

Cowen Institute launches effort to get more students to apply for college financial aid

June 28, 2018 12:15 PM Keith Brannon

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The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the single biggest vehicle for students to access federal and institutional need-based financial aid. A new Cowen Institute campaign aims to help more New Orleans public school students complete the FAFSA.

[The Cowen Institute at Tulane University](#) will use funding from The Kresge Foundation to launch a new campaign to increase the number of New Orleans public school students who complete federal financial aid applications for college.

The Cowen Institute will convene community partners, including public schools and universities, education leaders, nonprofits and policymakers, to collaborate on citywide goals and methods for incentivizing and tracking completion of the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA).

The campaign will build capacity within schools by providing counselors, volunteers and practitioners with access to tools, trainings and resources. The Cowen Institute will offer ongoing support to schools and dedicated outreach to students and families.

“Providing students with support in completing the FAFSA significantly increases their likelihood to enroll, persist in and graduate from college,” said [Amanda Kruger Hill](#), executive director of the Cowen Institute. “The FAFSA Completion Campaign will build capacity by leveraging existing networks and creating new resources for practitioners and families, paving the way for more eligible students to access federal funding. In doing so, we hope to increase college access and postsecondary success for our city’s young people.”

This Kresge grant will also support the Cowen Institute’s college persistence partners’ membership and participation in the National College Access Network (NCAN).

Kresge’s mission is to build and strengthen pathways to opportunity for people in American cities, and its education program seeks to increase the postsecondary attainment of low-income students and students of color as a means of advancing upward mobility and achieving greater equity.

"We are excited to support the Cowen Institute's effort to connect New Orleans to the national college access movement and to mobilize New Orleans to increase FAFSA completion just as a new state policy requires a completed FAFSA to graduate from high school," explained Bethany Miller, Kresge education program officer. "This is an important step towards ensuring New Orleans high school graduates, especially low-income students and students of color, have equitable access to affordable higher education in Louisiana."