

**Council of Independent Colleges
Walmart College Success Awards and Network
Application Guidelines**

The Walmart College Success Awards will support 30 competitively-selected Council of Independent Colleges Institutional Members to extend, deepen, or strengthen efforts to help first-generation students to succeed in college. Awards in the amount of \$100,000 each will be made to 20 institutions, and awards in the amount of \$50,000 each will be granted to another ten institutions. These funds will be used for projects that are likely to increase the retention and graduation rates of first-generation students. Projects with a primary focus on recruitment will not be funded. The newly selected 30 institutions and the 20 initial College Success Award recipients (selected in June 2008) will work together as a network to assist first-generation college students, learn from one another, and serve as models for other colleges and universities.

Grants of \$100,000 will be awarded to the 20 institutions with programs that show the greatest promise of increasing retention of the largest number of first-generation students. Ten \$50,000 awards will be designated for worthy projects that have a smaller scope of impact or are more experimental in nature.

Background

Receipt of a baccalaureate degree not only provides an individual with better life opportunities but also produces the educated citizenry that is fundamental to the success of the American economy and a democratic way of life. Nevertheless, too many young people are discouraged from considering college as an option, and this is particularly true of those whose parents have not attended college.

First-generation college students are often less well prepared academically and lack support from family members familiar with the collegiate experience. Consequently, these students often are not prepared to find and use financial, informational, and social resources, which frequently results in badly informed decisions about the college application process, college selection, and financial aid options prior to college attendance. Once enrolled, these students often make poor choices about course and co-curricular offerings.

Many private colleges and universities have risen to the challenges of retaining and graduating first-generation students. Contrary to stereotypes, approximately one-third of the undergraduate students enrolled in CIC's member colleges and universities are first-generation students. Moreover, the success rate of first-generation students in independent colleges is significantly higher than in public institutions. CIC institutions may be particularly well positioned to help first-generation students succeed because they 1) promote a climate of personal attention to the individual student; 2) involve students in

shaping their own learning; and 3) maintain strong connections between the campuses and the surrounding communities.

Eligibility

CIC Institutional Members with an undergraduate enrollment that includes at least 30 percent first-generation students among the most recent classes of new first-year students are eligible to apply.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1) Demonstration of commitment to first-generation college students

What efforts has the institution made to recruit first-generation students? Has the institution provided scholarships or assisted students in finding financial assistance? Has the percentage of first-generation students at the institution increased or remained consistent over the past five years? What measures has the institution taken to ensure that first-generation students succeed once they have enrolled? How does the institution track the successes and failures of these students? What kinds of programs and services are offered to increase the likelihood that first-generation students will graduate within four years? How successful have these programs been?

2) Demonstration of the effectiveness of the proposed activities in retaining and graduating a substantial number of first-generation students

If the proposed activities extend the work of an existing program, what is the evidence that the program has successfully increased the number of first-generation students enrolled at the institution? Have the retention and graduation rates of these students increased as a result of the program already in place? How will the proposed activities build upon past successes? How many first-generation students will be helped by the new program?

3) Demonstration that the proposed program targets first-generation students

Does the proposed program demonstrate a clear understanding of the challenges confronted by first-generation students? Will the award be used exclusively for first-generation students?

4) The promise of successful and lasting results from these activities

In what ways will the proposed activities improve the retention and graduation rates of first-generation students? How will the institution assess the effectiveness of the proposed program? How will the institution ensure that first-generation students continue to succeed once the two-year grant period has ended?

Consideration also will be given to supporting a variety of types of institutions in different regions of the country as well as diverse programmatic strategies for educating first-generation students.

Expectations of Award Recipients

Institutions that receive a Walmart College Success Award will be expected to:

- 1) Send a three-person team—including the chief academic officer, one full-time faculty member who is directly involved in the proposed activities, and one other staff or faculty member who will work with the proposed program—to participate in a meeting on July 17-19, 2011 (travel, lodging, and meals for participants will be covered by CIC).
- 2) Submit a written interim narrative and financial report in July 2011 and a final report in August 2012. Payment of the Awards will be made in two equal annual installments. Receipt of the second installment is contingent upon satisfactory progress.
- 3) Share periodic progress reports with CIC and other Walmart College Success Award recipients as requested by CIC staff.
- 4) Permit the inclusion of information about its project in publications about best practices in recruiting, educating, and graduating first-generation college students, including a report to be released at the conclusion of the project in 2013 as well as in other publicity materials including press releases, articles, and online resources.
- 5) Continue to maintain and share data with CIC until all first-generation students in the program graduate.
- 6) Identify the funded activities as the CIC/Walmart College Success Award in all project materials and publicity.

Application Guidelines

Institutions wishing to be considered for a Walmart College Success Award are asked to submit the following items. All applicants should normally apply for a \$100,000 Award.

- 1) An **Application Summary Form** (available on the CIC website at www.cic.edu/collegesuccess);
- 2) A **cover letter** from the president that affirms the institution's commitment to the proposed activities and agreement to comply with Award expectations
- 3) A **proposal**, no more than five pages in length (single-spaced, 12-point font), that includes the following items in order with the following headings.
 - **Current Efforts:** a description of the institution's recent and current efforts to enroll, retain, educate, and graduate first-generation students;
 - **Evidence of Success:** evidence of the success of recent and current efforts;
 - **Project Description:** a detailed description of the institution's intended use of the Award;
 - **Assessment Plan:** an assessment plan that details how the effectiveness of the proposed activities will be measured; and
 - **Program Institutionalization:** a detailed explanation of how the activities will be sustained after the two-year grant period has ended.
- 4) A detailed **budget** and accompanying narrative for the proposed project for the grant period (July 15, 2010–July 15, 2012). Funds may not be used for overhead, indirect costs, or capital expenses. Please include expenses in the following categories and itemize expenses within those categories. Enter "0" for any categories that are not relevant to the proposed activities.
 - *Personnel:* include personnel expenses directly related to the project. Institutions may use grant funds to pay salaries and fringe benefits to replace faculty or staff members released for the program or for new employees. Benefits should be calculated at 25 percent. Percentages of staff time less than one-third time may not be included. If personnel costs are proposed, the institution must detail how these expenses will be covered at the end of the grant period.
 - *Administrative expenses:* include expenses for postage, fax, telephone, supplies, materials, books, printing, duplicating, and any other administrative costs.
 - *Travel:* include transportation, lodging, and any other expenses incurred during travel. Do not include travel expenses for the summer conference.

- *Financial aid to students:* If funds are budgeted for this purpose, the institution must affirm that these funds are in addition to those already expended by the institution for this purpose and detail how funding will be continued following the end of the grant period.
 - *Other:* be specific
- 5) A **Retention and Graduation Data Form** that documents prior success in educating first-generation college students (available on the CIC website at www.cic.edu/collegesuccess)
 - 6) An **Institutional Team Information Form** that lists the names and contact information for the three-person team who will participate in the 2011 summer conference (available on the CIC website at www.cic.edu/collegesuccess). The team must include the chief academic officer, one full-time faculty member who is directly involved in the proposed activities, and one other staff or faculty member who will work with the proposed program. Institutions will be required to send these specific team members to the conference. Substitutions will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances.

Instructions for the Submission

The deadline for submitting application materials is February 12, 2010, 5:00 p.m. (EST). The application summary page should be submitted as a Word document. All other parts of the proposal should be submitted as a single pdf file with the five parts in the order listed in the guidelines. Please do not submit brochures, title pages, or other materials. Send the complete application by email in a single pdf file to: collegesuccess@cic.nche.edu. All application submissions will be acknowledged by email within three days of receipt. If you do not receive an email confirmation that your application has been received within that period of time, please contact Sarah Stoycos (sstoycos@cic.nche.edu).

CIC will announce the Award recipients by March 26, 2010.

Please direct all questions to Sarah Stoycos, CIC Director of Programs, by email at sstoycos@cic.nche.edu or by phone at (202) 466-7230.