

Gateway to College National Network Wins Investment to Help Low-Income Young People Earn High School Diplomas and College Credit

Gateway to College National Network selected in a national competition to identify programs with the potential to make a major impact on the lives of America's youth in poverty

PORTLAND, Oregon (April 1, 2011) – Gateway to College National Network has been awarded a three-year investment of up to \$3.5 million, with a first-year award of \$2 million, from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and the Social Innovation Fund to increase the evidence of its program's effectiveness through an outside evaluation and build its organizational capacity to expand so it can serve many more young people in need. With this investment, Gateway to College National Network will serve 750 – 1650 more youth, 16 to 21 years old, in the focus states of Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee, as well as in California, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and South Carolina, where Gateway to College is currently active.

Gateway to College National Network's flagship program, Gateway to College, is a dual credit program serving youth who have dropped out of school or are significantly behind in credits and unlikely to graduate. Through the program, students have an opportunity to earn their high school diploma and substantial college credit. Now operating at 30 colleges in 16 states, Gateway to College will utilize the investment to expand at up to 6 additional colleges over the next 3 years.

"We are thrilled to be selected for this prestigious award," said Laurel Dukehart, president of Gateway to College National Network. "Without a high school diploma, young people face a future of low wages and limited opportunities. We are excited to work with new communities looking for innovative ways to reconnect struggling youth to education."

Without a program like Gateway to College, national statistics suggest only 19 percent of dropouts will get a diploma within eight years of their expected graduation date. In contrast, 52% of all students who complete at least one term in the program earn a high school diploma. Gateway to College graduates earn not only a high school diploma, but also have an average of 35 college credits by the time they complete the program. This academic momentum is significant: nearly 70% of students say their goal is a bachelor's degree or higher. These are remarkable statistics when you consider that the average student enters Gateway to College with a high school GPA of 1.5.

Students are placed into small learning communities during their first (Foundation) term, and together they take classes in reading, writing, math, and college skills. After completing the Foundation term,

students transition to the comprehensive campus, taking classes with the general student population. Throughout their enrollment in the program, students receive one-on-one advising and support from resource specialists who act as coaches, mentors, and advisors. The wrap-around support of the resource specialist keeps students on the right track for success.

Gateway to College National Network is an inaugural member of a new portfolio, **the True North Fund**, created by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF). This fund is the launch vehicle for an innovative public/private partnership of the Social Innovation Fund, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, and institutional and individual philanthropic co-investors. The fund's goal is to bring together the capital to help expansion-ready nonprofits make an impact on the lives of more young people and build a stronger body of evidence about "what works" to help them succeed in life. Grantees in the True North Fund exemplify the overarching and long-standing goal of all of EMCF's grantmaking: to help economically disadvantaged young people overcome obstacles, discover a sense of direction and purpose in their lives, and steer a course to productive, independent adulthood.

Since 2003, the Gateway to College program has provided life-changing opportunities for young people across the country. Please see the attached background page for an example of Gateway's role in helping young people get on a path toward a brighter future.

Gateway to College National Network was chosen in an open, national competition that drew 225 applications from leading nonprofits across the country. In selecting nine organizations for awards totaling up to \$42 million over three years, EMCF relied on a rigorous, in-depth due diligence process to identify a mix of programs with great potential to help larger numbers of economically disadvantaged youth, ages 9-24.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), established by Congress in 2010 through the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, is a public-private partnership that uses private intermediaries to support the expansion of innovative, transformative social programs proven to promote economic opportunity, healthy lives, and youth development. In establishing the True North Fund, EMCF is leveraging its role as a SIF intermediary by combining federal funding with the private resources of the Foundation and other philanthropic co-investors. Through the fund, EMCF and its co-investors seek to draw greater philanthropic support for Gateway to College National Network and demonstrate how public and private dollars can be aggregated to help effective organizations attain greater impact and scale.

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About Gateway to College National Network

Gateway to College National Network builds the capacity of colleges, school districts, and states to revolutionize education for high school dropouts and underprepared college students so that all young people can achieve college credentials. Our strategies include: creating and replicating innovative programs, building partnerships, influencing systems, conducting research and sharing what we know, helping effect policy and regulatory changes, and providing customized consulting services. We also

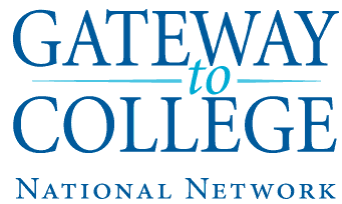
provide ongoing technical assistance, data and evaluation services, and professional development opportunities to our partner programs across the country. Visit www.gatewaytocollege.org for more information.

About the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation seeks to advance opportunities for low-income youth by supporting organizations that help young people, ages 9–24, become independent, productive adults. EMCF concentrates on the most vulnerable and disconnected youth living in impoverished communities. EMCF believes large, long-term investments in nonprofits whose programs have been proven to produce positive outcomes and that have the potential for growth are an effective and efficient way to overcome the obstacles confronting low-income young Americans today. Its goal is to help develop a growing pool of organizations that serve thousands more youth each year with proven programs. For more information, visit www.emcf.org.

About the Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund, administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, is a new federal program that addresses major challenges confronting communities by expanding high-impact nonprofit organizations delivering proven solutions. It brings together millions in public-private funds to expand effective community solutions across three issue areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development and school support. This work will directly impact thousands of low-income families and create a catalog of proven approaches that can be replicated in communities across the country. For more information on the Social Innovation Fund, visit www.NationalService.gov/Innovation.



Lawrence Caldwell, a Gateway to College Success Story

At age 15, Lawrence Caldwell dropped out of high school, ran away from an abusive home, and began living on his own. He worked in fast-food restaurants to support himself, but never gave up on the idea of going back to school. But with his demanding work schedule, reenrolling in a traditional high school was not an option.

Lawrence entered the Gateway to College program at Montgomery College in Maryland during the spring of 2007 with only 8 high school credits out of 22 needed for a diploma. While enrolled in the program, Lawrence also worked full-time and became the guardian of his younger brother after a lengthy custody battle. He excelled academically and, as a result, was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and joined the Renaissance Scholars honors program. In April 2010, Lawrence was one of only 40 community college students across the country selected to receive the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. This highly competitive scholarship provides recipients up to \$30,000 each year for tuition, books, and living expenses to use at a four-year college or university.

In May 2010, Lawrence earned his associate's degree, graduating with honors from Montgomery College with a 3.48 GPA. He is currently enrolled in an undergraduate psychology program at George Washington University and, in the future, plans to attend law school and become a family court lawyer so he can help young people in difficult circumstances.