

Working Families Success Network:

A National Initiative to Expand the Center for Working Families Approach in
Community Colleges

Funded by:

*Annie E. Casey Foundation
Lumina Foundation
W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and
Bank of America Charitable Foundation*

Managed by:

Achieving the Dream, Inc.

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From the Sponsors

Dear Potential WFSN grantee,

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Lumina Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and Bank of America Charitable Foundation are pleased to announce a new initiative to expand the Working Families Success Network (WFSN) in up to 18 colleges in four states.

The WFSN strategy in colleges brings together and integrates access to a full range of services and supports to help students access financial aid, public benefits and other resources, improve their financial knowledge, budgeting skills and choice of financial products, and develop and implement achievable career plans, putting students on a path to completing their college-level study and achieving economic self-sufficiency. Services are typically targeted to the level of need for students, with lighter touch services reaching a wider student population, and more individualized services focused on those most in need of them.

Community college students, motivated to secure credentials and degrees that will help support themselves and their families, often face challenges to staying in and completing their educational goals. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, 42% of community college students are first generation students, 58% attend only part time, and nearly 85% of students work while in school, with about a third of students working full time. Family obligations, the need for income, and emergencies can easily derail even the most focused students. The WFSN strategy is designed to support these students in pursuing academic and career goals, and to enable community colleges to achieve institutional changes that make permanent those supports, thereby improving retention and completion rates.

The WFSN approach has been implemented by a range of community-based nonprofit organizations for a number of years. Early data suggests that families are 3-4 times more likely to achieve a long-term economic outcome if they receive integrated services than those who did not. More recently a set of community colleges has begun adapting the approach to their operating environment, with promising initial indicators of success, including increases in term-to-term retention of 10-15%.

The WFSN community college expansion will greatly expand the number of community colleges integrating the WFSN approach into their operations, and provide critical data that will inform later expansion to more colleges and states. The initiative is being managed by Achieving the Dream, a national nonprofit dedicated to community college student success and completion, and will be informed by a range of national experts through an Advisory Committee.

We look forward to working with colleges and states to make this initiative a success.

Sincerely,

Bob Giloth, Vice President, Center for Community & Economic Opportunity, Annie E. Casey Foundation
Dewayne Matthews, Vice President of Policy and Strategy, Lumina Foundation
Carla D. Thompson, Vice President for Program Strategy, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Nikki Salzillo, Philanthropy Manager, Bank of America Charitable Foundation

Section I: Overview

Community colleges have become a central force in workforce development while simultaneously addressing the reality that most college students today are working and juggling a complex reality in order to get ahead. The U.S. Department of Education reports that 60% of community college students work more than 20 hours per week and over 25% work more than 35 hours per week. Working too many hours while in school has been shown to negatively impact academic success.¹ Students' need to work has been cited as the primary reason time to a degree has increased over the past three decades.² In order to secure a better economic future for community college students and the country, a fundamental change is needed so that low-income students can more easily access a broad range of supports that will allow them to focus on clear pathways to further education and employment and attain market-valued credentials and degrees within efficient timeframes.

In early 2014, the Annie E. Casey, Lumina, W. K. Kellogg, and Bank of America Charitable Foundations will partner with Achieving the Dream, Inc. to begin scaling the Working Families Success Network (WFSN) Initiative in 16 to 18 community colleges in four states. The WFSN Initiative is based upon the Center for Working Families (CWF) approach and has demonstrated success in helping low-income adults and their families achieve greater economic security by providing a range of supports and services in an integrated and seamless manner. Students engaged in WFSN show between a 10 to 15% higher term-to-term retention rate compared to other similar students. WFSN is comprised of three core services:

1. **Workforce and education services resulting in career advancement**—education, job readiness, training, and placement;
2. **Income and work supports**—access to student financial aid, public benefits, and free tax preparation; and
3. **Financial services and asset building**—financial education and financial coaching.

The WFSN strategy has strong potential to increase persistence and completion rates for low-income and underserved community college students across the country. It is essential that WFSN core services be integrated together and provided to students in a bundled fashion, reinforcing one another and providing a multi-faceted strategy to supporting student needs. Scaling-up WFSN will demonstrate the importance of embedding comprehensive services into existing operations and infrastructure within community colleges resulting in low-income students reaching their academic, financial, and long term employment goals.

This solicitation is being shared with a pre-selected group of state partner organizations in eight states that will pursue their own process for identifying community colleges to submit a proposal to join the WFSN Initiative. It is expected that state partner organizations will select colleges that are: geographically diverse throughout their respective states; have a student body that is racially and ethnically diverse; and enroll a representative number of low-income students relative to the student population in their state or region. These state partner organizations are state education or workforce agencies, state associations, or nonprofits, and have strong track records of working collaboratively to clarify and advance a shared agenda. In each state, participating colleges will work as a consortium to more intentionally integrate delivery of critical services for low-income students. Each consortium will consist of three to five colleges

¹ Scott-Clayton, J. *What Explains Trends in Labor Supply Among Undergraduates, 1970-2009?* NBER Working Paper 17744. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2012.

² Bound, J, Lovenheim, M., Turner, S. *Increasing Time to Baccalaureate Degree in the United States*. Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, 2010.

and a state partner organization. One of the colleges will be identified as the “Coordinating College”; preferably, this college is either already implementing significant aspects of the WFSN strategy or is an existing [ATD Leader College](#). The state partner organization will assist the consortium colleges in a few key ways in year 1 (outlined on page 13) and may help advocate for relevant policy change to support the implementation and sustainability of the WFSN model over time. This consortium model is designed to accelerate learning and collaboration among colleges that have a strong commitment to each other and to moving the WFSN agenda forward. The consortium model also lends itself to peer mentoring by colleges with greater experience with institutional change or with the WFSN model.

Most of the investment of this initiative will go toward building capacity at the colleges. Each college will receive grant awards of between \$70,000 and \$100,000 per year for three years. The WFSN Initiative review committee will ultimately decide the size of the grant awards, based on criteria such as: overall student enrollment at the institution; whether or not the college will play the Coordinating College role; and the existing level at which colleges are able to advance WFSN-related work (e.g., planning, implementation, or scaling). The state partner organization may receive grants of up to \$15,000 in the first year, and if selected to stay on and play a more specific policy role, may receive grants up to \$30,000 in years 2 and 3.³ Grant awards are intended to provide participating WFSN colleges with resources to help expand existing efforts dedicated to integrating and streamlining service delivery for maximum student support and academic and employment success. **Note:** ATD will contract directly with each participating college and state partner organization.

This initiative’s timeline and schedule of structured events provides the participating colleges adequate time during the summer and fall (July to late October) of 2014 to work collaboratively on designing, planning, and prototyping prospective WFSN-related activities. This dedicated planning time will help ensure that the colleges are in a strong position to begin advancing their WFSN activities in early 2015. A key goal of the WFSN Initiative is to increase national awareness about promising practices for implementing and sustaining the WFSN strategy within community colleges. As such, colleges and state partner organizations in this effort should be prepared to share ideas and lessons learned about their WFSN experience with other interested parties pursuing similar efforts. Colleges and state partner organizations will also participate in a third party evaluation.

The WFSN Initiative has been developed by a Design Team of thought leaders in workforce development, higher education policy, and the community college sector. The Design Team, comprised of Achieving the Dream, the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program (Aspen Institute EOP), MDC, Center on Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Brandon Roberts + Associates, and leaders from existing WFSN colleges will continue serving a vital role throughout the three year initiative. Additionally, the expansion of the WFSN model in community colleges will occur simultaneously with the expansion of other similar service delivery platforms nationally from Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) and United Way and potentially other national networks. The national offices of these organizations along with ATD and several foundations serve on the National WFSN Leadership Group, which is currently working on common outcome metrics, policy strategy, and joint learning events.

³ WFSN’s national funders are committed to raising additional local and national funds making the potential grant awards to colleges up to \$150,000. The size of the grant awards, within the range, will be determined as implementation plans for participating WFSN colleges are developed.

Section II: Brief History of WFSN in Community Colleges

The WFSN Initiative, pioneered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation through its Center for Working Families (CWF) investments, was developed to help low-income families reach financial stability and move up the economic ladder. WFSN offers an innovative framework for how families can increase their earnings and income ("Earn It"), reduce their financial transaction costs ("Keep It"), and build wealth for themselves and their communities ("Grow It").⁴ The WFSN model was first launched in neighborhood-based hubs or centers, and brings together, or bundles, services in: education and employment advancement; income and work supports; and financial and asset building in order to help families build self-sufficiency, stabilize their finances and become more economically competitive.

Today, there is growing evidence and support that the WFSN model applies to the work of community colleges, where many students from economically disadvantaged families go to get the skills and education they need to build better lives. In addition to a 10-15% increase in term-to-term retention, research has found that community college students who have received bundled services as a result of the WFSN model experienced positive financial indicators such as: improved credit scores; better use and management of debt; and an increased ability to manage family expenses. Additionally, WFSN students reported positive effects on their health, self-confidence, and overall family well-being.⁵

Community colleges, which typically cost less than a third of the in-state cost of a public 4-year college, enroll nearly half of all undergraduate students nationally. And yet these students are often less familiar with college and have more economic responsibilities than what is thought of as a "traditional" student. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, 42% of community college students are first generation students, 58% attend only part time, and nearly 85% of students work while in school, with about a third of students working full time. For community colleges to facilitate success and completion among these students, it is essential to promote strategies that satisfy a more comprehensive range of student needs, as students are often balancing family, work, and school.

As shown by the work of [MDC's network of WFSN community colleges](#), delivering a range of services for students in an integrated manner helps put them on a path to economic self-sufficiency. For instance, a 2009 ABT Associates study of Central New Mexico College, which has used the WFSN strategy since 2005, indicated that students who were targeted with bundled services had a 61% chance of receiving a scholarship or staying in school, compared to 16% of students who did not receive bundled services. This study also indicated that students who received bundled services were three to four times more likely to achieve a major economic outcome (e.g., buying a car, staying employed, or earning a vocational certification or associate's degree), compared to students who received only one service.⁶ Another independent assessment of the WFSN approach at Norwalk Community College also found that students in the program were more likely to achieve academic and completion goals than comparison groups (100% of students who received WFSN services at Norwalk re-enrolled in the subsequent term).⁷ With

⁴ Annie E. Casey Foundation. "The Center for Working Families: Helping Families Achieve Economic Success" 2006. Report is available: <http://www.aecf.org/upload/PublicationFiles/FES3622H5050.pdf>

⁵ Annie E. Casey Foundation. "An Integrated Approach to Fostering Family Economic Success: How three model sites are implementing the Center For Working Families Approach". 2010 Report is available: <http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Topics/Economic%20Security/Family%20Economic%20Supports/AnIntegratedApproachtoFosteringFamilyEconomic/Report%201%2012%2009.pdf>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Liston Cynthia, and Donnan Robert. "Center for Working Families at Community Colleges: Clearing the Financial

these early indicators of success, and ample evidence of need among today’s college students, embedding the WFSN strategy into existing operations and infrastructure at community colleges offers an avenue toward developing an integrated method to improve student success.

Section III: Project Goals and Theory of Change

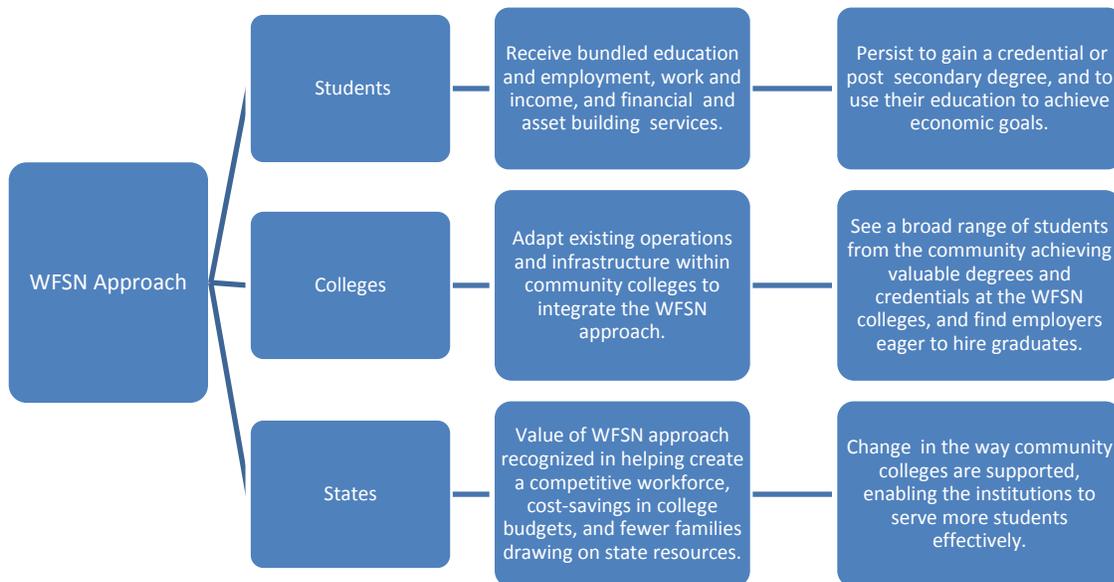
There are two over-arching goals for the WFSN Initiative:

Goal #1: To strengthen the evidence base for implementing the WFSN strategy in community colleges by highlighting the ways in which it contributes to higher persistence, completion, and job attainment rates for low-income students.

Goal #2: To demonstrate that embedding the WFSN strategy in college processes and systems can be cost effective and has the potential to catalyze changes in institutional culture that: a) make it increasingly student-centered; and b) ultimately improve student outcomes.

The WFSN scale-up strategy assumes a stretch goal for individual colleges to serve 40-50% of low-income students with targeted services at the appropriate level within three to five years of implementation. This projected measure is a likely “tipping point” for colleges in institutionalizing the services. By achieving these goals, scaling up WFSN will help facilitate transformational change at the student, college, and state levels. The theory of change (See Chart 1 below) and selected outcome measures, identified in section IV, proposes long term outcomes associated with transformational change for students, colleges, and states.

Chart 1: WFSN Theory of Change



Barriers to Student Success”. MDC and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012. Report can be accessed: <http://bit.ly/1j4v9cl>

Section IV: Selected Outcome Measures

Student Outcomes:

- Increased uptake in public benefits, financial aid, other financial assistance, and services provided by community partners.
- Improved management of debt and finances.
- Increased term-to-term retention of both full and part time students.
- Completion of a marketable degree or credential, or successful transfer to a four year college.
- Obtain employment with a family sustaining wage.

College Outcomes:

- A demonstrated shift in the way colleges design, implement, and sustain effective delivery of comprehensive services to help increase the economic security of low-income students and their families.⁸
- Increased percentage of target student population being served by WFSN services with the goal of serving 40 to 50% of target students in 3-5 years.
- Increased persistence and credential or degree attainment rates, strengthening the value proposition for potential students.
- Strong alignment with the needs of employers and industry leaders so that low-income students earn degrees or credentials with high labor market value and that allow them to secure employment that pays a family sustaining wage.
- New systems or infrastructure to help facilitate the WFSN strategy, supported and sustained through leveraging community partnerships relevant to WFSN-activities.
- Effective use of data and other evidence to better understand the needs of, and prescribe solutions for low-income students and their families.
- Cost-effective implementation of WFSN.

State Outcomes:

- Increased awareness and recognition by state policymakers and higher education stakeholders of WFSN's value and potential to reduce college costs while making the state more economically competitive through increased postsecondary degree attainment and workforce development.
- Proactive development of policies and funding mechanisms as incentives for the adoption of WFSN by a broader range of postsecondary institutions.
- Access to real time results from consortium colleges to create stronger alignment between WFSN and statewide efforts that are similarly focused on expanding economic opportunities for low-income students and their families.

⁸ ATD proposes a project to develop an instrument in conjunction with WFSN evaluators and potentially other ATD investors to measure institutional change. ATD intends to seek funding for this project.

WFSN Phases:

Selected consortia will engage in two distinct phases as part of their involvement in the WFSN Initiative:

Planning Phase

From July through the end of October 2014 participating colleges in each consortium will conduct the planning phase of the WFSN Initiative. During this time colleges will assess institutional and operational capacity; develop an implementation plan; develop/modify data systems to support WFSN activities; and develop a sustainability plan. Additionally, during this phase of work it will be reinforced to the colleges by ATD and WFSN content experts that they should design their implementation strategy to incorporate both system wide activities and intensive services for those who need it most in the first year.

Implementation Phase

Soon after completing their implementation plans in Fall 2014, colleges will: begin strengthening their existing WFSN-related services and add new services where needed; target and enroll students in WFSN core services at the appropriate intensity levels; and continually refine and adapt WFSN-related activities based on short and long term outcomes.

Section V: Design and Delivery

MDC has developed an implementation guide designed to be used by community college leaders, faculty, and staff interested in starting or expanding the WFSN strategy at their institution. The information below touches on some of the topics featured in this guide. We strongly suggest you read and utilize the guide to assist with completing your application. For access to all of these materials please visit the [WFSN Implementation Guide website](#).

Levels of Service:

In order for the WFSN strategy to be effective, it is essential that colleges have a thorough process for identifying students in their target population who are most in need of bundled services and appropriately match those students with the right services at the right intensity level (“low”, “medium”, and “high”).

Low-touch services are services that require less staff time as they typically entail only providing basic information. These services may reach more students but tend to have less of an impact than higher touch services.

- Low-touch service example: General assistance from the financial aid office on completing the FAFSA; limited referral to other financial aid resources; free tax preparation; or adding financial planning to a student success course.

Medium-touch services generally require some level of one-on-one interactions with students. These services often reach fewer students than low touch services but often have a greater impact on student outcomes.

- Medium-touch service example: Limited one-on-one assistance with conducting job searches, building resumes, and practicing interview skills.

High-touch services require a higher level of staff interaction with students and relevant resources. Generally these services are not offered to all students as a result of limited resources. Students able to utilize these services have the best outcomes, as compared to medium and low-touch services; however they reach fewer students.⁹

- High touch service example: One-on-one and ongoing assistance given to students to help access a variety of public benefits, including regular follow-up appointments.

WFSN colleges will be expected to simultaneously pursue two distinct but related approaches to planning and implementing WFSN services: **1)** identify and serve a specific target population of students and broaden access to high-touch services over time; and **2)** Increase access to lower touch services for a broad population of students and deepen the level and type of services for those students over time.

Use of Financial Products:

For the duration of the WFSN Initiative expansion initiative, ATD will work with the colleges to assist in identifying ways to integrate new and existing financial products to leverage the effectiveness of WFSN-related activities. Some of these products and services may include:

- Methods for developing strategic partnerships with local financial institutions that may include: local credit unions, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), and community banks to help students better access consumer-friendly financial products;
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) so that matched savings can be used for education purposes; and
- Income smoothing products to help mitigate the impact of unexpected expenses (e.g., emergency financial aid, small-dollar installment loans, or lines of credit).

Please see Appendix V for a more comprehensive list of financial products and services that may be used to leverage WFSN efforts.

⁹ MDC's Implementation Guide, 2013. Page 9 http://wfsncollegeguide.org/pdfs/MDC_WFS_all.pdf

Table 1: WFSN Core Services Matrix

WFSN Core Service Area	Emphasis	Examples of services	Examples of Services at Different Intensity Levels ¹⁰	
			Examples of low touch services	Examples of high touch services
Employment and career advancement services	Services that support WFSN students as they prepare to enter the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic supports Job training Job search Job placement Job retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group tutoring or supplemental instruction on developing “soft skills” Group sessions on career options One week or less of instructions on general job readiness skills General assistance provided by a career center, including referrals to job postings and resume skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one tutoring or supplemental instruction on contextualized training for a particular industry Multiple weeks of instruction with a majority of time focused on contextual skills for a particular industry One-on-one assistance with students requiring a high level of contextualization around a particular industry
Income and work supports	Services that help WFSN students access the services and benefits they’re eligible for, including: student aid; tax credits; and emergency financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance with benefit application and submission Tax assistance services Financial Aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General assistance from financial aid including the FAFSA form General information about tax services, public benefits, and emergency scholarship access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individualized assistance to students on financial aid One-on-one assistance given to students to help access public benefits and tax credits, with ongoing follow up after the submission of benefits applications to make sure students are connected with other WFSN services
Financial services and asset-building supports	Financial education, financial coaching, and asset-building products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one financial coaching Household budgeting Access to affordable financial products— e.g., flexible checking accounts, low-interest loans, first-time home-buyer financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing general information and referrals to partner organizations that offer financial coaching Providing financial education through student success courses Providing materials to students about affordable financial services and asset-building products at local financial institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individualized follow-up from group financial literacy sessions Dedicated staff who serve as financial coaches who provide multiple follow up sessions throughout enrollment Active partnerships with local financial institutions who provide affordable asset-building services and products

Note: Adapted from Liston Cynthia, and Donnan Robert. “Center for Working Families at Community Colleges: Clearing the Financial Barriers to Student Success”. MDC and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012. Report can be accessed: <http://bit.ly/1j4v9cl>

¹⁰ Matrices found in MDC’s WFSN Implementation Guide offer more information on ways in which colleges can implement services at different intensity levels. Page 42 offers more information on [intensity for employment and training services](#), pages 45-46 offers more information on [levels of intensity for income and work support services](#), and pages 48-49 offers more information on [levels of intensity for financial and asset building services](#).

Section VI: Criteria for Participation and Selection

Baseline Criteria:

Prospective WFSN community colleges and state partner organizations will be evaluated on the following baseline criteria:

College Level

- Commitment to racial equity and poverty reduction in the mission and/or vision of the college.
- Demonstrated commitment by community college leadership at multiple levels of the college to implement and consistently pursue efforts to institutionalize the WFSN strategy over time.
- Existing or recent initiatives within the college focused on student success and culture change to support improved service delivery, or other creative or innovative efforts being pursued to increase retention and completion for low-income students.
- Demonstrated enthusiasm and eagerness to take on and/or continue work related to creating more efficient and effective institutional systems and policies supporting low-income students.
- Ongoing provision of services in at least one of the three core services at the college, including: education/workforce services; financial services/asset development; and work/income supports.
- Demonstrated ability to collect and use data to inform program design and improvement, and willingness to develop data-sharing agreements with relevant county and state agencies.
- Demonstrated ability to align college courses with labor market needs and/or supporting the successful transfer of students to four-year colleges.

State Partner Organization Level:

- Experience at the state level implementing college reform initiatives and evidence of leading successful cross-college collaborations.

Competitive Criteria:

College Level

Each state will be evaluated on the collective strength of the colleges submitting applications in the consortium. Competitive consortia applications will demonstrate most of the following criteria:

1. Evidence of leadership and a management structure necessary to implement proposed work.
2. The consortium's overall vision for implementing and scaling a WFSN strategy, including:
 - a. a process for identifying and engaging students who are most in need of services, an estimate of the number of students in this target population, and a strategy for effectively connecting students with the right set of services at the right intensity (low, medium, and high);
 - b. an analysis of each colleges' work in implementing at least one of WFSN's three core services, including challenges faced and reflection on how the institution addressed these challenges (colleges that demonstrate activity in multiple WFSN core service areas will be considered more competitive);
 - c. a description of ambitious outcome goals over the 3 years of the grant;
 - d. how WFSN-related services are being designed to address the economic wellbeing of low-income students and their families;
 - e. how the colleges plan to leverage relevant statewide policies and other efforts in their respective states to support WFSN-related activities;

- f. a plan for addressing foreseeable obstacles (e.g., scaling, institutional culture change, changes to staffing plans, data collection/matching, location, etc.), and utilizing institutional and community assets; and
 - g. a plan for sustaining this work beyond the life of the grant.
3. The existence of current programs and policies focused on supporting low-income students.
 4. Evidence of delivering student service supports in an effective and efficient way.
 5. Commitment to explore partnerships with outside organizations that add particular expertise or value to WFSN-related efforts.
 6. Utilization and or/adaptation of student data systems to track WFSN participation, services and outcomes, and a plan for using data to assess progress towards goals.
 7. Commitment to participate in the WFSN learning networks and evaluation.
 8. Commitment to disseminate lessons learned to other community colleges and appropriate partners.
 9. Evidence that collectively the colleges in the consortium are: comprised of a representative number of low-income students relative to the state or region's population of community college students (consortia that enroll as high as 15 to 25% of low-income students in a state or region will be considered highly competitive); have a student body that is racially and ethnically diverse; and are geographically diverse.
 10. Colleges and states with policy influence at the state level will be given higher priority.

State Level

The eight prospective WFSN expansion states were determined by the Design Team using the following criteria:

1. state budget priorities;
2. state postsecondary policy support for strengthening support services in community colleges;
3. state postsecondary policy support for systemic reforms to increase completion; and
4. state human services policy support for expanding access to public benefits.

The proposal review committee will re-visit this criterion when evaluating applications to confirm that it is still accurate.

Section VII: Technical Assistance and Peer Learning Activities

Achieving the Dream will oversee the operation of WFSN Initiative learning activities and networks. These activities and networks will include an inaugural meeting, targeted technical assistance, intrastate and cross-state learning meetings, and a national learning network. Continuous learning and improvement will be critical to the WFSN Initiative, and ATD will provide customized technical support as colleges pursue WFSN implementation. Soon after the WFSN expansion colleges are selected, a team of national technical advisers and coaches will be deployed by ATD to help those colleges get off to a strong start. Additionally, the national WFSN learning network will facilitate the sharing of promising practices across states and provide an opportunity to explore innovative policy ideas that support the WFSN Initiative.

Coordinating College:

Each consortium will consist of one Coordinating College which, as noted earlier, will ideally be filled by either an ATD Leader College or a college that has significant experience with implementing WFSN-related activities.¹¹

The Coordinating College will play an important role in:

- serving as a peer mentor to other colleges in the consortium;
- serving as a consortium representative at learning events when all participating colleges cannot attend;
- serving as a liaison to the state partner organization; and
- supporting the state partner organization in building an intrastate learning network.

Section VIII: Description of Fundraising Assistance

The national foundations supporting the WFSN Initiative are committed to leveraging their influence nationally to raise the visibility of this effort by engaging other funders (national and local) to support the WFSN consortia in each state. The primary funders will work with WFSN consortia in securing local and state funding, and will continue their national fundraising efforts.

Section IX: Use of Funds**Colleges:**

Three uses of funds:

1. Planning and Implementing core WFSN services;
2. Expanding and Scaling core WFSN services; and
3. Participation costs related to the initiative.

WFSN colleges may use grant funds to support efforts to plan, implement, and scale WFSN-related activities. Examples of these efforts include: staff development/training in any of the three core WFSN service areas; revisions to existing data systems to more effectively track participation and outcomes of WFSN students; communications campaigns to bolster outreach to prospective WFSN students; travel expenses related to participation in WFSN-related cross and intra-state learning events; and other planning and infrastructure development. Grants should help leverage existing college capacities and resources and provide opportunities for re-envisioning the deployment of college resources in innovative, effective, and efficient ways. The budget and budget narrative submitted with the proposal should reflect the colleges' intentions for use of the funding

State Partner Organizations:

In each of the four selected WFSN states, the designated state partner organization may use grant funding to: assist in creating a culture of mutual accountability within the consortium; promote cross-college communication and peer-learning; and convening the consortium colleges for ATD (and other) site visits and at least one annual in-person meeting that may coincide with annual higher education meetings that

¹¹ ATD expects that the majority of selected colleges will be ATD colleges or colleges that have implemented the WFSN strategy, but is prepared to include others that have the capacity to take on this work and share ATD values. Coordinating Colleges will be expected to provide extra guidance and support to any non-ATD colleges in the consortium, modeling off peer coaching strategies tested in several of ATD's grants programs. Non-ATD colleges will be encouraged to join ATD and will be included in events such as DREAM and semi-annual policy forums.

are typically hosted and organized by state partner organizations. The state partner organization may be selected to play a more substantive role in years 2 and 3 in promoting improvements to state policy effecting community colleges, benefits access, workforces systems, and income supports, among other areas.

Section X: Evaluation Activities

It is expected that one or more independent evaluators will be engaged to clarify the results of the WFSN Initiative by conducting both formative and summative evaluations. However, given that WFSN expansion must operate within resource and time constraints, the initiative will allow for three years of operations with a final fourth year dedicated to completion of the evaluation and communication of findings. The evaluation will include activities to capture information about these aims, specifically evaluating effective practices and supportive policy. The evaluation findings will assist in the communication of lessons learned to a diverse audience of higher education stakeholders. The evaluation may also include case studies and other reports intended for a public audience. WFSN colleges will be required to participate in this evaluation, which will include some formative feedback to the sites to support the work. This participation could include evaluation site visits, focus groups, and interviews with the evaluation team. Lastly, institutions will also submit progress reports to Achieving the Dream and unit-record data (individual student records) that are directly relevant to WFSN activities.

Section XI: Key Dates

Activity	Description	Date
Release of Invitation to Apply	Applications will be sent to state partner organizations within each of the 8 states.	Jan. '14
Webinars Provided by ATD	Webinars will be conducted for interested colleges, allowing for ATD and the Design Team to provide guidance on the application process.	Jan. – March '14
Applications Due	Incomplete or late applications will not be selected. Questions regarding the applications should be sent to wfsn@achievingthedream.org	End of March '14
Site Visits to Semi-Finalist Consortia	Two day site visits will be conducted with some semi-finalist applicants.	Early/Mid May '14
Consortia Selections	Colleges will be notified by email or phone by Julian Haynes, Associate Director of Programs and Policy—ATD.	June '14
Inaugural Forum	Representatives from the selected consortia will attend the Inaugural Forum helping to set the groundwork for WFSN implementation.	Mid/late June '14
Colleges Refine Implementation Proposals	Draft Implementation Proposals	July – End of Sept. '14
Feedback on Draft Implementation Proposals	Comments on Implementation Proposals	Early Oct. '14
Colleges Finalize Implementation Proposals	Final Implementation Proposals must be submitted by all consortium members.	End of Oct. '14
Soft Launch	Soft launch is defined as a time when colleges begin testing possible ways (based on their respective implementation plans) that the WFSN strategy might be implemented.	Oct. '14
Full Implementation	During full implementation colleges will utilize knowledge learned during the soft launch to strengthen WFSN-related services; target and enroll an increasing number of students; and continually refine and adapt WFSN-related activities based on short and long term outcomes.	Jan. '15
State Learning Networks Convene	Selected state consortia will be expected to convene at least once in person annually. This event may occur in conjunction with an existing meeting or conference.	Jul. '14 – June '15

Section XII: Questions/comments

For questions regarding WFSN and the application process, please contact:

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