

March 23, 2026

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt, Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and  
Education

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chairwoman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and  
Education

Dear Chairman Aderholt, Chairwoman Capito, and Ranking Members Baldwin and  
DeLauro:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations bills for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-H), we, the undersigned 34 organizations, write to express our thanks for the strong bipartisan support shown for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program (PSSG) by including funding for the program in the recent FY26 appropriations law. We also write to express our continued support for at least \$55M for PSSG, which supports college retention and completion initiatives, without reducing funding to other critical educational programs. Investing in PSSG can help strengthen completion and employment outcomes and reduce the “skills gap” between available jobs and qualified candidates.

An increase in federal funding to at least \$55M allows grantees to continue and expand efforts to ensure that students who begin two-year or four-year degree programs complete those programs. PSSG has earned bipartisan, bicameral support. The program received funding in the four prior bipartisan fiscal year budget agreements, including \$45M for the program in the recently passed FY26 funding law. Members of both parties have introduced [legislation](#) that includes authorizing language for the program. Given this groundswell of support from both sides of the aisle, we strongly encourage you to provide at least \$55M for the evidence-based Postsecondary Student Success Grant program in your FY27 appropriations bills.

Currently, regions across the U.S. face a “skills” gap between qualified candidates and [over seven million available jobs](#). We know that completion rates for those pursuing two- and four-year degrees have substantial room for improvement, adversely impacting pipelines into local workforce participation. PSSG meets our nation’s workforce degree-completion challenges by building higher education institutional capacity through evidence-based strategies to graduate more students prepared to work.

Rigorous research demonstrates that when higher education institutions use comprehensive approaches to student success and provide academic support, career counseling, and wraparound services, they improve postsecondary outcomes and graduation rates. For example, studies have shown that the CUNY ASAP program [nearly doubled](#) the three-year graduation rate for associate degree students. These programs offer replicable models that can be scaled through robust investment in PSSG. When students progress through school more quickly, not only are they set up for success and financial stability, but it ensures the efficient use and preservation of their own student aid. And beyond benefitting just the individual, successful progression in students’ academic endeavors strengthens the financial health of state systems of higher education while ensuring taxpayer funds are used for the benefit of our nation.

To date, [22 grants](#) encompassing over 40 institutions of higher education have been awarded via PSSG. The initial \$5 million in competitive Postsecondary Student Success Grants awarded in FY22 enabled five institutions in Florida, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Texas to implement and scale programs to strengthen student retention and completion. Subsequent \$45 million allocations for PSSG in each of the FY23 and FY24 appropriations packages expanded these vital interventions to additional grantees in California, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas.

Specific examples of PSSG-funded programs include:

- Austin Community College in Texas used its funding for the ACCESS project to conduct targeted outreach to “stop-out” students and provides re-enrollment coaching along with other student supports.
- In Oklahoma, Tulsa Community College redesigned its First-Year Experience course to strengthen students’ academic planning, connect them with campus support services, and improve early-term retention.
- Florida International University used PSSG to expand comprehensive supports for low-income and first-generation students, including tutoring, financial aid guidance, mentoring, and career exploration services.

- In South Carolina, Claflin University, an HBCU in Orangeburg, has used its grant to expand coordinated advising, academic coaching, and data-driven interventions aimed at increasing completion rates.

Continued investment is essential to sustain and expand high-impact student success practices, particularly those meeting the high bar for receiving an “expansion” grant under the Education Innovation and Research program criteria based on prior effectiveness.

Investing at least \$55M to strengthen evidence-based Postsecondary Student Success Grants, without making cuts to other higher education programs, will provide students with support to reach their postsecondary education goals, close workforce skill gaps, and bolster the economy and nation’s future.

Sincerely,

AFT: Education, Healthcare, Public Services

Alray Scholars Program

America Forward

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

College Housing Northwest

Complete College America

Data Quality Campaign

EdTrust

Harrisburg Area Community College

Hildreth Institute

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

LeadMN

National Association for College Admission Counseling

National Education Association

New America Higher Education Program

New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium

Results for America

SchoolHouse Connection

Students United

The Campaign for College Opportunity

The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs

The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)

Third Way

Trellis Strategies

uAspire

UnidosUS

United States Student Association (USSA)

United Way of King County

University of Illinois Chicago

URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America

Washington Student Association (WSA)