Our College Preparation and Completion (CPC) initiative supports organizations across the United States that work to increase the numbers of low-income students who are ready for, enrolling in, and finishing college with a bachelor’s degree. Effective college preparation and completion programs can help make that happen.

**COLLEGE COMPLETION**

Regardless of zip code, all students deserve the opportunity to enroll in college and graduate with a bachelor’s degree. Why is that important?

- We know that low-income students enroll and graduate from college at much lower rates than students from wealthier families, putting them at a disadvantage when seeking employment.
- We know that 21st century jobs are requiring higher levels of education, making a college degree even more valuable than it has been in the past.
- We know that the poverty cycle is most effectively broken through education.
- We know that society-at-large benefits from more students receiving a college degree.

We believe the right interventions at the right times can help low-income students get accepted to college and successfully graduate. To that end, we fund college preparation and completion programs that support low-income, determined students as they work toward their ultimate goal of college graduation.

“REGARDLESS OF ZIP CODE, ALL STUDENTS DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENROLL IN COLLEGE AND GRADUATE WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE.”
OUR FOCUS AREAS

1. RIGOROUS ACADEMIC CURRICULUM
   Prepare students to successfully complete college-level course work, while also taking and passing high-stakes exams.

2. NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS/ CHARACTER EDUCATION
   Provide students with the support and social/ emotional/ character skills needed to complete rigorous academic curriculum and manage environmental challenges in college.

3. FINANCIAL ACCESS/ COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY
   Reducing financial barriers to college entry and completion while also increasing financial literacy and college affordability knowledge.

4. WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT
   Providing the support that enables students to enter and graduate from a four-year college (e.g. coaching and advising on the application/ selection/ enrollment processes, addressing financial and home/ life challenges of the college experience, dealing with situational adversity)

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES
To further the mission of the foundation, we expect all CPC-related grants to directly impact at least one of the following key success measures:

- College enrollment rate (four-year schools)
- College persistence rate (first to second year)
- College completion rate (bachelor’s degree within six years)

CPC GRANTMAKING GUIDELINES
To ensure the most efficient use of funds, the foundation’s CPC team adheres to the following grantmaking guidelines:

- We fund specific, time-bound projects and not general operating expenses.
- We fund only incremental staff positions (i.e. new, for the purpose of the grant project) and/ or direct project costs, and will not fund existing positions nor organizational overhead.
- We award multi-year grants where appropriate (i.e. based on the time it takes to complete the project work), and most grants last three plus years in duration.
- We expect every grant to include an assessment/ evaluation of student and organizational outcomes that result from the project work.
- All grantees will be expected to report on their number of students served and cost per student served on an annual basis, as well as any other success measures relevant to the project work.

CPC FUNDING PRIORITIES

- Programs that are not typically attractive to local funders (e.g. national office infrastructure, pilots of unproven ideas, evaluation of project results/ impact)
- Projects designed to increase an organization’s effectiveness, efficiency, and/ or scale
- Programs that serve the most students as effectively and efficiently as possible, no matter where they are located in the U.S.
- Organizations that have already achieved a significant degree of scale and above-average results with low-income students prior to an initial grant request from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
- Programs and projects that have the potential to be catalysts for systemic, large-scale change beyond just the organization requesting the grant
- Preference is given to organizations supporting students already in college as opposed to students working to get into college (i.e. focus on college completion activities)

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MICHAEL & SUSAN DELL FOUNDATION EFFORTS IN THE U.S. AND AROUND THE GLOBE, VISIT WWW.MSDF.ORG OR CONTACT US AT COMMUNICATIONS@MSDF.ORG.