



NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO HELP COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED EXPANDS TO MICHIGAN

Six Michigan colleges join Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count; receive \$450,000 grants to plan, launch and implement student success strategies

Chapel Hill, N.C. – Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed, today announced the selection of six Michigan colleges joining the initiative. The initiative has now grown to 84 participating institutions in 15 states. This marks Achieving the Dream's first expansion into Michigan, made possible through new funding partnerships with the W.K. Kellogg and Kresge foundations.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation will fund four colleges: Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, Jackson Community College in Jackson, Bay de Noc Community College in Escanaba and North Central Michigan College in Petoskey. The Kresge Foundation will fund two more: Wayne County Community College in Detroit and Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn. Each college will receive a \$50,000 grant to plan and launch Achieving the Dream this year, and will then become eligible for an implementation grant worth up to \$400,000 over four years. The Michigan colleges were selected through a request-for-proposal process.

Achieving the Dream provides participating colleges with support to implement strategies designed to help more students — particularly students of color and low-income students — earn degrees, complete certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies. Achieving the Dream emphasizes building a culture of evidence, in which colleges use data to identify effective practices, improve student success rates and close achievement gaps.

“We are excited to bring Achieving the Dream to Michigan,” said Carol Lincoln, senior program director at MDC, Inc., and the initiative's national director. “There is a clear understanding in Michigan of the important role that community colleges play in helping students acquire the 21st-century skills that employers demand. The Michigan colleges joining Achieving the Dream are committed to supporting student success, and we look forward to having the benefit of their experience as part of this growing community of learners,” remarked Lincoln.

“Both the W.K. Kellogg and Kresge foundations have long histories of helping people and organizations make a positive difference. They will be great partners in Achieving the Dream,” said Martha D. Lamkin, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation for Education, which provided the initial funding for Achieving the Dream. “We look forward to working with these two highly regarded foundations as well as these six worthy institutions in Michigan. It speaks well of the initiative that it continues to attract the attention of such respected organizations.”

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Each participating college works closely with an Achieving the Dream coach, many of whom are former college presidents, and a data facilitator who provides hands-on help with the use of data. More about Achieving the Dream, including a full list of participants, can be found online at www.achievingthedream.org.

In addition to efforts at participating colleges, the initiative supports research into effective practices at community colleges, conducts outreach to communities, businesses and the public, and advocates for public policy supportive of community college students' success. For each of the states where Achieving the Dream is active, one organization serves as the lead organization for policy efforts. The Michigan Community College Association will serve in that role in Michigan.

Achieving the Dream was launched in 2004 with start-up funding from Lumina Foundation, which continues to fund aspects of the initiative. Eighteen additional funders have since joined the initiative, bringing additional institutions and states into Achieving the Dream.

Eight national partner organizations work with Lumina to guide the initiative and provide technical and other support to the colleges and states. They are: the American Association of Community Colleges; the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin; the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University; Institute for Higher Education at the University of Florida; Jobs for the Future; MDC; MDRC; and Public Agenda.

About Achieving the Dream

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is a national initiative to help more community college students — particularly students of color and low-income students — succeed. The initiative works on multiple fronts — including efforts at community colleges and in research, public engagement and public policy — and emphasizes the use of data to drive change.

About Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation for Education, an Indianapolis-based, private, independent foundation, strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access and success in education beyond high school. Through grants for research, innovation, communication, and evaluation, as well as policy education and leadership development, Lumina Foundation addresses issues that affect access and educational attainment among all students, particularly underserved student groups, including adult learners. The Foundation bases its mission on the belief that postsecondary education remains one of the most beneficial investments that individuals can make in themselves and that society can make in its people.

About MDC

MDC is a nonprofit headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC. Founded in 1967 to identify and help remove barriers to progress for the South, MDC has been publishing research and developing policies and programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and promoting equity in the American South for the past 40 years. MDC's mission is to help organizations and communities close the gaps that separate people from opportunity. www.mdcinc.org

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