-income high school students to apply for the ACE scholarship.</p> <p>Participated in statewide forums to speak about ACE.</p> <p>Assisted students, high school counselors, and colleges during the award process.</p> <p>Reviewed applications, selected recipients, and provided the scholarship funds to the college chosen by the student.</p> | <p>Yes, as of May 5, 2015, a total of 1921 low-income high school students have been awarded scholarships through federal and matching funds during the 2014-2015 academic year.</p> | <p>No major changes are expected. CCPE will continue to seek more state funding for ACE as CACG funding comes to an end.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | | |
| 2. Increase the number of low-income students taking more than one college course per semester. | Continued to inform high school counselors, dual enrollment providers, and students that the ACE program will fund more than one course per semester. | For AY2014-2015, the percentage of low-income students taking more than one college course per semester was 53.6% - a slight decrease from the previous academic year of 55.8%. | No changes expected. The slight decrease could be attributed to increased competition for the scholarships. |
| 3. Maintain or increase the significantly higher college-going rate of ACE scholarship recipients relative to the college-going rate of other low-income public high school graduates. | Provided assistance to counselors and colleges with informational workshops and printed materials. Helped counselors and colleges market to students the importance of going to college by attending and presenting at college fairs and seminars. | <p>The college-going rate of <u>all</u> senior ACE recipients increased from 82.8% in AY2011-2012 to 86.1% in AY2012-2013.</p> <p>The college-going rates for <u>public</u> high school seniors who received the ACE award increased from 82.3% in AY2011-2012 to 86.1% in AY2012-2013. Incredibly, this compares to a 77.7% college-going rate in AY2012-2013 for non-low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools. This ACE recipient college-going rate of 86.1% in AY2012-2013 is 34.6% higher than other public low-income student's college-going rate for the same academic year.</p> | No changes expected. |
| <p>ACE Plus Scholarship Program</p> <p>1. Continue fully funding as many first-year \$500 and second-year \$1,000 ACE Plus scholarship awards as funding allows.</p> | Informed high school guidance counselors and current and former ACE and ACE Plus students about the scholarship opportunity. Reviewed applications for funding, selected recipients, and provided scholarship money to the colleges chosen by the students. | A total of 377 college scholarships were awarded to low-income Nebraskan students. There were 188 first-year scholarships awarded and 189 second-year scholarships awarded. | CCPE has been working with state senators seeking funding for this program. The Nebraska legislature is currently in the process of reviewing this legislative bill. |



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Project Status Chart**

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SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

2. Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Increase the number of Nebraska students receiving college information, outreach activities, FAFSA assistance, and academic enrichment services. Also, to increase the number of middle or high school counselors, financial aid administrators, and college admissions counselors participating in professional development activities.

| 2.a. Performance Measure | Measure Type | Quantitative Data | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------|---|-------------------------|-------|---|
| Number of Nebraska students receiving college information, outreach activities, FAFSA assistance, and academic enrichment services. | | Target | | | Actual Performance Data | | |
| | | Raw Number | Ratio | % | Raw Number | Ratio | % |
| | | | / | | | 9147 | / |

| 2.b. Performance Measure | Measure Type | Quantitative Data | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------|---|-------------------------|-------|---|
| Number of middle or high school counselors, financial aid administrators, and college admissions counselors participating in professional development activities. | | Target | | | Actual Performance Data | | |
| | | Raw Number | Ratio | % | Raw Number | Ratio | % |
| | | | / | | | 402 | / |

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

Continued on next page...

Subrecipients:

The Commission is currently funding nine sub-recipients with CACG funds.

A. Central Plains Center for Services

Central Plains seeks to increase the number of state ward youth leaving the state's custody who have access to and enroll in postsecondary education and increase the number of state ward youth who complete their postsecondary education. Central Plains Center for Services provides Education Specialists who work one on one with these students across rural Nebraska through their Success Through Education program.

The youth and their families that are involved with the Success Through Education program are challenged with cycles of generational poverty, abuse, drug dependency, and homelessness. The Success Through Education program provides the opportunity to break their families patterns. Youth participate in creating an academic plan, financial plan, FAFSA completion, college testing, college applications, college visits, scholarship applications, and alternate plans.

Currently there are 253 youth involved in the Success Through Education program. All of these youth are at various stages of their college preparation including FAFSA completion, academic plans, financials plans, college application completion assistance and other college access support activities.

B. EducationQuest Foundation

EducationQuest is using its CACG funds to expand its outreach to 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students. There are multiple components to this program: 1) a new college access webinar series offered to school counselors; 2) middle school and high school counselor early college awareness training; 3) the KnowHow2GONebraska Student Ambassador Program; 4) 8th grade students' college visits; 5) 8th, 9th, and 10th grade College Access Handbook, 6) College Access Messaging for 8th, 9th, and 10th graders as well as Adult Learners, and 7) the Spring College Fairs. This past grant year a total of 3,731 students at 32 middle schools were served with their CACG funded 8th Grade Campus Visit Grants. EducationQuest was similarly successful with their College Access Handbook publication and presentations that served 7,899 students and their spring college fairs in Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha.

C. Ho-Chunk Community Development Corporation

This program seeks to work with Native American students in the Walthill and Winnebago high schools in Nebraska. Their program, Challenging Our Youth to Succeed (COYS), has made progress at both the above referenced high schools. New partnerships were formed to work with the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) and Little Priest Tribal College (LPTC). UNO's Native American Outreach Coordinator and LPTC's Department Chair of Indigenous Studies have been working with the students during their bi-weekly meetings. COYS has bi-weekly meetings at both high schools for half an hour. The project coordinator faces severe time constraints and is working on increasing her time allotments. Activities at COYS have included GPA importance discussion, FAFSA/financial aid meetings, college/career fair, college visitations, and a college financing workshop. During this reporting period, a total of 46 students enrolled in the program which is a significant increase from 39 students during the prior reporting period.

D. Metropolitan Community College

This program focuses on four aspects: 1) the Young Gifted Black Girls Conference (YGBGC); 2) the Men of Distinction Conference (MODC); 3) the Parental Involvement Program (PIP) and 4) funding for their STEM Academy. The YGBGC was held spring 2015 and was free to girls in the 10th, 11th, or 12 grades. A total of 129 students were in attendance. The aim of the conference was to expose students to the benefits of a college education with black speakers reinforcing that college is possible. The MODC was held fall 2014 with 124 students that focused on college preparation, specifically incorporating strategies on submitting successful competitive scholarship applications. The PIP component aims to reinforce low-income parents who are

entering postsecondary education and help them identify and remove the barriers that may prevent them from completing their education. These parents share strategies with each other and have developed a support system that aids in their postsecondary educational success. Due to staffing difficulties the STEM Academy has struggled with attendance during the reporting period. However, Metropolitan Community College has recently hired new staff and is expecting a large class this summer.

E. Nebraska Methodist College

Nebraska Methodist College's (NMC) Challenge Program is a partnership between St. Luke's United Methodist Church and Nebraska Methodist College. The program provides after-school tutoring and other support services for at-risk students attending Burke High School. These services include: college visits, ACT preparation, seminars, college application assistance, community service, and mentoring/tutoring. The program currently has 91 active students enrolled. Overall, the success of their program is outstanding – 100% (21) of their senior students in May 2014 graduated from high school and 95.2% of those students continued on to postsecondary education. A total of 89% of their students missed less than five days of school during the first semester in fall 2014.

F. Omaha Public Schools

Careers for Kids (CFK) is an Omaha Public Schools program designed to provide college access and career exploration opportunities to high school students who are low income and or first generation. CFK provides college access outreach services through their specialists who meet with students at least biweekly to review grades, missing assignments, and other concerns. There is no minimum GPA requirement for enrollment in the CFK program making this the most challenging CACG project to date. However, to date 124 students are enrolled in the program and receiving support services to aid in their postsecondary career. A large component of the program is to have their students graduate from high school on-time. During this reporting period, 121 out of 124 students are scheduled to graduate on-time. All senior students have completed the FAFSA, taken the ACT or Compass Test, as well as every senior has been accepted to at least one postsecondary institution.

G. Western Rural Initiative

The Western Rural Initiative includes three sub-recipients, Scottsbluff Public Schools, Chase County, and Valentine Public Schools. As these are small grants these programs focus on college visits, ACT test preparation, and FAFSA completion. Students have attended college visits as well as participated in EducationQuest events. Chase County was able to serve 110 students with information relating to college access, hired staff to administer ACT Test preparation, and other outreach activities. Scottsbluff Public Schools served 55 high school students and their parents by providing information regarding college access. Also, Scottsbluff focused on providing 46 students outreach activities such as job shadowing and internships with multiple community partnerships. Valentine Public Schools successfully met their goal of all 11th grade students taking part in ACT Test preparation software. Valentine also focused on improving student knowledge about the college process – results from their survey indicate that 82% of these students had a better understanding of the college process after activities. And finally, Valentine has reported 35 of 46 11th grade students took part in a campus visit – a remarkable accomplishment for a rural high school. Without these CACG funds, these smaller rural schools would not have the financial ability to provide these college visits and outreach activities.

SERVICES/ACTIVITIES

1. Number of students who participated in CACG activities or received services during the reporting period.

Number of Students: 11,445

2. Services Provided to Students during the reporting period:

| Place an "X" in this column if your project provides this type of service | Type of Service/Activities | Number of Students Targeted (if data available) | Number of Students Participated |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| X | Information for students and families (i.e., postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, planning, financial options, and college preparation) | | 8980 |
| X | Outreach activities | | 841 |
| X | Assistance in completion of FAFSA or other financial reporting forms | | 329 |
| X | Need-based grant aid | | 2342 |
| X | Academic enrichment | | 655 |
| | Loan cancellation, repayment, or interest rate reduction | | |
| | Other (please specify) | | |

3. Professional Development

| Category | Number of Participants |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Middle or High School Counselors | 390 |
| Financial Aid Administrators | 5 |
| College Admissions Counselors | 7 |

- b. Please describe briefly the type of professional development activities that were implemented (e.g., workshops and/or materials).
Informational workshops on college access strategies and tours of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions



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SECTION B - Budget Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

Federal Budget Summary

| | Proposed Federal Expenditures for FY 2014 | Actual Federal Expenditures for FY 2014 | Anticipated Federal Expenditures for FY 2014 | Anticipated Carryover (with extension) |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1. Salaries and Wages | \$57,831 | \$31,679.65 | \$26,151.35 | <i>*See Section C for our estimate of any carryover funds and how CCPE plans to use them</i> |
| 2. Employee Benefits | \$20,756 | \$11,428.23 | \$9,327.77 | |
| 3. Travel | \$884 | \$131.88 | \$752.12 | |
| 4. Materials & Supplies | \$4,049 | \$962.63 | \$3,086.37 | |
| 5. Consultants & Contracts | \$35,800 | \$175.00 | \$35,625 | |
| 6. Other | \$766,290 | \$143,036.28 | \$623,253.72 | |
| A. Total Direct Costs: (Lines 1 – 6) | \$885,610 | \$187,388.67 | \$698,221.33 | |
| B. Total Indirect Costs: | | | | |
| C. Equipment | | | | |
| D. *Scholarships/ Tuition Assistance | \$506,390 | \$269,228 | \$237,162 | |
| D. Total Costs (A+B+C+D) | \$1,392,000 | \$456,616.67 | \$935,383.33 | |

* The scholarships/tuition assistance line item also includes loan cancellation, loan repayment, and interest rate reduction.

Non-Federal Budget Summary

| | P roposed Matching Con- tributions for Y 2014 | F Actual Matching Con- tributions for FY 2014 | Anticipated Contributions for FY 2014 | Matching | Anticipated Carryover (with extension) |
|---|--|--|---|----------|---|
| 1. Salaries and Wages | | \$13,405.38 | | | |
| 2. Employee Benefits | | \$6,905.80 | | | |
| 3. Travel | | | | | |
| 4. Materials & Supplies | | | | | |
| 5. Consultants & Con- tracts | | | | | |
| 6. Other | \$252,875.00 | \$174,988.26 | | | |
| A. Total Direct Costs: (Lines 1 – 6) | \$252,875.00 | \$195,299.44 | | | |
| B. Total Indirect Costs: | | | | | |
| C. Equipment | | | | | |
| D. *Scholarships/ Tui- tion Assistance | \$443,125.00 | \$685,000 | | | |
| E. TOTAL COSTS (A+B+C+D) | \$696,000.00 | \$880,299.44 | | | |

* The scholarships/tuition assistance line item also includes loan cancellation, loan repayment, and interest rate reduction.

| | Actual Federal Expenditures FY 2013 | Actual Matching Contributions FY 2013 |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Salaries and Wages | \$60,875.20 | \$19,053.88 |
| 2. Employee Benefits | \$21,097.88 | \$9,815.63 |
| 3. Travel | \$2,249.25 | |
| 4. Materials & Supplies | \$940.25 | |
| 5. Consultants & Contracts | \$33,625.02 | |
| 6. Other | \$593,893.40 | \$254,720.87 |
| A. Total Direct Costs: (Add lines 1-6) | \$712,681.00 | |
| B. Total Indirect Costs | | |
| C. Equipment Purchase | | |
| D. *Scholarships/ Tuition Assistance | \$524,788.63 | \$640,000 |
| E. TOTAL COSTS (A+B+C+D) | \$1,237,469.63 | \$923,590.38 |

* The scholarships/tuition assistance line item also includes loan cancellation, loan repayment, and interest rate reduction.

SECTION C - Additional Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education is estimating roughly \$150,000 to \$200,000 in anticipated carryover funds from award year 2014-2015 to be spent prior to the end of the carryover year period in August 2016. CCPE is anticipating the funds to be used primarily on our scholarship programs as well as a minor amount on administrative expenses to finish carrying out the duties of the grant. CCPE is anticipating that carryover funds from award year 2013-2014 will be expended prior to the carryover expiration on activities and services described in our past grant applications.

There have been no significant budget changes resulting from modification(s) of project activities.