



\$2.3 Million Grant Fast-Tracks UW System Math Initiative

When it became clear that math was a stumbling block for far too many students, University of Wisconsin System faculty decided to take action. They launched the [Math Initiative](#) in 2017 to address multiple institutional barriers to student success, such as:

- Disproportionate placement of students of color and low-income students in developmental math.
- Default placement in algebra, regardless of whether it is relevant to a student's area of study or career plans.
- Lack of clarity about which gateway courses will count toward a student's major if they transfer to another college.

We recently made a three-year, [\\$2.3 million](#) grant to support the UW System's efforts to address these barriers by applying best practices from such experts as the National Association of System Heads, Carnegie Math Pathways and The University of Texas at Austin's Charles A. Dana Center. The grant also supports professional development opportunities, such as the Dana Center-led Institutional Change Team Workshop held in May 2018.

We look forward to seeing their progress on helping more first-year students complete developmental and introductory math courses aligned with their program of study and guaranteed to meet systemwide transfer requirements. By proving a clear pathway to graduation, we hope greater numbers of UW System students will successfully earn degrees and certificates.



New Data Shows Dash Emergency Grants Dramatically Increase Retention Rates

When confronted with unexpected expenses they can't afford, even the most devoted students must sometimes leave college to deal with the crisis. That's where [Dash Emergency Grants](#) come in.

We started this flagship program in 2012, initially to help two-year colleges launch emergency grant programs. Last year we expanded support to four-year colleges. To date, we've invested over \$10 million to help low-income students overcome financial emergencies and persist to college completion.

With new data from the National Student Clearinghouse, we're pleased to share that Dash Emergency Grants are making a positive impact on student retention. At two-year colleges, **86%** of Fall 2017 emergency grant recipients reenrolled, transferred or graduated by Spring 2018. Four-year colleges, which awarded their first emergency grants in Fall 2017, reported a **93%** retention rate. Later this year we'll distribute a summary of lessons we've learned from our partner colleges over the course of these grants.



25 Cities Accept NCAN Challenge to Increase FAFSA Completion Rates

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) provides access to federal, state and institutional financial aid, but not every college-bound student completes the form. According to [NerdWallet](#), an estimated \$2.3 billion in free money was left on the table last year because nearly 650,000 Pell-eligible students didn't fill out the FAFSA.

The National College Access Network (NCAN) is working to change that. This spring, NCAN issued a [FAFSA Completion Challenge](#) to 100 cities across the country with populations of at least 100,000 residents and a FAFSA completion rate that is below the national average.

Twenty-five cities have accepted the NCAN challenge. With grants of up to \$40,000 and support from NCAN, each city will develop and implement a plan to increase the class of 2019's FAFSA completion rates by at least 5 percentage points over the class of 2018's rate. The 25 participating cities are listed [here](#).

Great Lakes and The Kresge Foundation are each supporting the [NCAN initiative](#) with grants of \$1 million. Our support brings evidence-based strategies for promoting FAFSA completion to more school districts so they can help more of their seniors complete this vital task.