



## **2012 College Access Grants – Frequently Asked Questions**

Read the following information before applying for EducationQuest Foundation's *College Access Grants* program. Contact EducationQuest at 800.303.3745 extension 6906 or [grants@educationquest.org](mailto:grants@educationquest.org) if you have additional questions.

**1. What is the *College Access Grants* program?**

EducationQuest's *College Access Grants* program provides funding to Nebraska high schools to increase the school's college-going rate by 10 percentage points over four years. The awards range from \$2,500 to \$20,000, based on the size of the high school. Funding is awarded through a competitive application process.

**2. How does EducationQuest define "college"?**

EducationQuest defines college as any accredited postsecondary institution including four-year universities/colleges, community colleges, or trade/vocational schools.

**3. What is the focus of this grant?**

Grant funds should focus on students who might not otherwise attend college.

Underrepresented students includes:

- Underserved minorities
- First-generation college students –neither parent completed a two-year or four-year degree.
- Low-income students – students who participate in the free-or-reduced lunch program.

**4. How many students need to be part of the target audience?**

While *all* high school students can participate in college access activities, the high school must select and report on a target audience of students who are underrepresented in higher education. Based on the high school's enrollment, the required target audience is:

- Less than 125 students – 100% of the student body must be served
- Between 126 and 300 students – 20% of the student body must be served
- Between 301 and 600 students – 15% of the student body must be served
- Between 601 and 1,300 students – 10% of the student body must be served
- 1,301 and more students – 10% of the student body must be served

**5. Is my high school eligible to apply?**

To be eligible, the high school must:

- Be located in Nebraska
- Be approved or accredited by the State of Nebraska to award a high school diploma.

**6. How much would my high school receive?**

Funding is based on grades 9-12 enrollment, as measured in the 2011-2012 academic year:

- 125 and fewer students – \$2,500/annually for four years
- 126 to 300 students -- \$5,000/annually for four years
- 301 to 600 students – \$7,500/annually for four years
- 601 to 1,300 students – \$10,000/annually for four years
- 1,301 and more students -- \$20,000/annually for four years

**7. How does my high school apply?**

A representative of your high school must attend the free EducationQuest *College Access Symposium* on **March 27, 2012**, which will be held at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln Nebraska Union.

To apply for a *College Access Grant*, complete the grant application available in the “Middle School/High School Professionals” section of **EducationQuest.org**.

**Grant applications are due on or before June 8, 2012.**

**Interested schools are required to submit a Letter of Intent by May 1, 2012. The Letter of Intent can be emailed or sent via U.S. mail and should:**

- Confirm the school’s interest in applying.
- Provide the high school’s college-going rate.
- Describe, with actual number of students served, the target audience for the grant.
- Provide the estimated enrollment (grades 9 through 12) for the 2012-2013 academic year.

The Letter of Intent and the *College Access Grant* application may be submitted electronically to grants@educationquest.org or by regular mail addressed to:

College Access Grants  
EducationQuest Foundation  
1300 O Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**8. Should my high school apply if it has a high college-going rate?**

EducationQuest is interested in applications that show the need to increase the college-going rate by 10 percentage points over the four year funding cycle. If your high school has a high college-going rate, the high school’s likelihood of being selected is low. The review committee will consider high school’s with a compelling reason that a college access program is needed despite the high college-going rate.

**9. How will the application be evaluated?**

A high school’s application will be evaluated primarily on whether the high school has a compelling and workable plan to provide the required college-access activities. The application will also be evaluated on whether the high school can increase its college-going rate by 10 percentage points over the course of the four years of funding (or provides a compelling reason why a lower benchmark should be accepted).

The application will be reviewed by a committee that includes individuals with expertise in college access related issues, at-risk youth programming, or in a comparable field. The committee will conduct the review in July, 2012.

EducationQuest will notify all applicants of **funding decisions on or before August 1, 2012.**

EducationQuest encourages the review committee to examine the content of the application rather than the professionalism of the writing. Make sure that the application includes:

- A compelling reason why the high school needs funding to increase its college-going rate.
- A baseline college-going rate.
- Demographics of the high school's student body.
- Attainable goals for the expected college-going rate increase for *each year of funding*.
- Detailed description of all college-access activities that will achieve these goals, including the required activities explained in the application.
- Staffing plan, including who will manage the grant and the role of the administration and other team members, where applicable.
- Detailed budget that links grant funding to college-access program's goals.
- Prospective community partners, including colleges, local/regional businesses, and community agencies that will assist at-risk students in the high school.
- Business/community partner's contribution, either in cash or in-kind, to match EducationQuest's funding on a 1:10 ratio. For example, if the high school's grant is \$7,500, the business/community partner(s) will contribute \$750, in cash or value of in-kind, annually.

**10. What format should I use for Section Six of the application?**

EducationQuest will accept any format that clearly provides a plan for each required activity.

An example:

**Required Activity:** Visit at least one Nebraska college or university by December of the students' senior year.  
**Activity:** Junior college campus visit  
**Activity type:** New (NOTE: should be New, Enhanced, or Existing)  
**Implementation:** September – survey junior class during homeroom class to identify careers that interest the students. Use results to select colleges for visits.  
October – recruit students to attend and secure appropriate permissions. Encourage students to bring a family member. Contact two colleges (a two-year and four-year) in the Omaha area that meets the student's needs. Coordinate schedule with college.

November – conduct college visit. Use *Go.Visit.College!* resources for bus ride. After visit, ask student to reflect on their experience and what questions they have about going to college.

**Target Audience:** Target audience juniors. Additional students (sophomores and seniors) will be included if there are open seats.

Provide detail to support the high school's grant application.

When indicating *Activity Type*, indicate which of the following best describes the activity:

- New – the first time the high school will conduct this activity. Grant funds will be used to support activity.
- Existing – high school plans to continue an existing activity with no changes.
- Enhanced – high school plans to use grant funds to modify an existing activity to better serve its students and families. An example could include a high school deciding to provide a light meal before its annual financial aid night.

**11. Why does EducationQuest believe that *College Access Grants* activities are important?**

EducationQuest has studied the issue of college access. The required activities increase the likelihood that at-risk students will attend college (The Mitchell Institute, 2002, 2007). However, each high school is encouraged to customize the implementation of the required activities to best meet the needs of students, families and community.

**12. Why is there a business/community partnership requirement?**

EducationQuest believes that a business/community partnership can provide students with early knowledge of career opportunities that instill the importance of postsecondary education. In addition, when EducationQuest funding expires, the business/community partnership may provide support for continuation of the program and/or its activities.

A consortium of community partners could be substituted for a single business partner.

Matching funds from the business/community partnership may be used for scholarships but cannot divert funding from an existing scholarship program.

**13. How much support do we need to receive from the community?**

The grant requires a 10% match. The match can be either cash or in-kind donation that supports college access efforts, including funding new scholarships.

In-kind contributions include the donation of time or supplies, including donating food for college access events or contributing employees' time to coordinate a job shadowing experience.

**14. Why are families expected to be part of the program?**

Families (parent, legal guardian, or other caring adult) are key to college access. Students who are unlikely to attend college need even greater support from their families. Families need information on how to help their children attend college.

**15. What is an appropriate budget for the college access grants program?**

EducationQuest’s *College Access Grant* application requires that your high school submit a proposed program budget for the first year of funding. The application should include both a summary and detailed budget. The budget is resubmitted annually for EducationQuest’s approval.

EducationQuest will **not** fund:

- Scholarships for tuition, fees, room/board, or other expenses, including tuition or fees for dual enrollment coursework
- Any travel outside the state of Nebraska
- Professional development for staff
- Any third-party contracts (including ACT test prep services)
- Capital equipment purchases, including computers
- Endowments
- Faculty/staff clothing items
- Caps and/or gowns for students or staff
- *Educational Planning Programs* or *College Fairs* that are not part of the official NACRO and/or EducationQuest schedule
- On a limited basis, software may be an approved expense if directly related to the college access activity.

Grant funds can be used for the travel costs associated with attending required *College Access Grant* activities, such as the *College Access Workshop*.

All expenses, including staff, must adhere to the district’s policies and procedures. If staff is reimbursed, only those expenses associated with the direct delivery or administration of the program are allowed. The high school’s district’s travel policies, including permissions slips, must also be followed.

Sample budget summary for a high school with 425 students:

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Travel (college visits, business visits, etc.)	\$ 2,500
Activities	\$ 1,000
Materials/Supplies	\$ 750
Postage	\$ 250
Printing	\$ 750
Staff	\$ 2,000
Other	\$ 250
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 7,500</b>

**SAMPLE BUDGET DETAIL (Travel)**

**ACTIVITY: Travel \$2,500**

\$500: College visits for senior students to [insert college name(s)]: 200 miles round trip @ \$2.50/mile

\$480: College visit for senior students: overnight – doom rooms - \$30 per room – 16 rooms

- \$300: College visits for senior students: meal \$10 per student, 30 students
- \$250: College visits for junior students to [insert college name(s)]: 100 miles round trip – bus rental @ \$2.50/mile
- \$300: College visits for junior students: meal \$10 per student, 30 students
- \$563: Career visits for freshman and sophomore students to regional medical center: 75 miles @ 2.50/mile (need 3 buses)
- \$107: Career visits for freshman students to three local/regional businesses: 60 miles total 1.79/mile (van rate)

**16. What reports are required if the high school is funded?**

The reporting requirements are explained in detail in the reporting packet. The high school will report only aggregated data and will send no personally-identifiable student information to EducationQuest.

EducationQuest will require mid-year and year-end reports each year of grant funding to verify the progress on college access-related activities, enrollments, and budgets.

Additionally, the following reports are required annually, either as part of the mid-year or the year-end reports:

- Initial Student Survey
- Annual Program Evaluation

**17. How will EducationQuest calculate the college-going baseline for the high school?**

EducationQuest will use the class of 2010 college-going rate as reported to the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. See *College-going Rates for Nebraska Public High Schools for the High School Class of 2009-2010* at [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us) -- Data Collection, Reports, Presentations.

If the high school is not included in the report, please contact Eric Drumheller at EducationQuest.

**18. What if our Class of 2010 college-going rate is an anomaly and does not provide an accurate representation of our high school?**

You may submit additional actual college-going rate trend information. Contact EducationQuest for details about this process.

**19. When will grant funding begin?**

Selected high schools will be notified by August 1, 2012, and should begin college access activities as soon as possible. EducationQuest will send 10% of the first year's allocation as soon as the grant paperwork is returned, 40% in October, 2012, and the 50% in February, 2013. Each year after, payments will be sent in October and February, as long as all the reporting requirements have been met. Grant funds are transmitted electronically.

**20. What other assistance will EducationQuest offer in addition to grant funding?**

An EducationQuest staff member will work with the high school as questions arise during the application process. Once the high school has been selected, EducationQuest will serve as a college access resource and provide guidance during the four-year grant period.

Newly selected high schools are required to attend a *College Access Orientation* on August 30, 2012 in Lincoln. This orientation will cover grant program activities, reporting requirements, and the budget process.

EducationQuest hosts a *College Access Workshop* in the fall and spring. These day-long meetings provide an opportunity to learn from the high school peers. While attendance is strongly encouraged, it is not required. The fall 2012 *College Access Workshop* is October 11, 2012 in Lincoln.