



We're Looking Forward to Connecting, Learning and Sharing at NCAN's Annual Conference

Members of Ascendium's Education Grantmaking team are looking forward to joining partners and practitioners at the National College Access Network's (NCAN) annual conference, **"Racing Toward Postsecondary Success,"** taking place September 16-18 in Indianapolis. We're proud to sponsor the Success in Higher Education track of the event, and are involved in some sessions as well. Ascendium Vice President of Education Philanthropy Amy Kerwin will join colleagues from three national grantmakers for one of the plenaries, **"Taking Stock of the College Access and Success Movement: A Conversation with Grantmakers."**

Ascendium Program OfficerCarolynn Lee will moderate a workshop led by staff from two of the public school districts participating in our summer melt text nudging initiative, **Text Steps.** The session, **"Eyes on the Prize: Aligning School and Community Resources to Improve Low-Income Student Access & Success,"** will explore strategies for developing districtwide systems of supports to increase college and career readiness among high school graduates from low-income backgrounds. Representatives from all 13 Wisconsin districts implementing Text Steps will be at the conference.

During the conference, NCAN will announce the winner of the **2018-19 FAFSA Completion Challenge.** The project—funded by Ascendium and The Kresge Foundation—builds on the success of the **2016-17 FAFSA Completion Challenge,** through which 22 of the largest U.S. cities collectively increased FAFSA completion rates and helped reverse a four-year nationwide decline. We're excited to hear results from the 2018-19 cohort, and two event sessions will highlight lessons learned.



How to Build a High-Quality Higher Education in Prison Program

In 2018, we announced our support for the **Alliance for Higher Education in Prison,** a collaborative dedicated to promoting the expansion of quality higher education in prison (HEP); empowering students in prison; and shaping public discussion about education and incarceration. In June, the Alliance collaborated with the Prison University Project (another Ascendium grant partner) to publish **"Equity and Excellence in Practice: A Guide for Higher Education in Prison,"** a comprehensive list of recommendations outlining the essential components of a high-quality HEP program. Funding for the report was provided by the Lumina Foundation.

This work complements several projects we support aimed at advancing high-quality HEP, one of the **four focus areas** that underpin our funding strategy.



Tools of the Trade Scholarship Helps Keep Wisconsin Apprentices on the Job

Starting August 26, construction and industrial trades apprentices attending Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) institutions can apply for a \$1,500 scholarship to help cover the cost of tools, clothing, supplies and other related expenses. The application period runs through October 18.

Ascendium's **Tools of the Trade Apprentice Scholarship** program (TOTT), now in its seventh year, has provided more than \$1 million in scholarships to WTCS apprentices since its launch. Up to 200 scholarships will be awarded across the 16-college system this year.

For many apprentices, adding the cost of specialized equipment and work clothes on top of ongoing household expenses can present a serious obstacle to success. The TOTT program tries to bridge the gap so that the price of a pair of steel-toed boots and a welding helmet does not stand in the way of a family-supporting career. Since the program's inception, 95% of TOTT scholarship recipients have either completed their apprenticeship or continued it the following semester.

Recent Grants

Recipient	Grant	Amount
Kent State University Foundation	Development of a Comprehensive Transfer Blueprint	\$1.1 million

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

LearnX 2019 Annual Learning Exchange Meeting

September 9-11, Philadelphia, PA

NCAN National Conference: Racing Toward Postsecondary Success

September 16-18, Indianapolis, IN

Comnet19: The Communications Network Annual Conference

October 2-4, Austin, TX

Close It Annual Summit

October 15-16, Santa Fe, NM

Grantmakers for Education Annual Conference

October 22-24, New Orleans, LA