

# EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY UPDATE



## \$8.5 Million in Strong Start to Finish Grants Awarded to Four State Systems

Recipients to Focus on "Last Mile" Work to Implement Proven Pathways Reforms at Scale

Four state higher education systems have each received three-year grants of \$2.1 million from **Strong Start to Finish** (SSTF), an initiative launched last year with \$13 million in pooled funds from Great Lakes, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Kresge Foundation.

City University of New York (CUNY), Ohio Department of Higher Education, State University of New York (SUNY) and University System of Georgia were selected from nine finalists after SSTF received 47 letters of interest in fall 2017.

The grants will help the four systems increase the number of historically underserved students who enter a program of study and pass gateway math and English classes in their first year of college, a key predictor of postsecondary success.

SSTF also awarded \$25,000 grants to each of five other finalists to support their participation in a learning network over the next three years.

These grants will make a critical connection between developmental education reforms and guided pathways so that many more historically underserved students will succeed, said Amy Kerwin, Vice President Community Investments, Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates and Chair of the Strong Start to Finish Funder Advisory Board. It's a new way for funders to work together to achieve a new level of results, she added.

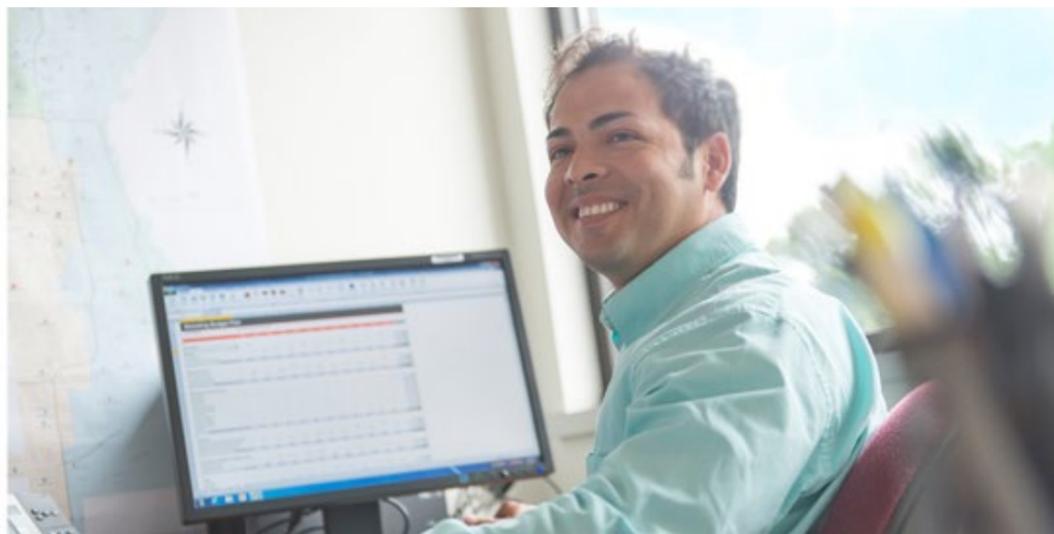


## Wisconsin Apprentices Receive \$300,000 in Scholarships

Demand for skilled workers in many fields is high in Wisconsin, and the state's technical colleges are leading the charge in meeting that demand. For many of those family-supporting careers, an apprenticeship is a key component of students' training.

But apprentices often earn modest wages, making it hard to afford required tools, equipment and clothing. Now in its fifth year, Great Lakes' Tools of the Trade Apprenticeship Scholarship program is helping apprentices with financial need cover those costs and stay on the path to completion. This year, we're awarding \$1,500 to each of 200 hardworking apprentices across the Wisconsin Technical College System's 16 colleges.

Since 2013, we've awarded a total of \$900,000 to apprentices, 94% of whom have either completed or continued their training the following semester. [Learn more.](#)



## How Are We Doing? New Survey to Gather Feedback from Grant Applicants and Recipients

Our commitment to helping more students succeed relies on strong partnerships with our grantees. With that in mind, Great Lakes commissioned the **Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP)** to conduct a confidential survey of our grant applicants and recipients this spring. The survey is a follow up to our first **grantee perception survey**, completed in 2014. We've since made substantive changes to improve our practices based on that feedback.

CEP will ask participants for candid assessments of how we go about our work as a grantmaker, and compare our performance against that of other funders. Results are due this summer, and we're eager to learn how we can continue to work more effectively with applicants and grantees.