

July 11, 2025

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and
Education

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and
Education
House Appropriations Committee

Dear Chairman Aderholt, Chairwoman Capito, and Ranking Members Baldwin and
DeLauro:

As you continue to work on the Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations bill for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-H), we, the undersigned 14 organizations, write to express our continued support for at least \$55M for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program (PSSG), which supports college retention and completion initiatives, without reducing funding to other critical educational programs. Investing in PSSG can help strengthen completion and employment outcomes and reduce the “skills gap” between available jobs and qualified candidates.

An increase in federal funding to at least \$55M allows stakeholders to continue and expand efforts to ensure that students who begin two-year or four-year degree programs complete those programs. PSSG has bipartisan and bicameral support, having received funding in the three prior bipartisan fiscal year budget agreements. Members of both parties have introduced [legislation](#) that includes authorizing language for the program. Given this groundswell of support from both sides of the aisle, we strongly encourage you to provide at least \$55M for the evidence-based Postsecondary Student Success Grant program in your FY26 appropriations bill.

Currently, regions across the U.S. face a “skills” gap between qualified candidates and [over seven million available jobs](#). We know that completion rates for those pursuing

two- and four-year degrees have substantial room for improvement, adversely impacting local workforce participation. PSSG addresses these issues by building higher education institutional capacity through evidence-based strategies to graduate more students prepared to enter the workforce. Rigorous research demonstrates that when higher education institutions use comprehensive approaches to student success and provide academic, career counseling, and personal services, they improve postsecondary outcomes and graduation rates. For example, studies have shown that the CUNY ASAP program [nearly doubled](#) the three-year graduation rate for associate degree students. These programs offer replicable models that can be scaled through large-scale investment in PSSG. When students progress through school more quickly, not only are they set up for success and financial stability, but it preserves vital aid and strengthens the financial health of state systems of higher education.

To date, [22 grants](#) have been awarded via PSSG. The initial \$5 million in competitive Postsecondary Student Success Grants awarded in FY22 enabled five institutions in Florida, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Texas to implement and scale programs to strengthen student retention and completion. Subsequent \$45 million allocations for PSSG in each of the FY23 and FY24 appropriations packages expanded these vital interventions to additional grantees in California, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas. Continued investment is essential to sustain and expand high-impact student success practices, particularly those meeting the high bar for receiving an “expansion” grant under the Education Innovation and Research program criteria based on prior effectiveness.

Investing at least \$55M to strengthen evidence-based Postsecondary Student Success Grants, without making cuts to other higher education programs, will provide students with support to reach their postsecondary education goals, close the workforce skill gaps, and bolster the economy and nation’s future.

Sincerely,

AFT, AFL-CIO

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)

Complete College America

EdTrust

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs (NASSGAP)

New America Higher Education program

Results for America

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)

The Institute for College Access & Success

Third Way

Today's Students Coalition

UnidosUS