



FORD
FOUNDATION

FUNDING FUTURES

SCHOLARSHIPS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

DONOR RESOURCE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

At the Ford Foundation, we know that young people are a formidable force for positive social change in the world. Yet we have also seen how unequal access to economic and social resources limits many talented young people, and keeps them from reaching their full potential.

That is why we created this resource guide, *Funding Futures: Scholarships as Agents of Social Change*. This guide is intended to illustrate how scholarship programs can make higher education more open and inclusive to all—and how they can fuel social change. The impact of well-designed scholarships can extend far beyond individual scholars. These scholarships help recognize and cultivate untapped talent, and address the inequality that too often thrives both in higher education institutions and in communities around the world. In short, they transform students, schools, and societies.

Take the Ford Foundation's International Fellowships Program (IFP), which concluded in 2013. For over a decade, IFP helped more than 4,300 social justice leaders from the world's most vulnerable populations attend leading graduate programs. For the vast majority of IFP alumni, the experience was not merely a path to career enhancement. It was part of a lifelong commitment to fostering social change—and provided fellows with the skills they needed to catalyze such change, one community at a time.

We are confident that this donor resource guide will be helpful to anyone who wants to start or improve a scholarship or fellowship program. But we also hope the guide—with its resources and examples from past programs like IFP as well as current initiatives—inspires donors and institutions alike to take risks and initiate transformational programs.

On behalf of everyone at the Ford Foundation, thank you for your commitment to this work. We can't wait to see what the future holds.



Hilary Pennington

Vice President, Education, Creativity, and Free Expression

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS: DEFINITIONS

This guide examines scholarships and fellowships aimed at catalyzing social justice, and explains how to design programs that will serve individuals seeking to make real social change. The examples discussed in this guide show that serving needs-based students is itself a social justice issue—equally important, though, is ensuring that the impact made on their lives will translate to change in their communities.

While several definitions exist, the **scholarships** and **fellowships** described in this resource guide are associated with degree-granting higher education institutions, ensuring participating students obtain advanced education as well as a degree.

By definition, a **SCHOLARSHIP** is:

- an amount of money that is given to a student by a school, organization, or other institution to help pay for the student's education expenses,
- which generally does not have to be repaid, and
- is often awarded based on a student's academic or other achievements.

While **FELLOWSHIP** can describe a variety of different programs, fellowships generally are:

- short-term opportunities lasting from a few months to several years,
- focused on the professional development of the fellow, and
- sponsored by a specific association or organization seeking to expand leadership in their field.

Fellowship programs can be designed to support a range of activities including graduate study in a specific field, research to advance work on a particular issue, developing a new community-based organization or initiative, training and reflection to support the fellow's growth, or opportunities to further explore a particular field of work.

Fellowships have traditionally been awarded to graduate and post-graduate students, but there are an increasing number of fellowships available to recent college graduates in public policy, the arts, education, and other nonprofit fields.

Sources: US Department of Education, University of California-Berkeley, Merriam-Webster Dictionary

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS: PURPOSE

Scholarship and fellowship resources can be used for a variety of purposes. The resources can be allocated based on the student's anticipated contribution to society, known financial need, record of merit, stated academic ambition, personal circumstances, or a combination of these or other specific factors, as determined by either the funding source or the post-secondary institution.

Unlike public resources, privately-funded scholarships and fellowships have special value because they can target specific underrepresented populations (e.g. undocumented immigrants). As a result, they are a proven tool in creating both access and success for underrepresented students. A summary of current US legal considerations related to underrepresented candidates can be found at finaid.org/educators/affirmativeaction.phtml.

Some institutions may use the resources as “first dollars,” providing the base of student support, while others may deploy the resources as “last dollars,” completing the package of necessary financial aid. In deploying such resources, whether large or small, these general purposes and others might be considered:

- **ACCESS:** Designed to enable a student to pursue a degree at post-secondary institutions that he or she would otherwise not be able to attend.
- **COMPLETION:** Focused on enabling a student to complete a post-secondary education successfully, including attaining a degree in a timely manner.
- **RETENTION:** Addressing the inevitable gaps in available resources. Sometimes modest support can make all the difference in allowing a student to pursue an education without costly interruptions.

DONOR GUIDANCE

Successful scholarships and fellowships require a well-defined three-way commitment among the donor, the student, and the recipient institution or organization. As you design and develop your partnership focused on social change, here are some basic questions to consider:

1. What is your goal?
2. How will you define success?
3. How will you measure progress toward success?
4. What will students need in order to succeed, not just survive?
5. Do these students have the potential to become leaders in serving their communities or pursuing their chosen fields?
6. What will the institution or organization need in order to succeed, not just comply?
7. What is the institution's or organization's record in securing success for their students? What are their documented graduation rates and time to degree?
8. Are the relevant processes for student recruitment and admissions in place? Could they be improved?
9. Are the necessary practices, such as emergency aid, in place to provide full student support toward degree completion? Could they be improved?
10. Are the professional personnel also in place to provide full student support, such as academic counseling?
11. What communications would you expect to receive about the progress and longer-term impact of your commitment?
12. What form of recognition, if any, would you prefer for your support?

To address accounting and legal requirements, seek expert professional counsel. Relevant guidance is also available to members of the US-based Council on Foundations (cof.org), National Scholarship Providers Organization (scholarshipproviders.org), and similar organizations. In addition, FinAid Scholarship Design and Management offers a useful summary of key design concerns (finaid.org/educators/awardedesign.phtml).

FEATURED EXAMPLES

There are many successful models of scholarships and fellowships aimed at creating lasting social change. The examples below, which were featured at the *Funding Futures: Scholarships as Agents of Social Change* convening in September, 2016, demonstrate the wide variety and proven effectiveness of traditional as well as non-traditional approaches to scholarships and fellowships.

TheDream.US Scholarships

thedream.us

Launched in 2014, TheDream.US is a national scholarship fund for immigrant youth who have received Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status, commonly referred to as DREAMers. The scholarship is offered to highly motivated DREAMers who, without financial aid, could not afford a college education to set them on the path to entering the US workforce. This scholarship is unique in its focus on immigrant youth who are highly motivated and have a financial need.

Gates Millennium Scholars

gmsp.org

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) program was established in 1999 with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to promote academic excellence, and to provide an opportunity for outstanding minority students with significant financial need to reach their highest potential. GMS not only serves minority students, but also aims to increase representation in computer science, engineering, education, library science, mathematics, public health, and the sciences through scholarships for bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees.

Higherlife Foundation

higherlifefoundation.com

The Higherlife Foundation is an Africa-based organization that provides quality education and lifelong development to orphaned and vulnerable children, as well as students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The foundation's commitment to this specific group of children, who otherwise would not have access to quality education or equal opportunities, holds the potential for significant social impact in the communities where it operates.

International Fellowships Program (IFP)

fordifp.net

As the single largest program ever supported by the Ford Foundation, the International Fellowships Program (IFP) was designed to promote social justice, community development, and access to higher education. The program offered advanced education opportunities to students from the world's most vulnerable populations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Russia – including women, indigenous people, and fellows from rural areas. The program's unique selection criteria—focused on recognizing overlooked academic and leadership potential, developing global leaders while addressing their financial needs, and enabling greater inclusion—fostered real social change in local communities.

Findings released in April, 2016 as part of a 10-year study now underway reveal that IFP alumni not only experienced personal and professional gains, but also are driving tangible and sustainable change in their home communities, countries, and wider global society: iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Publications-and-Reports/IIE-Bookstore/IFP-Report-1#.VzN5imMruiY

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

jkcf.org/scholarship-programs/undergraduate-transfer

This highly-selective scholarship is for top US community college students seeking to complete their bachelor's degrees at selective four-year colleges or universities. The foundation is the largest private scholarship for community college transfer students in the US, a group often overlooked for scholarship donors, and offers financial aid based on academic and leadership potential, financial aid, persistence, and service to others.

The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program

mastercardfdn.org/scholars-program

Working with partner organizations, the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program provides access to secondary and higher education for young people who are committed to giving back to their communities. The program provides students with holistic support, including financial aid for all costs associated with education, skills training to prepare for employment, transition support as students move to higher education or the workforce, and alumni support. The program also requires a commitment from students to give back to their communities of origin to ensure they are implementing social change where it is needed most.

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program

mmuf.org

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) aims to increase diversity in college and university faculties by increasing the number of students from underrepresented minority groups who pursue PhD programs for professorial careers and by supporting the pursuit of PhDs by students who have demonstrated a commitment to the goals of MMUF.

Sphinx Global Scholars

sphinxmusic.org/sphinx-global-scholars

Sphinx Global Scholars aims to increase diversity in the arts around the world, especially in classical music. Sphinx artists travel across the globe to serve as cultural ambassadors, teach underserved and underrepresented populations, learn and understand new cultures, and perform abroad.

FURTHER RESOURCES

These resources address scholarship and fellowship design, identifying and meeting needs, inclusion and diversity, and creating social change through scholarship and fellowship programs. When building programs, especially those aimed at social change, it is important for an organization to critically examine the goals of the program, the communities and populations it is meant to serve, additional support features, and appropriate partner institutions and organizations to help achieve these goals.

IMPROVING DESIGN

Answering the Call: Institutions and States Lead the Way Toward Better Measures of Postsecondary Performance contains lessons from vanguard institutions and states about how to improve and use postsecondary data to increase student outcomes (2016: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation).
postsecondary.gatesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AnsweringtheCall.pdf

Designing Scholarships to Improve College Success provides findings on The Performance-Based Scholarship Demonstration (2015: MDRC).
mdrc.org/sites/default/files/designing_scholarships_FR.pdf

Strategic Scholarship Giving for Student Success: Insights and Approaches from 10 Years of Grantmaking offers guidance based on a decade of scholarship grant-making, data tracking, and analysis, showing how scholarships can be an effective and strategic tool for ensuring student success (2015: College Futures Foundation).
collegefutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Strategic-Scholarship-Giving-for-Student-Success-Dec2015Report_CollegeFutures.pdf

Supporting Postsecondary Student Success explains how community-based collaborations help students complete their postsecondary programs (2016: Institute for Higher Education Policy).
ihep.org/guidebooks/studentssupports

ADDRESSING UNMET NEED

Barriers to Success: High Unmet Financial Need Continues to Endanger Higher Education Opportunities for Low-Income Students describes how many students struggle to access safe, sustainable, and adequate meals and shelter (2015: CLASP).
clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Barriers-to-Success-High-Unmet-Financial-Need-Continues-to-Endanger-Higher-Education-Opportunities.pdf

Fulfilling the Promise, Serving the Need: Advancing College Opportunity for Low-Income Students outlines the significant work advanced by postsecondary institutions and leaders to ensure that more students, especially low-income students, obtain an affordable, high-quality postsecondary education (2016: US Department of Education).

[ed.gov/about/overview/focus/advancing-college-opportunity.pdf](https://www.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/advancing-college-opportunity.pdf)

The New Forgotten Half and Research Directions to Support Them examines the circumstances of youth who drop out of community college before attaining a credential, discusses institutional challenges in the era of increased college access, and outlines a research agenda to help youth move beyond “some college” and achieve their potential (2015: WT Grant Foundation).

wtgrantfoundation.org/resource/the-new-forgotten-half-and-research-directions-to-support-them

On the Verge: Costs and Tradeoffs Facing Community College Students explores California, where community college tuition is the lowest in the country and waived for all students with financial need, yet the financial obstacles to low-income students' success are high and widespread (2016: The Institute for College Access & Success).

ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/on_the_verge.pdf

INCREASING INCLUSION

Foiling the Drop-Out Trap: Completion Grant Practices for Retaining and Graduating Students describes microgrant programs at 10 urban, public research universities (2016: Coalition of Urban Serving Universities and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities).

aplu.org/projects-and-initiatives/urban-initiatives/coalition-of-urban-serving-universities/aplu-usu-dropout-trap-full.pdf

Increasing Diversity Abroad: Expanding Opportunities for Students at Minority Serving Institutions examines the alarming lack of diversity in both racial composition and institutional representation for study abroad, noting that students of color account for less than 25% of those who engage in such opportunities (2016: CIEE and the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions).

ciee.org/downloads/MSI_Study_Report.pdf

Promoting Inclusion and Identity Safety to Support College Success reviews some of the obstacles and barriers to college success for students from low-income and minority backgrounds and describes what institutions and faculty can do to create an environment of identity safety—where all students are valued, included, and can perform to their highest potential (2016: The Century Foundation).

[s3-us-west2.amazonaws.com/production.tcf.org/app/uploads/2016/05/18140602/TCF_PromotingInclusionandIdentity.pdf](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/production.tcf.org/app/uploads/2016/05/18140602/TCF_PromotingInclusionandIdentity.pdf)

Target Populations is a compilation of guidance available from the National College Access Network: [collegeaccess.org/Target Populations](https://collegeaccess.org/Target-Populations)
See also resources available from population-specific organizations, such as the American Indian College Fund: collegefund.org

Turning the Tide: Inspiring Concern for Others and the Common Good through College Admissions includes recommendations to reshape the college admissions process and promote greater ethical engagement among aspiring students, reduce excessive achievement pressure, and level the playing field for economically disadvantaged students (2016: Harvard University).
mcc.gse.harvard.edu/files/gse-mcc/files/20160120_mcc_ttt_execsummary_interactive.pdf?m=1453303460

True Merit: Ensuring our Brightest Students Have Access to Our Best Colleges and Universities examines admissions practices and preferences at highly selective colleges and universities that have resulted in making admission to a selective institution more difficult for high-achieving, low-income students than for others (2016: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation).
jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_True_Merit_Report.pdf

FOCUSING ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

Linking Higher Education to Social Change provides a detailed framework for how fellowship programs, philanthropic organizations, and local governments can emulate the IFP model (2013: Ford Foundation).
fordifp.net/portals/o/IFP%20PDF/IFP%20Final%20Publication.pdf

Social Justice and Sustainable Change: The Impact of Higher Education offers the first findings from the 10-year impact study of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), showing that funding the post-graduate academic pursuits of emerging social justice leaders from marginalized groups leads to significant, measurable benefits for communities and organizations in their countries and throughout the world (2016: Institute for International Education).
iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Publications-and-Reports/IIE-Bookstore/IFP-Report-1#.VzN5imMruiY

For more information and to continue the discussion, visit www.fordfoundation.org/fundingfutures