NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Achieving the Dream Announces the National Community College Expansion of the Working Families Success Network Strategy

Sixteen colleges and four state partners commit to implementing the WFSN strategy to support more low-income students and their families achieve their academic and financial goals

Silver Spring, Md. (Aug. 28, 2014) – Achieving the Dream today announced a national community college expansion of the Working Families Success Network (WFSN) strategy. Sixteen community colleges in four states will implement the strategy — used at over 100 sites in the nation to help low-income individuals and families achieve financial stability — to promote postsecondary completion for students whose economic challenges can thwart their academic and career goals.

The WFSN strategy involves intentionally integrating and sequencing three distinct but related services:

1. Education and employment advancement — education, job readiness, training, and placement;
2. Income and work supports — access to student financial aid, public benefits, tax credits, and free tax assistance; and
3. Financial services and asset building — financial education and coaching linked to affordable products and services to help families build self-sufficiency, stabilize their finances, and become more economically competitive.

The four state partner organizations and 16 colleges are:

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<th>Arkansas Consortium</th>
<th>California Consortium</th>
<th>Virginia Consortium</th>
<th>Washington Consortium</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (Malvern, Ark.)</td>
<td>California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office</td>
<td>Virginia Community College System</td>
<td>The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges</td>
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<td>College of the Ouachitas (Forrest City, Ark.)</td>
<td>Cabrillo College (Aptos, Calif.)</td>
<td>Danville Community College (Danville, Va.)</td>
<td>Big Bend Community College (Moses Lake, Wash.)</td>
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<td>East Arkansas Community College (Forrest City, Ark.)</td>
<td>Cañada College (Redwood City, Calif.)</td>
<td>Eastern Shore Community College (Melfa, Va.)</td>
<td>Clark College (Vancouver, Wash.)</td>
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<td>North Arkansas College (Harrison, Ark.)</td>
<td>Porterville College (Porterville, Calif.)</td>
<td>Northern Virginia Community College (Annandale, Va.)</td>
<td>Highline College (Des Moines, Wash.)</td>
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<td>Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (Helena-West Helena, Ark.)</td>
<td>Skyline College (San Bruno, Calif.)</td>
<td>Patrick Henry Community College (Martinsville, Va.)</td>
<td>Walla Walla Community College (Walla Walla, Wash.)</td>
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These colleges and state partner organizations were selected through a competitive application process that assessed commitment to racial equity and poverty reduction as well as the colleges’ demonstrated ability to support student success using data-informed decision-making.

This effort is supported with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Lumina Foundation, MetLife Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

“Our goal is to support students who have already taken a big step toward their long-term financial success by addressing the short-term economic challenges that can get in their way,” said Rosa Maria Castañeda, a senior associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “This expansion builds on the momentum behind the Working Families Success Network strategy as well as the efforts of colleges across the country to find smarter ways to help low-income students cross the finish line.”

Through this work, Achieving the Dream seeks to demonstrate that embedding the WFSN strategy in community college culture and systems can be cost effective and improve student outcomes and financial stability. The goal is for the intentional integration and sequencing of services – which evidence suggests make a difference in whether a student thrives or languishes – to become the routine way colleges support low-income students and their families.

"Through the expansion of the WFSN strategy in community colleges, we expect to learn more about the power of bundling or coupling services needed by low-income students with family responsibilities," said Carol Lincoln, Senior Vice President of Achieving the Dream. "Colleges that have pioneered this strategy have seen increases of 10-15 percent in term-to-term retention. Since financial challenges are the most frequently given reason students drop out, new solutions are needed for helping students persist and complete credentials. WFSN colleges will produce new lessons about the mix, intensity, and delivery of critical services that can help close achievement gaps and keep students on pathways to completion and careers."

For more information about the national community college expansion of the WFSN strategy, please visit www.achievingthedream.org/resources/initiatives/working-families-success-network.

For more information about the Working Families Success Network, please visit www.workingfamiliessuccess.org.

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**Achieving the Dream, Inc.** is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Evidence-based, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, Achieving the Dream is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success nationwide by: 1) guiding evidence-based institutional improvement, 2) leading policy change, 3) generating knowledge, and 4) engaging the public. Conceived as an initiative in 2004 by Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations, today, Achieving the Dream is leading the most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history. With over 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams - working throughout 34 states and the District of Columbia – the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network helps nearly 4 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.

**The Annie E. Casey Foundation** is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.

**Bank of America Corporate Social Responsibility** Bank of America’s commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a strategic part of doing business globally. Our CSR efforts guide how we operate in a socially, economically, financially and
environmentally responsible way around the world, to deliver for shareholders, customers, clients and employees. Our goal is to help create economically vibrant regions and communities through lending, investing and giving. By partnering with our stakeholders, we create value that empowers individuals and communities to thrive and contributes to the long-term success of our business. We have several core areas of focus for our CSR, including responsible business practices; environmental sustainability; strengthening local communities with a focus on housing, hunger and jobs; investing in global leadership development; and engaging through arts and culture. As part of these efforts, employee volunteers across the company contribute their time, passion and expertise to address issues in communities where they live and work. Learn more at www.bankofamerica.com/about and follow us on Twitter at @BofA_Community.

**Lumina Foundation**, an Indianapolis-based private foundation, is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college—especially 21st century students: low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Lumina’s goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change.

**MetLife Foundation** was created in 1976 to continue MetLife’s long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its founding through the end of 2013, MetLife Foundation has provided more than $600 million in grants and $70 million in program-related investments to organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. Today, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, committing $200 million over the next five years to help build a secure future for individuals and communities around the world.

**W.K. Kellogg Foundation** (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti.