



# Education Partnerships

*USA Funds® is a nonprofit corporation that works to enhance postsecondary-education preparedness, access and success by providing and supporting financial and other valued services.*

## **USA Funds provides \$16.3 million in support of higher education**

**A**s part of its nonprofit mission, USA Funds supports a variety of scholarship and outreach programs designed to help students and families prepare for, pay for and succeed in higher education. For the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2007, USA Funds awarded more than 200 grants and provided a total of \$16.3 million to programs that help fulfill that mission.

### **Early awareness and college preparation**

To educate students on the value of postsecondary education, USA Funds provides support to a variety of early awareness initiatives, including USA Funds Unlock the Future®. During the year USA Funds distributed more than 170 USA Funds Unlock the Future kits to schools, community agencies and faith-based organizations. The program advises middle-school students and their parents of the benefits of higher education and encourages them to make training or education after high school a part of their future plans.

In September USA Funds released USA Funds Consejos, an early awareness program designed to inform Latino students and their families about the value of higher education.

USA Funds also is involved in programming to change the learning environment for students across the nation. In partnership with Scholarship America, USA Funds spearheads the Learning Communities Coalition, a group of 10 organizations committed to improving college access for low-income students in six communities. The group is targeting communities in Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Wyoming and Washington, D.C.

The George Washington Learning Community in Indianapolis is using the initiative as a platform to reshape the learning culture for its students. Community members, teachers and students have taken an active role to make George Washington a model community and to implement change.

“I knew that if we didn’t take action, we couldn’t complain,” says Nicolas Abney, a student at George Washington Community School. “We needed to change the social structure for students to succeed, and I saw this was an opportunity to help make a change.”



**Students take a tour of the University of California, Berkeley campus as a part of the USA Funds-sponsored Punte Project, an academic-preparation program that encourages higher-education access in California.**

Additionally, USA Funds is a major funder of College Goal Sunday events in Arizona, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Nevada and Wyoming. College Goal Sunday offers students and parents free assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. More than 11,000 parents and students attended these College Goal Sunday events in 2007.

In conjunction with College Goal Sunday, USA Funds published and distributed through major newspapers or directly to schools more than 3-million copies of “USA Funds Countdown to College™.” The publications feature financial-aid and college-admissions advice.

### **Scholarship initiatives**

To help students overcome financial barriers to higher education, USA Funds provides scholarship assistance to students through its own scholarship programs, and through assistance to organizations that support scholarships. Through USA Funds Access to Education Scholarships®, a national scholarship program, USA Funds awarded more than \$8.3 million to help more than 5,600 low-to-moderate-income students pay college expenses for the 2007-2008 academic year.

USA Funds awarded an additional \$315,000 to 210 graduating high-school seniors in 11 states and the District of Columbia through the USA Funds Scholars program. Over the past six years, USA Funds’ national scholarship programs have awarded more than \$42 million in scholarships to more than 13,000 students.

# Selected grants awarded by USA Funds July 1, 2007 – Sept. 30, 2007

USA Funds awards grants to advance its nonprofit mission to enhance postsecondary-education preparedness, access and success.

## **Institute for Higher Education Policy**

*Washington, D.C.*

**Project** Minority-Serving Institutions National Symposium

**Geographic Scope** National

**Amount** \$495,256

The Institute for Higher Education Policy is developing and hosting a national symposium focused on improving college-student financial literacy. Participants will include senior administrators and staff from minority-serving postsecondary institutions.

## **National Council for Community and Education Partnerships**

*Washington, D.C.*

**Project** USA Funds Unlock the Future and USA Funds Consejos Early Awareness Campaigns

**Geographic Scope** National

**Amount** \$364,000

USA Funds is collaborating with NCEP to add a new component to the USA Funds Unlock the Future early awareness program, and to enhance the USA Funds Consejos early awareness program geared to Latino students and their families. New and enhanced materials will focus on the college-planning and admissions process and financial-aid options.

## **United Negro College Fund**

*Indianapolis*

**Project** Enrollment Management Program

**Geographic Scope** National

**Amount** \$300,000

The Enrollment Management Program aims to increase enrollment, improve retention, enhance graduation rates, and determine enrollment-management best practices at private Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

## **Indiana Commission for Higher Education**

*Indianapolis*

**Project** Learn More Indiana

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$266,400

USA Funds is supporting operation of a toll-free telephone Helpline and a Web site — [www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org) — that raise awareness of the benefits of and options for education after high school and the importance of early preparation. The project is a one-stop source for Indiana residents regarding education and careers.

## **Scholarship America**

*Minneapolis*

**Project** Learning Communities Coalition Management

**Geographic Scope** National

**Amount** \$150,000

Grant funds support the continued management of the Learning Communities Coalition. This group of organizations is working to significantly increase the number of youth in selected communities who complete high school and successfully pursue postsecondary education. Pilot Learning Communities sites are in Tucson, Ariz.; Orlando, Fla.; Indianapolis; Okolona, Miss.; Washington, D.C.; and Wind River Reservation, Wyo.

## **Excelencia in Education**

*Washington, D.C.*

**Project** Florida Policy Options to Accelerate Latino Success in Higher Education

**Geographic Scope** Florida

**Amount** \$127,100

This initiative aims to develop institutional policy recommendations geared toward enhancing postsecondary access and success for Florida students, particularly Latinos.

## **HUDDLE Learning Inc.**

*Topeka, Kan.*

**Project** Kansas Education and Career Hotline

**Geographic Scope** Kansas

**Amount** \$105,580

HUDDLE Learning Inc. will develop and operate a Kansas Education and Career Hotline. The hotline will offer Kansas residents information regarding education and career options.

## **U.S. Dream Academy Inc.**

*Columbia, Md.*

**Project** Dream Academy Learning Center

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$100,000

The Indianapolis learning center will focus on providing at-risk students with mentoring, tutoring and guidance by linking them with local professionals. The U.S. Dream Academy seeks to raise support for the children of prisoners, and children at risk of falling behind in school.

## **Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township Foundation Inc.**

*Indianapolis*

**Project** Advancement Via Individual Determination

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$70,000

AVID is a rigorous academic program for students who rank in the middle of their classes. The AVID program in Lawrence Township Schools in Indianapolis helps increase students' preparedness for a college-preparatory curriculum.

## **Institute for Higher Education Policy**

*Washington, D.C.*

**Project** Student Aversion to Borrowing: Who Borrows, Who Doesn't, and How Students and Families Decide

**Geographic Scope** National

**Amount** \$61,715

IHEP's research paper will examine the aversion that some minority and low-income students have to borrowing money for education.

## **Jobs for Arizona's Graduates**

*Scottsdale, Ariz.*

**Project** Classrooms to Careers Program

**Geographic Scope** Arizona

**Amount** \$60,000

JAG helps at-risk young people to stay in school and graduate with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. The program provides participants with classroom instruction, student-organization activities, group and one-on-one counseling, tutoring, remediation, employer marketing, job development, and follow-up services.

## **Central Indiana Community Foundation Inc.**

*Carmel, Ind.*

**Project** Mexican Scholarship Fund

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$50,000

The Mexican Scholarship Fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation encourages Indiana students of Mexican descent to pursue higher education by providing them with scholarships.

## **Thurgood Marshall College Fund**

*New York City*

**Project** College Fund

**Geographic Scope** National

**Amount** \$50,000

Funding will support need-based scholarships from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. The organization works to develop and prepare new leaders by supporting public Historically Black Colleges and Universities, students and alumni.

## **Starfish**

*Indianapolis*

**Project** Filling Empty Caps and Gowns

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$50,000

The Starfish Initiative is cultivating promising low-income youth as leaders through an intensive academic and support program designed to promote college entrance and success.

## **Police Athletic League of Indianapolis Inc.**

*Indianapolis*

**Projects** Educational Programs of Tutoring and Mentoring, and Youth Leadership Council Activities

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$50,000

The PAL Club seeks to involve at-risk youth in educational, cultural and fitness activities that aim to deter crime, increase self-esteem, and promote positive relationships with law enforcement. This grant encourages mentoring and leadership opportunities for Indianapolis youth.

## **YMCA of Greater Indianapolis-Urban Mission Branch**

*Indianapolis*

**Project** Black and Hispanic Achievers Program

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$50,000

Y-Teen Achievers programs help provide social and financial access to higher education for low-income students by connecting them with adult mentors and facilitating placement, tuition assistance and college entrance. Students in the program participate in college tours and receive information about college admissions and financial aid.

## **The Regents of the University of California**

*Oakland, Calif.*

**Project** Puente Project

**Geographic Scope** California

**Amount** \$50,000

The Puente Project is an academic-preparation program that seeks to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees, and become community leaders. USA Funds' support helps fund a ninth-grade leadership conference.

## **Training Inc.**

*Indianapolis*

**Project** USA Funds Bridge to Education Program

**Geographic Scope** Indiana

**Amount** \$49,500

USA Funds' grant provides career and life-skills training to disadvantaged, unemployed or underemployed men and women. Training Inc. equips people to become self-sufficient by preparing them for full-time employment or to continue their education.

# USA Funds Volunteer Committee Supports Local Charities

The smell of baked turkey and ham fills the halls, while someone is cutting pies and tending to the gravy. Someone makes a last-minute run to the grocery store for rolls.

Sounds like the typical holiday dinner — but it's not. It's the annual USA Funds Harvest Luncheon to benefit the Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana. Each of the nearly 70 employees at the USA Funds headquarters in Indianapolis are encouraged to bring in a favorite dish, and anyone who pays \$5 and brings in a canned good can enjoy a lunch of home-cooked holiday favorites and the company of friends and co-workers.

The 2007 luncheon raised \$500 for Gleaners, which helps Indiana charities feed people in need.

As a nonprofit organization, USA Funds works every day to fulfill its mission of promoting preparation for, access to and success in education. USA Funds employees take that mission one step further by supporting other nonprofit organizations in the local community.

"Our work at USA Funds has a national reach tied to education," says Karen Backus of USA Funds. "Events like the Harvest Luncheon allow us to assist a wide variety of local organizations."



Photo by Brent Smith

USA Funds employees Stacey Moore, left, and Nellie Daniels prepare food for the annual Harvest Luncheon.

The USA Funds volunteer committee, made up of USA Funds staff members, plans the charitable events throughout the year. Events from 2007 include:

- ◆ Race for Education — Through an event in which employees purchased desserts prepared by USA Funds staff members, and took part in outdoor games, USA Funds employees raised \$647 to purchase supplies for schools in need.
- ◆ Chili Cook-Off and Salvation Army Angel Tree — USA Funds staffers raised \$848 for the Salvation Army's Indiana Division by purchasing chili prepared by USA Funds employees. Employees also donated gifts for needy children, distributed by the Salvation Army at the holidays.
- ◆ Rebuilding Together — Employees volunteered their time to help an elderly or needy community member who needed assistance with home repairs.
- ◆ Coats for Kids — Through donations of winter coats from employees, USA Funds supported Indianapolis-area families in need.
- ◆ Coney Island Luncheon — This event, where USA Funds employees purchased lunch as part of an employee pitch-in, raised \$727 to purchase supplies for schools in need.



Brian Allison, USA Funds vice president of technology and industry initiatives, takes part in the 2007 United Way Day of Caring.

Backus and Kim Kelley Lucas are two members of the USA Funds volunteer committee, which was established in 2002. Backus has been with USA Funds for 28 years. She is the executive assistant to Carl Dalstrom, USA Funds' president and CEO. Kelley Lucas has been with the company for 11 years and is the assistant for the legal department.

"I love my job, but serving on the volunteer committee takes me away from the everyday routine," says Kelley Lucas. "The events are fun to plan and enjoyable for everyone who participates — but more importantly, we are raising money for those in need."

## Day of Caring a key activity

USA Funds also is active with the local United Way chapter, and the USA Funds volunteer committee coordinates the company's involvement in the United Way Day of Caring.

United Way Day of Caring is a two-day event, conducted at the start of each United Way campaign. Participating organizations choose agency projects, and employees volunteer to assist as needed. USA Funds allows its employees a paid day to take part in the Day of Caring.

In 2006 United Way of Central Indiana recognized USA Funds for financial contributions. That year, the United Way of Central Indiana office in Hamilton County awarded USA Funds the United Way Community Excellence Award. The honor recognized strong campaign performance year after year, use of best practices, chief-executive-officer support, volunteer participation on boards and committees, and participation in the annual United Way Day of Caring.

In 2007 USA Funds raised more than \$29,000 for the United Way. With a corporate match of employee donations, USA Funds' contribution exceeded \$61,000.

"USA Funds is a strong supporter of the United Way year after year," says Denise Tull, area director, United Way of Central Indiana, Hamilton County Office. "United Way values and appreciates USA Funds' continued commitment to the entire community."

# A Reason for Optimism About Arizona Higher Education

By April Osborn

Executive Director, Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education

**T**oday I am invigorated about the future of postsecondary education in Arizona.

The source of my optimism is the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education's Developing Arizona's Human Capital: Addressing Today's Postsecondary Challenges conference, which recently concluded.

At the conference, for which USA Funds served as a major sponsor, more than 150 Arizona leaders came together to hear state-specific data and global and national comparisons from Tom Mortenson of the Pell Institute. Policy-makers and higher-education-committee chairs outlined our governor's "P-20 Council" initiatives and the legislative agenda designed to serve as avenues to reach our shared goals.

Together we are seeking a roadmap to guide Arizona higher education to the successful future we desire. I was both challenged and inspired by our leaders' commitment.

The conference also shined a spotlight on successful routes to achieve college access, transition and success. In announcing Pathways to Higher Education Award winners, we honored exceptional education leaders and their work with their students. Hearing these inspirational stories made me proud to be a higher-education professional.

## Much work remains to be done

In contrast, we also reflected on the unfulfilled potential of too many of our would-be first-generation college students and our minority and foster youth for whom pathways for success remain unopened or are strewn with barriers and obstacles. But we in Arizona have noted these deficits, and we are actively working toward solutions.

Of course, financial need presents a seemingly insurmountable barrier for too many of our students — both traditional students and adults returning to education. In response, a freshman legislator told us of the genesis of his Early Graduation Scholarship program, designed to encourage Arizona high-school students to graduate early and promptly enter postsecondary education.

Within the conference presentations and discussions were themes of hope, change and shared leadership. The conference led us to rededicate ourselves to the development of our human capital — and it confirmed that higher education is the tool that works.

So today I have new energy and focus to work to achieve our mission of "expanding access and increasing success in postsecondary education for Arizonans."

## About the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education

The mission of the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education is to expand access and increase success in postsecondary education for Arizonans. ACPE serves as a forum for community colleges, proprietary and career schools, and private and public colleges and universities to address challenges and explore opportunities that will benefit students.

Through a variety of programs, ACPE works toward three primary goals:

- ◆ Increasing available student financial resources.
- ◆ Implementing strategies to help students and families plan, enroll and succeed in postsecondary education.
- ◆ Engaging in problem solving across all sectors of postsecondary education.

To learn more about ACPE, visit the commission's Web site, [www.azhighered.gov](http://www.azhighered.gov), or call (602) 258-2435.

## USA Funds provides \$16.3 million in support of higher education

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For the sixth consecutive year, USA Funds awarded \$100,000 each to the American Indian College Fund, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and the United Negro College Fund, and provided additional support to those organizations' fund-raising events. These contributions address the findings of a federal advisory committee, which reported that members of ethnic-minority groups will account for a large part of the future growth in the college-going population and that these students will have significant financial need.

"Through the support of organizations like USA Funds, the United Negro College Fund is able to provide scholarships for African-American students," says Andrea Neely, UNCF area development director. "We are extremely grateful for USA Funds' continued generosity in making sure that more African-American students will realize the dream of a college education."

## State programs

USA Funds focuses much of its support on initiatives that enhance higher-education access in the eight states — Arizona, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada and Wyoming — that it serves as designated guarantor under the Federal Family Education Loan Program.

These programs included college-planning publications, hotlines and Web sites; college tours; college fairs; best-practices conferences; admissions-test preparation; mentoring programs; student-enrollment and retention projects; as well as mobile classrooms that help hospitalized students keep up with their studies.

"USA Funds is pleased to partner with governmental agencies and other nonprofits to increase higher-education opportunities," says Henry Fernandez, USA Funds executive director, access and outreach. "Our goal is to ensure that every deserving student has the opportunity to benefit from postsecondary education, and through our support of these outreach programs we are working to fulfill our mission."



An officer from the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police assists students with their homework during an Indianapolis Police Athletic League tutoring session, an initiative supported by USA Funds.