



# ANNUAL REPORT **FY22**



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# FROM THE DIRECTOR

Iowa College Aid celebrated great successes the past year by our programs and staff as they continued to achieve our mission and live our motto of ‘Because College Changes Everything.’

We aspire to facilitate this change by making postsecondary education as affordable and attainable as possible to every Iowan. The most tangible way in which we achieve this is in the administration of 15 scholarship and grant programs that in FY22 provided more than 20,000 Iowans with more than \$90 million to pursue their educational goals.

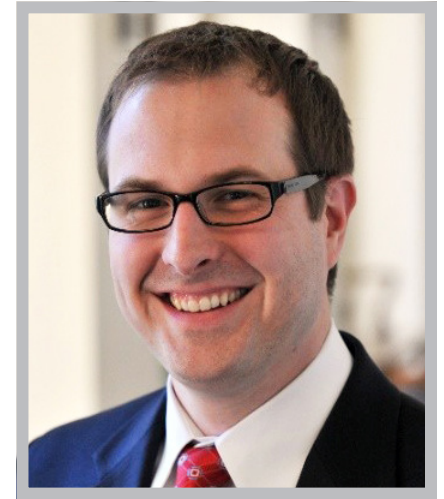
This unwavering commitment to helping Iowans achieve postsecondary education and remove barriers was extremely apparent this year with the launching of GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready. Facing the unwarranted loss of federal funding to support GEAR UP Iowa, staff immediately mobilized to find alternate funding sources through American Rescue Plan funds. Staff strategized how to continue to deliver this critical programming to the Iowans who need it most and were most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a few short months, that same staff secured new funding and was able to both reimagine GEAR UP Iowa and launch it as GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready in partner schools in the same academic year to maintain much of the momentum the previous programming generated.

The creativity and effectiveness of this pivot was celebrated nationally, with other states and organizations regularly inviting Iowa College Aid to share our experiences and expertise.

GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready is just one of our programs that fills the needs of our growing state as our Local College Access Networks (LCAN), Course To College, College Access, and Virtual College Coach all consistently create a pipeline of future talent to maintain Iowa’s strong and vibrant economy and communities. Iowans that seek a postsecondary degree or credential are supported by more than \$90 million in direct student support that Iowa College Aid provides through its scholarship, grant, and loan forgiveness programs.

Our Postsecondary Authorization team protected that state financial aid and the hard-earned personal investment Iowans make in their education from unscrupulous providers. They authorized 250 schools to offer courses in Iowa and monitor those schools while vetting student disputes.

Every member of our agency supported all of these critical services, including our research staff which continually provided real-time monitoring and evaluation of our programming. Their expertise also evaluated and delivered data-based guidance on many challenges facing postsecondary education, including the impact of the FAFSA Simplification Act. As a result, Iowa College Aid became one of the only organizations to evaluate, model, and project the effects of this change and has served as a trusted source of knowledge not only to our partners in Iowa but throughout the nation.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wiederspan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Mark Wiederspan  
Executive Director  
Iowa College Aid

# IOWA COLLEGE AID

Our motto, “Because College Changes Everything,” is borne out in the many and varied benefits of higher education. As individuals, college graduates earn higher wages, are more likely to hold jobs, and report greater satisfaction with their lives. As workers, they make their communities economically stronger and more competitive. As taxpayers, they contribute more while relying less on social services. As members of their communities, they are more likely to be active by donating, voting, and volunteering. As parents, they raise children who are more likely to go to college, extending the advantages through generations.

Just as the benefits of higher education spread across many areas, increasing college access and success requires a multitude of interconnected efforts. Iowa College Aid supports students and families through every step of the college-going process with services and aid that reach students directly, along with initiatives based in schools and communities.

GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready works in partnership with local school districts to build school capacity to improve early awareness and access to college and career possibilities for low-income and underserved students in the state. The program provides activities like academic coaching, skill building, and campus and workplace visits to encourage students to begin planning their paths beyond high school. GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready program specifically works with partner schools to address the impacts of the pandemic on student outcomes.

Course to College also offers tools and resources for school counselors and other college access professionals as they create a college-going culture in their schools and communities. This step-by-step program creates a navigable path to guide students and their families through each step of the college-going process. At the student level, AmeriCorps College Access Coaches offer direct assistance in-person, virtually, and via text messaging. Websites, social media, and free publications guide students and families through the complex process of applying for college and financial aid.

Local College Access Networks (LCAN) partner with leaders from the business, education, and nonprofit sectors to identify and address barriers to postsecondary education in specific communities and populations. Through LCANs, Iowa College Aid invests in community efforts to improve college and career possibilities and supports community-led efforts to improve college attainment.

Our work is not finished when students enroll in college. Financial, academic, and social support continue to be key to their success. Grant and scholarship programs for Iowa undergraduates increase their chances of graduating and reduce the amount of debt they incur by distributing nearly \$90 million in aid. Our community engagement division, through AmeriCorps College Coaches and Course to College, as part of the Future Ready Iowa Mentoring Program also supports students’ transition into and through college.

Support also takes the form of consumer protection. Iowa College Aid is the state agency that evaluates and authorizes higher education institutions to operate in Iowa or to offer distance education to Iowans. In that role, we also handle student questions, concerns, and complaints.

Along with all these student-directed services, Iowa College Aid has a research team that produces trusted, reliable data about higher education in Iowa. This information might be as broad as a statewide report or as targeted as a dashboard for a single legislative district. Sound research helps us analyze our own programs and helps stakeholders make informed, data-driven decisions that benefit Iowans.

These intertwined efforts are difficult to capture in a brief description, but we hope this report will help you understand both their individual functions and their interconnections. Together, they all work toward fulfilling our mission and vision, always with “Because College Changes Everything” foremost in our minds.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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## OUR MISSION

We advocate for and support Iowans as they explore, finance, and complete educational opportunities beyond high school to increase family and community success.

## OUR MOTTO

Because college changes everything.

## OUR VISION

All Iowans can achieve an education beyond high school.

## AGENCY STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Be a trusted source of information for Iowa residents and higher education stakeholders on postsecondary education access, affordability, success, and completion.
2. Align programs and services with the postsecondary needs of Iowa residents and key stakeholders.
3. Increase and align resources to support agency programs and services.

# AGENCY HISTORY

- 1963** Higher Education Facilities Commission created to administer federal grants for construction of academic facilities
- 1960s** Becomes state-designated guarantor for the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP); begins administering state grants, scholarships and loan forgiveness
- 1969** Iowa Tuition Grant begins
- 1973** Iowa Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant begins
- 1978** Renamed Iowa College Student Aid Commission
- 1996** Iowa National Guard Educational Assistance Grant (NGEAP) begins
- 2007** All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship begins
- 2008** First GEAR UP Iowa grant begins
- 2009** I Have a Plan Iowa (IHAPI) begins
- 2010** FFELP eliminated; sponsors Iowa Financial Literacy Program (IFLP)
- 2012** FFELP portfolio transferred to Ascendium Education Group, then known as Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation; Kibbie Grant (Iowa Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant) begins
- 2013** Course to College (then known as 3-Step Process) begins
- 2014** First Local College Access Network (LCAN) begins; second GEAR UP Iowa grant begins
- 2015** IFLP transferred to Iowa Insurance Division
- 2016** Iowa Go Alliance Academy begins
- 2017** Course to College Corps (the precursor to College Access and College Success AmeriCorps) begins
- 2018** Iowa College & Career Readiness Academy replaces Iowa Go Alliance Academy
- 2019** Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship and Future Ready Iowa Grant begin
- 2020** Virtual College Coach begins. Rural Veterinary Loan Repayment Program begins
- 2022** GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready launches; The Postsecondary Attainment Institute, Iowa College's Aid 501(c)(3), is formed. Mental Health Professional Loan Repayment Program begins

# FY22 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## Ms. Sherry Bates



Regent, State Board of Regents  
Represents State Board of Regents

## Dr. Kathleen Mulholland, Chair



Represents general public\*

## Ms. Barbara Sloniker



Represents parents of Iowa students\*

## Sen. Chris Cournoyer



Represents Iowa Senate\*\*

## Dr. Terry Murrell



President, Western Iowa Tech  
Represents community colleges\*

## Ms. Emily Stork



Represents general public\*

## Rep. Cecil Dolecheck



Represents Iowa House\*\*

## Dr. Mark Putnam



President, Central College  
Represents private colleges and universities\*

## Mr. Jeremy Swink



Represents K-12 practitioners\*

## Mr. Timothy Fitzgibbon



Represents general public\*

## Sen. Herman Quirnbach



Represents Iowa Senate\*\*

## Mr. Jeremy Varner



Division Administrator, Community Colleges  
Represents Iowa Department of Education

## Ms. Melissa Hidalgo



Represents Iowa college students\*

## Mr. Doug Shull, Vice Chair



Represents general public\*

## Rep. Cindy Winckler

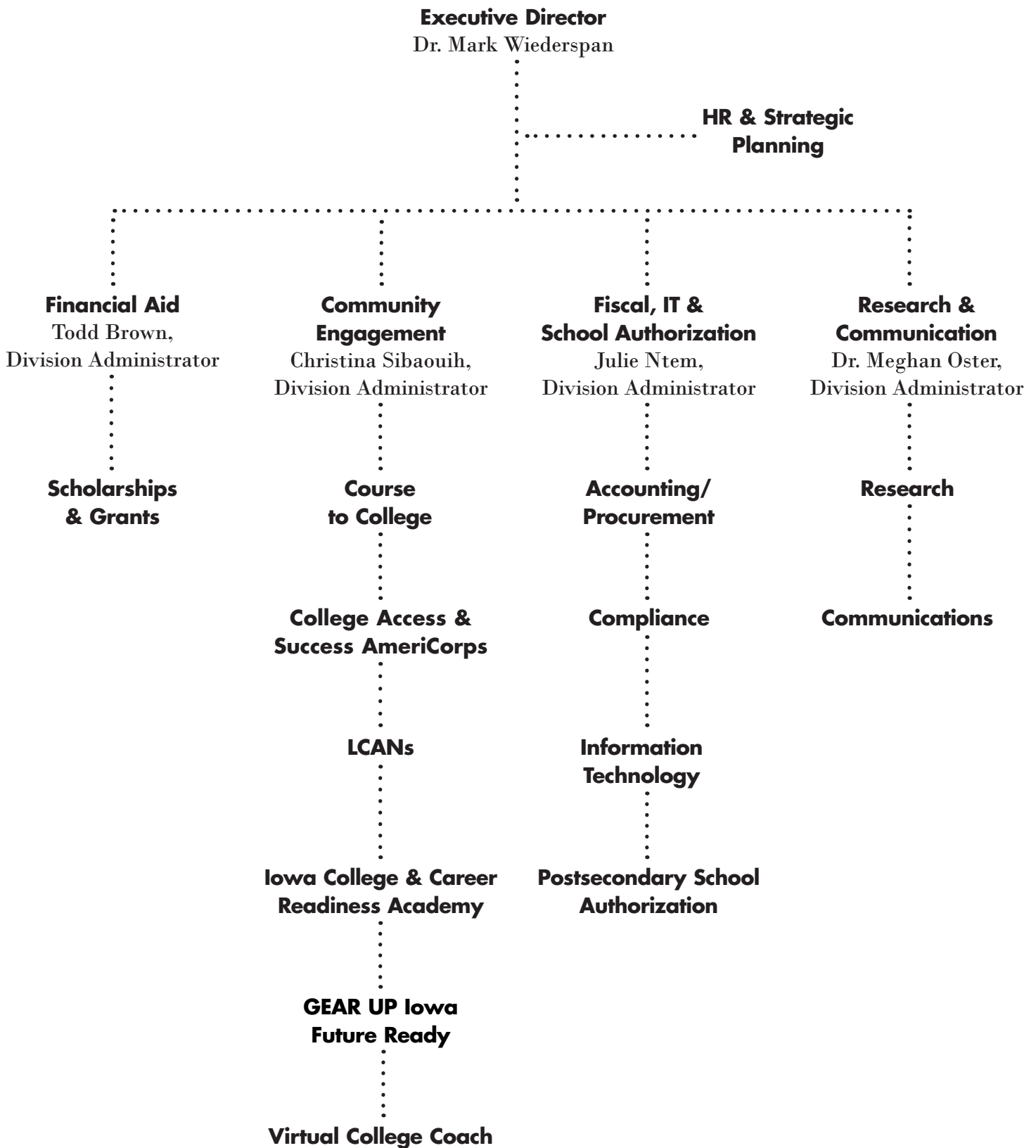


Represents Iowa House\*\*

\*Appointed by the Governor

\*\*Ex officio (nonvoting)

# DIVISIONS & TEAMS





# FY22 IN REVIEW

## JULY 2021

- The Postsecondary Authorization team worked with the Iowa Attorney General's Office to prepare a bond claim of \$5,441 for students affected by Inspirit Institute's sudden closure in Dubuque in February 2020.
- Twelve communities joined as Local College Access Networks (LCANs) for the 2021-22 year. Of the 12 LCANs, 10 were returning communities, and two, Perry LCAN and Brother To Brother, were new LCAN communities.
- GEAR UP Iowa staff presented at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) conference. The presentation, titled 'FAFSA Growth that Defied the Odds,' discussed GEAR UP Iowa's successful FAFSA interventions during the pandemic.

## AUGUST 2021

- The Virtual College Coach Program expanded to include ninth and 10th-grade students and their parents/guardians in the texting campaign. The expansion allows the Virtual College Coach to assist all high school students and their families.
- We welcomed 15 counselors to Des Moines for College and Career Transition (CCTC) orientation. The program created counselor positions to work directly through Iowa's community colleges and partner high schools throughout Iowa.
- Registrations launched for three new courses for the fall College & Career Readiness Academy.
- Staff members engaged with Iowans in person at Iowa College Aid's booth at the Iowa State Fair. Thousands of Iowa College Aid publications and branded items were distributed, and staff had the opportunity to have productive conversations with Iowans about college and financial aid.
- Three Iowans were awarded the Terry E. Branstad State Fair Scholarship during a ceremony at the Iowa State Fair. Ruby Hummel (Panorama High School), Gavin Tindale (Montezuma High School), and Sierra Wegener (Northeast Middle-High School) all received \$2,000 to attend an Iowa college or university.
- The Iowa College Aid Board of Commissioners appointed Dr. Terry Murrell to the Board of Commissioners. Dr. Murrell is the president of Western Iowa Tech Community College.

## SEPTEMBER 2021

- Iowa College Aid hosts a series of virtual events via Zoom to help students and parents create their FSA ID in preparation for the opening of FAFSA applications. More than 50 Iowans participated in the events and received direct support from our staff.
- We partnered with ICAN to host a week of virtual 'Back On Track' events designed to help students, parents, and counselors prepare for the college planning process with the new school year. Information about deciding, applying, financing, and other college-going subjects were covered extensively. More than 200 students and families participated in the events, and recordings were shared publicly with all Course To College enrolled schools.
- Staff hosted a series of #WhyApply Day panels to gauge the program's impact. As a result, many students stated they felt inspired and supported due to the campaign that generated hope and motivation.

- Iowa College Aid celebrated National GEAR UP Week, Sept. 20-24. Governor Reynolds participated via a proclamation, and our staff celebrated the successes and accomplishments of many GEAR UP students via social media.

## OCTOBER 2021

- The 2022-23 financial aid cycle begins as more than 700 Iowans completed their Iowa Financial Aid applications in the first five days of the cycle to mark an increase over the early numbers from the previous cycle.
- Iowa College Aid, ICAN, and FAFSA stakeholders partnered to celebrate Oct. 11-15 at Iowa FAFSA Awareness Week. The week included a series of events to reverse the declining FAFSA completion trend in Iowa. In addition, more than 170 Iowans registered for the statewide virtual FAFSA Step-by-Step event hosted with ICAN.
- The Community Engagement team's efforts ramped up in the fall with 55 college application and FAFSA events occurring around the state. One of those events, an #ApplicationDay at South Tama High School, resulted in more than 100 students committing to postsecondary education plans.
- Our LCAN staff hosted a day-long LCAN Coordinator Gathering that featured training, discussion and peer-to-peer learning. In addition, the event featured a panel of Year IV LCAN coordinators, sessions on sustainability and continuous improvement, and LCAN meeting management.
- Iowa College Aid staff continued to lead national discussions as they presented at several National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) conference sessions. One of those sessions detailed Iowa College Aid's groundbreaking research into the effects of the EFC to SAI transition. The conference also marked Iowa College Aid division administrator Todd Brown's final year as NASSGAP President.
- Iowa College Aid's expertise was also sought out in Iowa as executive director Dr. Mark Wiederspan participated in a day of discussion on postsecondary enrollment trends as part of the Cedar Rapids Gazette's Iowa Ideas Conference.

## NOVEMBER 2021

- Iowa College Aid's staff of experts continued to earn recognition as Tristan Lynn was named the Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (IASFAA) John C. Parker Distinguished Service Award winner. The award recognizes an individual's sustained accomplishment in the field and focuses on the recipient's call to service and achievement in support of IASFAA.
- FAFSA report distribution begins as all public high schools in Iowa receive the reports for the fourth consecutive year. In 2021-22, private high schools were added to the recipients for the first time. Schools could also display their FAFSA completion goals on the reports.
- All Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship recipients were added into the Virtual College Coach texting program. Enrolling these students into the program gives success coaches direct access to assist the scholarship recipients and serve them with one of our best outreach tools. Weeks after the initial opt-in, more than 90 percent of the students remained opted into the program.
- The Teach Iowa Scholar Program received 180 applications, including 52 renewal applications for the program that provides awards of up to \$4,000 a year, for a maximum of five years, for those teaching in designated shortage areas in Iowa.

## DECEMBER 2021

- Our LCAN leaders continued to earn recognition for their work in the communities they serve by the Iowa School Counselor Association (ISCA). Jen Wolleson, the Carroll Regional College Access Network Coordinator, was named the ISCA's Advocate of the Year. The Carroll Regional Access Network serves 10 communities in western Iowa and aims to raise FAFSA completion rates, offer local college and career-readiness events, and raise awareness of the Last-Dollar Scholarship.
- The Carroll LCAN also helped secure a Career Advantage Incentive Fund grant to create a regional center in Templeton, Iowa. LCAN staff will partner with DMACC staff to provide services to students at IKM-Manning, Coon Rapids-Bayard, Audubon, and Exira-EHK high schools.
- The American College Application Campaign highlighted Iowa College Aid's pandemic-related pivot to providing virtual services as staff detailed its efforts in hosting virtual application fairs, FAFSA completion nights, and decision celebrations.
- More than 20 colleges participated in Iowa College Aid's application fair. Colleges offered half-hour sessions with students to assist in completing their applications before the winter break. In addition, our Course to College schools provided students time during the school day to attend the sessions and offered extra assistance to students that still needed to get their applications submitted.

## JANUARY 2022

- GEAR UP Iowa hosts its advisory board to focus on ways to support schools and students with educational field trips and campus visits.
- Iowa College Aid submits two bills at the start of the legislative session that quickly pass through subcommittees and committees in both houses. One of the bills altered eligibility requirements for the Last-Dollar Scholarship, and the other made changes to institutions required to register with Iowa College Aid.
- At Iowa College Aid's request, all six members of Iowa's congressional delegation submit a letter to the U.S. Department of Education to address shortcomings in the GEAR UP funding review process.

## FEBRUARY 2022

- Iowa College Aid's financial aid program specialist Tristan Lynn was named treasurer-elect for the Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (IASFAA).
- A total of 1,177 students were designated as eligible to receive the Karen Misjak GEAR UP Iowa Scholarship. Eligible students receive up to \$1,500 per semester.
- Iowa College Aid celebrated National School Counseling Week Feb. 10-14 by featuring nominated counselors on social media.
- The Iowa College Aid staff was issued new laptop computers to engage in a hybrid work environment that allows many staff members to work more efficiently and remotely as they travel throughout the state to serve Iowans.
- The relaunch of GEAR UP Iowa as GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready begins with outreach to 11 school districts to start mapping and planning the reimplementation of the programming in those schools.

## MARCH 2022

- The Rural Iowa Veterinarian Loan Repayment program received 30 applications with six applicants selected for the award.
- Applications for the Terry E. Branstad Iowa State Fair Scholarship also closed, with 76 applications received.
- The All-Iowa Opportunity Scholarship also closed with increased numbers as 5,735 applications were received, with 1,000 students being awarded the scholarship.
- Iowa College Aid released its annual Student & Faculty Diversity Report that summarizes the representation of minority students and faculty at Iowa colleges and universities.
- Our Dubuque Local College Access Network continued to support its community with back-to-back days of test preparation and college and career fairs.
- At the March 18 Board of Commissioners meeting, the board unanimously approved the creation of the Postsecondary Attainment Institute. The Postsecondary Attainment Institute is a 501(c)(3) that will support and enhance the mission of Iowa College Aid and be able to disburse funds from public and private sources to support Iowa College Aid.
- Iowa College Aid published its Last-Dollar Scholarship Semester Report detailing recipients' enrollment status, ethnicity, progress, location, and top programs.

## APRIL 2022

- GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready is officially awarded funding through American Rescue Plan funds approved by Governor Reynolds. Iowa College Aid immediately deployed plans in 11 partner districts – Centerville, Clinton, Columbus Junction, Davenport, Davis County, Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Marshalltown, Saydel, South Tama, and Storm Lake.
- Less than a week after officially relaunching, GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready organizes its first campus visits as staff coordinates visits to Simpson College for students from Marshalltown and Columbus Junction.
- Iowa College Aid staff penned a letter to Iowa's Congressional Delegation and engaged in advocacy with members of the delegation regarding a provision in the FAFSA Simplification Act that may negatively impact Iowans by including the net worth of family farms and small businesses as assets.
- Iowa College Aid participates with the Iowa Jump\$tart Coalition to promote Financial Literacy Awareness Month. A proclamation from Governor Reynolds celebrates the month.
- The Health Care Loan Repayment program received a record number of applications with 181.
- The Massachusetts Board of Education asked Iowa College Aid's postsecondary authorization staff members to detail Iowa's surety bond claim laws and success in claiming bonds on behalf of affected students.
- Mason City High School, an Iowa College Aid Course To College partner, was named a School of Excellence by the American College Application Campaign (ACAC). Mason City was one of 19 high schools in the country to earn the honor based on a demonstrated commitment to student success.

- The Midwestern Higher Education Compact awarded Iowa College Aid \$5,000 in grant funds to support Iowa's SARA-related processes. The grant funds a newly established Student Protection Fund that reimburses tuition and financial losses to students impacted by a sudden school closure.
- Iowa College Aid selected the three recipients of the 2022 Governor Terry E. Branstad Iowa State Fair Scholarship that will receive \$2,000 to attend an Iowa college or university.
- More than 60 high schools register to be Course To College partners during the first month of enrollment for the program.
- The application process for Local College Access Network grants begins for 2022-23.

## **MAY 2022**

- Governor Reynolds joins Iowa College Aid staff in declaring May as College Decision Month. The month-long celebration recognized the importance of Iowans' decisions to continue their education and training.
- As part of College Decision Month, Iowa College Aid helped host celebrations with 17 high schools and more than 1,600 students participating. Iowa colleges, Iowa Workforce Development and the Governor's office joined in the celebrations to congratulate those seniors. Virtual celebrations also recognized a unique education/career path and celebrated the students choosing those respective paths.
- The Story County Local College Access Network joined other community organizations to host a Youth Summer Job Fair with 32 local businesses. More than 400 students participated in the event, including a resume-building workshop.
- Iowa College Aid selected 32 AmeriCorps student leaders to serve in 16 high schools during the 2022-23 school year. The student leaders serve as peer mentors to assist fellow students in completing the necessary steps to pursue postsecondary education.

## **JUNE 2022**

- The Postsecondary Attainment Institute was officially recognized and approved by the State of Iowa.
- Iowa College Aid hired 11 school counselors from 12 partner districts to serve as summer FAFSA associates funded through the College Access and Success AmeriCorps Grant. The summer FAFSA associates aim to prevent summer melt, increase FAFSA completion, and assist with the transition from high school to college.
- Iowa College Aid executive director Dr. Mark Wiederspan and division administrator Todd Brown presented to the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) on the FAFSA Simplification Act's impact on the Iowa Tuition Grant Program. The presentation was one of the most highly attended NASSGAP sessions this year.

# FINANCIAL AID

**\$90M**

State appropriations

**7**

Scholarship and grant programs

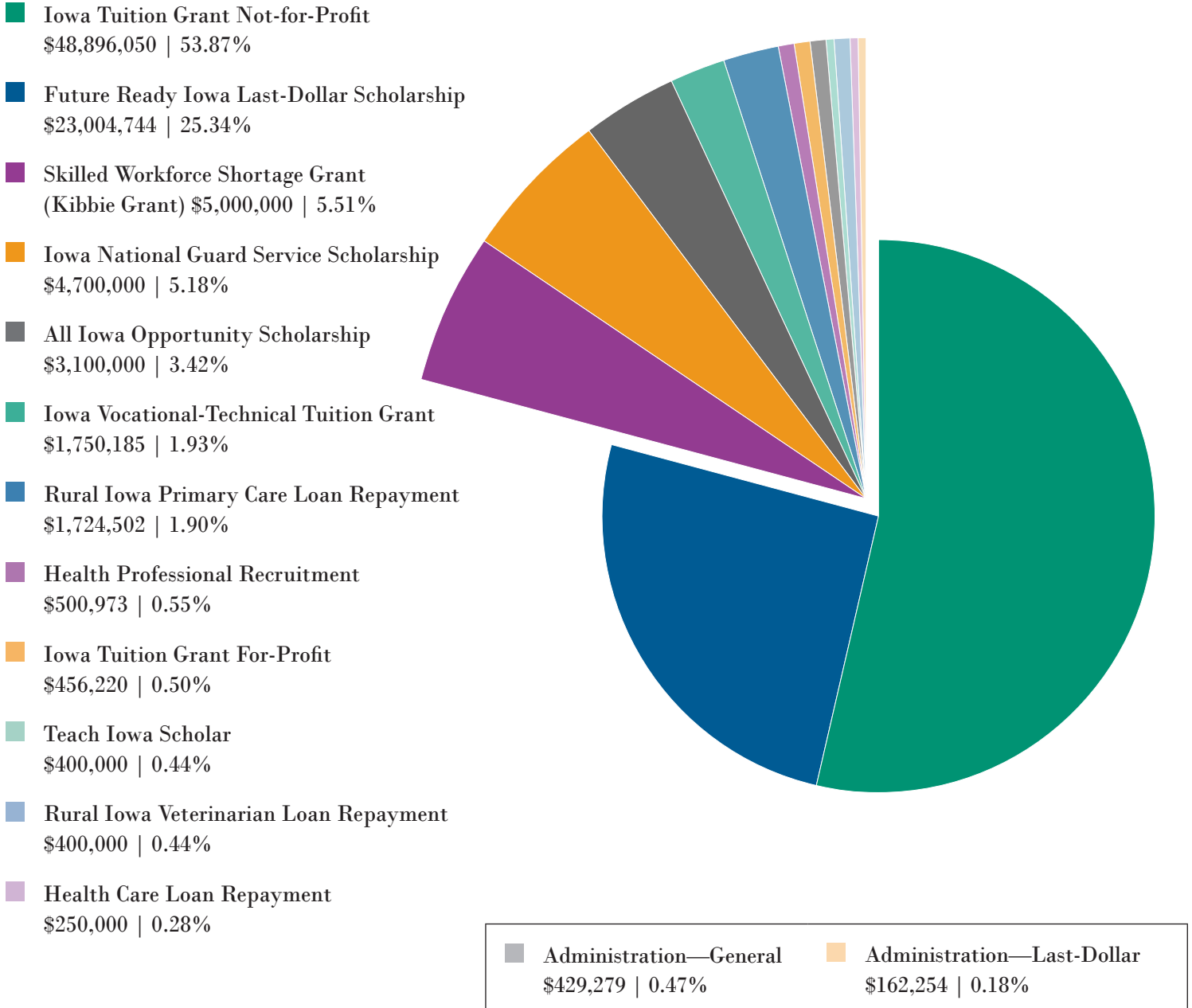
**5**

Loan forgiveness programs

**28K+**

Awards made in FY22

## FY 2022 state appropriations: \$90,774,207



## Scholarship & Grant Reserve Fund balance

Beginning balance for FY22: \$898,627.56

Ending balance: \$882,364.16

Iowa College Aid administers the Scholarship and Grant Reserve Fund authorized in Iowa Code Section 261.20 “to alleviate a current fiscal year shortfall in appropriations for scholarship or tuition grant programs that have the same nature as the programs for which the monies were originally appropriated.” The maximum balance is two percent of the funds appropriated to the Iowa Tuition Grant and Iowa Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant programs.

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### State-funded scholarships and grants

#### **All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship:**

Need-based assistance for students at risk of not pursuing higher education because of social and financial barriers.

#### **Future Ready Iowa Grant:**

For Iowa residents returning to school for a bachelor’s degree in a high-demand program of study.

#### **Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship:**

For Iowa residents working toward a certificate, diploma, or associate’s degree in a high-demand program of study.

#### **Iowa National Guard Service Scholarship:**

For members of Iowa Air and Army National Guard units in undergraduate programs at Iowa colleges and universities.

#### **Iowa Tuition Grant For-Profit:**

Need-based assistance for Iowa residents in undergraduate programs at Iowa’s for-profit private colleges and universities.

#### **Iowa Tuition Grant Not-for-Profit:**

Need-based assistance for Iowa residents in undergraduate programs at Iowa’s not-for-profit private colleges and universities.

#### **Iowa Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant:**

Need-based assistance for Iowa residents in career or technical programs of study at Iowa community colleges.

#### **Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition (Kibbie) Grant:**

Need-based assistance for Iowa residents in high-demand career or technical programs of study at Iowa community colleges.

**State-funded loan repayment programs**

**Health Care Loan Repayment:**

For nurse educators teaching full-time at eligible Iowa colleges and universities, as well as registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who practice in high-need communities.

**Health Professional Recruitment:**

Health care professionals who graduate from eligible Iowa colleges and universities and practice in high-need communities in Iowa.

**Rural Iowa Primary Care Loan Repayment:**

For graduates of Des Moines University or the University of Iowa who practice in specified rural Iowa communities.

**Rural Iowa Veterinarian Loan Repayment:**

For veterinarians in their final year of a doctor of veterinary medicine program or those who have graduated in the last five years and are practicing in specified rural locations.

**Teach Iowa Scholar:**

For highly qualified Iowa teachers who teach in designated shortage areas.

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**Other aid programs administered by Iowa College Aid**

**Education & Training Voucher:**

Federal program for students who are or were in foster care or who were adopted from foster care.

**Karen Misjak GEAR UP Iowa Scholarship:**

For students that participated in GEAR UP Iowa at partner schools.

**Governor Terry E. Branstad Iowa State Fair Scholarship:**

For outstanding Iowa high school seniors who have strong academic and leadership credentials and have actively participated in the Iowa State Fair.



<b>Program</b>	<b>Initial appropriation</b>	<b>Total applicants</b>	<b>Unduplicated recipients</b>	<b>Total awards</b>	<b>Average award</b>	<b>Max award for FY22</b>
Iowa Tuition Grant Not-for-Profit	\$48,896,050	22,195	8,891	\$48,860,179	\$5,495	\$6,800
Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship	\$23,004,744	22,033	7,764	\$21,495,093	\$2,769	NA
Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant	\$5,000,000	19,360	4,299	\$5,217,068	\$1,214	\$3,000
Iowa National Guard Service Scholarship	\$4,700,000	1,423	1,001	\$5,963,269	\$5,957	\$9,659
All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship	\$3,100,000	5,584	747	\$3,128,282	\$4,188	\$4,772
Iowa Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant	\$1,750,185	19,360	2,559	\$1,804,219	\$705	\$1,000
Rural Iowa Primary Care Loan Repayment	\$1,724,502	17	17	\$3,171,819	\$186,578	\$200,000
Future Ready Iowa Grant	\$0	800	18	\$68,125	\$3,785	\$5,000
Iowa Tuition Grant For-Profit	\$456,220	705	210	\$429,943	\$2,047	\$3,000
Health Professional Recruitment	\$500,973	47	33	\$1,077,555	\$32,653	\$50,000
Teach Iowa Scholar	\$400,000	180	82	\$328,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Rural Iowa Veterinarian Loan Repayment	\$400,000	30	6	\$360,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Health Care Loan Repayment	\$250,000	181	54	\$246,014	\$4,556	\$6,000
Karen Misjak GEAR UP Iowa Scholarship	NA	3,133	2,584	\$3,408,288	\$1,319	\$1,500
Education & Training Voucher	\$1,306,113	359	146	\$1,131,772	\$7,752	\$12,000
Governor Terry E. Branstad Iowa State Fair Scholarship	NA	73	3	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$2,000

# COURSE TO COLLEGE

**150**

High schools participated

**41**

High schools opted to be partner sites

**360**

Public high schools received FAFSA reports

## Prepare, Apply, Finance, Decide, Go

This program supports high schools in creating a college-going culture through five steps: Prepare, Apply, Finance, Decide, and Go. Schools choose from two levels of involvement: Participant and Partner. Partner sites commit to host events and to distribute coordinator surveys.

Our annual “College Decision Day” has expanded far beyond one-day celebrations at individual schools. In FY22 year we held statewide events throughout April and May and our first “College Decision Week.” Each day from May 16-20, we recognized high school seniors who made the decision to pursue postsecondary education. Each day focused on celebrating a different education or training pathway and those who made the important decision to pursue their pathway to their career goals.

These statewide events capture our commitment to bring more services directly to students with combined virtual and in-person events focused on partnerships within our communities. Continued collaborations with partners such as ICAN has helped expand the reach and impact of these events with more than 100 Iowa high schools registering their events with Iowa College Aid.

This was the fourth year that we offered automated FAFSA completion reports—and the fourth year that all Iowa public high schools signed up to receive them. It was also the first year we have offered this valuable resource to Iowa’s private high schools and we were encouraged by the participation from those schools.

## Statewide events

Thousands of students individually participated in our statewide in-person and virtual events. Additionally dozens of high school counselors participated in our weekly calls.

- Why Apply Panel - Sept. 17, 2021
- College Prep Virtual Conference - Sept. 20-23, 2021
- Statewide Application Fair - Dec. 6-16, 2021
- FAFSA Line-By-Line - Oct. 13, 2021
- College Decision Week - May 16-20, 2022



“Thank you so much for all your communication. Hoover counselors appreciate all the information and knowledge you deliver each week.”

—Tracy Levang  
Hoover High School

# COLLEGE ACCESS & SUCCESS AMERICORPS

23

College Access  
student leaders in  
12 schools

12

Summer  
FAFSA associates

3

College Success  
coaches

8K+

Member  
hours

## Removing barriers to college

AmeriCorps members, placed by Iowa College Aid in high schools and community colleges, work to remove barriers to college access, success, and completion. They provide customized direct support to students, as well as capacity development for schools and colleges.

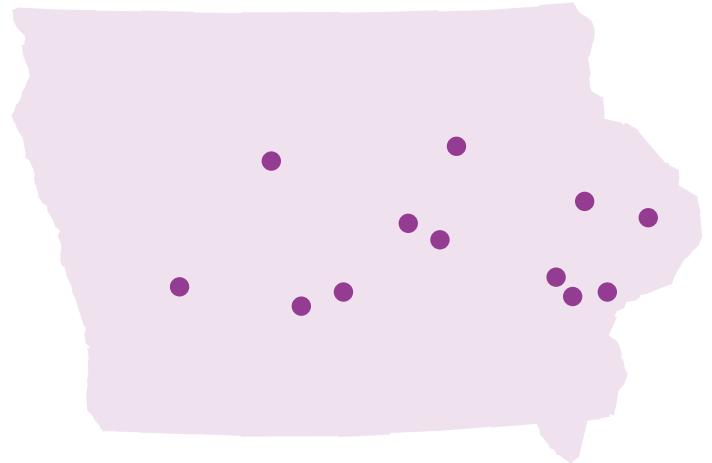
College Access Coaches follow Iowa College Aid's Course to College program to help high schools create a college-going culture by:

- Preparing students for college.
- Helping students apply to college.
- Ensuring students complete a FAFSA and research all finance options.
- Celebrating students' decisions about postsecondary education.

College Success Coaches support college students by:

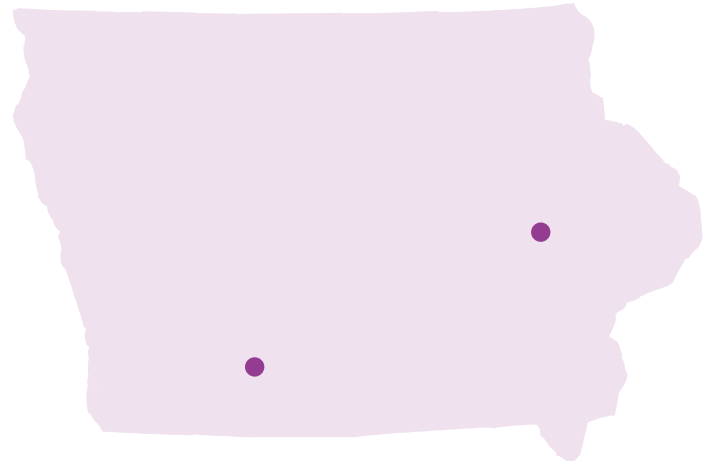
- Promoting the Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship and throughout Iowa and ensuring award recipients remain eligible.
- Assisting incoming students with the transition from high school graduation to their college campus.
- Providing individualized holistic college success services to current college students.

## College Access



## College Success

Including one state-wide virtual coach



"Students began requesting me by name and it was an impactful experience to know students wanted to discuss their financial aid and college experience. Eventually others on campus would refer to me as a Last-Dollar Scholarship expert. I entered this position without much knowledge but these moments in my external environment showed me I was making a difference."

— John Lyons (College Success Coach at Kirkwood Community College)



# LOCAL COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORKS

11

Communities funded

\$545K

Awarded in grants

163

Leadership team members

150+

College-going events hosted

## Collective Impact to raise attainment

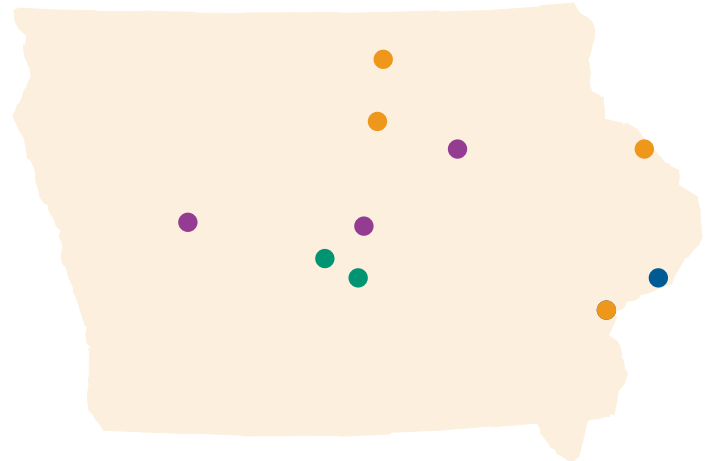
Local College Access Networks (LCANs) work in communities to raise college attainment. Iowa College Aid provides funding, training, and technical assistance to align the efforts of the education, government, business, and nonprofit sectors—a model known as Collective Impact. The total awarded in FY22 was \$545,375. Of the 11 LCANs funded, nine are centered on a geographic area, while two are specific to a statewide student demographic.



“The Carroll Regional College Access Network is working collectively to increase post-secondary attainment in Carroll and surrounding counties. The team is making progress on collaborative initiatives to increase FAFSA completion, increase awareness of the Last-Dollar Scholarship, and implementing a summer melt program.”

- Jen Wollesen,  
Carroll Regional CAN  
Coordinator

## LCAN communities



### YEAR I

Brother To Brother (Des Moines)  
Future Ready Perry

### YEAR II

Quad Cities CAN

### YEAR III

Black Hawk County CAN  
Carroll Area CAN  
Latinos CAN\*

OPT-in CAN for System Involved Youth\*  
Story County CAN

### YEAR IV

Aligned Impact Muscatine (AIM)  
Dubuque CAN  
Mason City CAN

\*Statewide

# IOWA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ACADEMY

66

Enrolled in courses

29

Schools and agencies  
enrolled

8

Courses available

## Continuing ed for college access professionals

This suite of eight Iowa-specific online courses helps college access and success professionals provide equitable postsecondary opportunities for all students. Participants who complete the first three courses are certified as College Access Professionals; those who complete five courses are certified as College Access Specialists. Equity Badges and Specialist Certificates are awarded to those who complete six courses

Iowa College & Career Readiness Academy graduates help their schools and districts develop practices that lead to postsecondary success, ensuring that all students—especially low-income and first-generation—have access to postsecondary opportunities. Participants learn to effectively prepare students for education beyond high school, whether through on-the-job training or at a trade school, college or university.



## Courses offered

- 101: Foundations of College and Career Readiness in Iowa
- 201: Creating Iowa's College and Career Readiness Culture
- 301: Systems and Optimization
- 401: Planning and the District's Role in Creating a Student-Centered Career and Academic Plan
- 501: Introduction to Planning, Accessing and Financing Postsecondary Opportunities
- 601: Advanced Equity Issues In Planning, Accessing and Financing Postsecondary Opportunities
- 602: Supporting College & Career Readiness For Systems-Involved Students
- 701: College & Career Readiness for K-5 School Counselors and Educators

“One of the benefits of taking Iowa College & Career Readiness Academy courses include getting to learn more about some of the initiatives, programs, strategies and data that impact college and career readiness support in our state. Participants leave the courses with both an action plan of how to implement new strategies and a resource bank of new colleagues to support that work.”

— Mark Shea, Postsecondary Success Lead, Northwest AEA & CCR Academy Facilitator



# GEAR UP IOWA FUTURE READY

18

High school partners

11

School districts

9

College partner grantee sites

933

Students received a form of service

## GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready launches

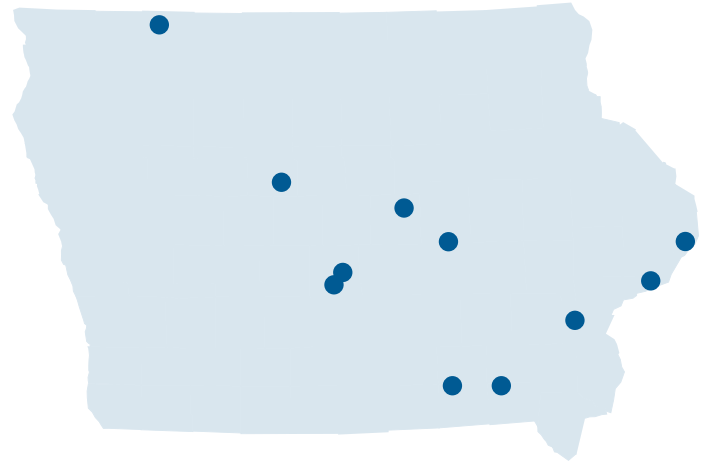
GEAR UP Iowa succeeded through an array of adversity during FY22 as the program was denied critical federal funding. However, GEAR UP Iowa's leadership and staff quickly pivoted and were able to secure four years of funding to provide many of the same essential services as GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready.

The same staff dedication and commitment allowed it to launch targeted support to partner districts to address the impacts of COVID-19. Services started in six school districts in March and expanded to 11 districts by August, 2022.

Since the return of GEAR UP Iowa Future Ready, students have participated in and received:

- Nearly a dozen campus visits.
- Career fairs and career site visits.
- Face-to-face support, virtual support and texting to ensure students are aware of the resources available.
- Sessions focused on self care, sense of belonging, and balancing student life and academic success.
- Virtual mentoring support through the Virtual College Coach.

## GEAR UP Iowa districts



- Centerville
- Clinton
- Columbus Junction
- Davenport
- Davis County
- Des Moines
- Fort Dodge
- Marshalltown
- Saydel
- South Tama
- Storm Lake



GEAR UP has provided opportunities to our students that could not happen without the program in our school. A free tutoring program offered every day and a College and Career Fair are just a couple of examples of programs that are impacting every student in our building as a result of GEAR UP.

– Taylor Lux, Saydel GEAR UP Coach

# VIRTUAL COLLEGE COACH

**9K+**

Students enrolled

**185K**

Text messages  
sent

**13K**

Text messages  
received

## Participation in Virtual College Coach remains steady

Student engagement in our text messaging platform continued to grow over FY22 with more than 9,000 students enrolled in the program. Starting from 907 students in the program’s first year, the Virtual College Coach has continued to grow and received a huge boost this past year with the enrollment of all Last-Dollar Scholarship recipients. Nearly 80 percent of all Last-Dollar Scholarship recipients remain opted into the service, demonstrating the Virtual College Coach’s effectiveness and ability to assist those students.

In addition to adding Last-Dollar Scholarship recipients, Virtual College Coach also expanded to offer its services to all high school grade levels and their guardians. Each grade level now receives personalized information to assist them as their specific point in the college-going process.

As the program enters its third year, its growth continues as texting campaigns are added for school counselors and college access professionals to offer assistance to those on the frontlines of directly affecting students’ decision to pursue a postsecondary education. The program is also engaging in vigorous research to determine the most effective strategies to market the Virtual College Coach in schools.

## Text Messaging Metrics as of June 30, 2022

	Future Ready Iowa / LDS	College Access
Enrolled	8,522	648
Messages sent	167,671	17,010
Messages received from students	13,214	1,001
Engagement	62.9%	40.0%

# POSTSECONDARY SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION

250

Schools registered/  
authorized

174

Based in Iowa

76

Based out of state

18

Student dispute  
cases vetted

## Program oversight and consumer protection

Iowa College Aid is the state agency that authorizes postsecondary schools to operate in Iowa and to offer postsecondary education programs to Iowans, whether from a physical location in Iowa or via distance education. The Postsecondary School Authorization team also ensures that students receive the consumer and financial protections afforded under Iowa law.

Our agency accepts questions and complaints from any student attending an Iowa postsecondary school and from Iowa residents attending any postsecondary school in the United States.

The team monitors schools under its oversight and takes action, when possible, to close Iowa enrollment when a school is in danger of closing. When Iowa students are displaced by a sudden closure, the team provides advice about options for debt relief or transfer.

## Covered schools

Postsecondary schools that fall under Iowa College Aid's authority include:

- Degree-granting colleges and universities
- Non-degree postsecondary schools
- Other types of schools and education providers such as:
  - Personal driver's education schools
  - Real estate, mortgage, and appraisal schools
  - Private non-degree allied health schools
  - Cosmetology, barbering, and massage therapy schools
  - Schools of religious study
  - Other non-degree vocational schools
  - Continuing education schools

## State requirements

To offer postsecondary instruction to Iowans, a school must be authorized under one of the following:

- Registration
- Exemption from Registration
- State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)
- Financial Responsibility
- Financial Responsibility Exemption

In addition, some schools might be required to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Student consumer protection laws including a surety bond or letter of credit payable to the State of Iowa
- Compliance with Iowa's tuition refund policy for students who withdraw
- Disclosures to students about total program cost; estimated fees for license exams or fees charged by others to obtain a credential; the percentage of students who complete or terminate the program; and additional disclosures if a school makes income or placement claims.





# RESEARCH

**49%**

of Iowa high school seniors filed the FAFSA

**60%**

of Iowa high school graduates enrolled in college in the fall after graduation

**139K**

Iowans enrolled in postsecondary education

**70%**

of recent high school graduates that enrolled in college earned a credential within six years.

## Trusted source of data

In addition to continuous evaluation of Iowa College Aid programs, our Research team provides analytics and insight for higher education stakeholders, the media, and the general public. We continue to deliver every Iowa legislator with an individual dashboard detailing high school graduation rates, FAFSA filing rates, college-going rates, educational attainment level, financial aid recipients and dollar amounts, and participation in Iowa College Aid programs for their House or Senate district. Much of our research can be found on our Higher Education Data Center ([IowaCollegeAid.gov/DataCenter](http://IowaCollegeAid.gov/DataCenter)).

## EFC to SAI Transition Research

Throughout this year, the research team has continued to work on the transition from the Expected Family Contribution to the Student Aid Index. Staff has presented multiple times to a variety of stakeholders from local stakeholders to national organizations. Additionally, members of Iowa College Aid are a part of a national group examining the change in the formula and developing ways to communicate and market the change in financial aid eligibility to constituents.



## Research projects

- Iowa College Aid research staff continue to participate in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. In July 2021, we participated in a retreat to discuss the future of data in Iowa.
- “FAFSA Filing in Iowa: 2021,” July 2021.
- “The Future of FAFSA Filing in Iowa: Findings and Policy Considerations,” September 2021.
- “Iowa Explores Universal FAFSA Completion,” blog post for the Education Commission of the States, October 2021.
- “Postsecondary Indicators by Gender,” October 2021.
- Presented “Evaluating the EFC to SAI Transition,” at a NASSGAP meeting. October 2021.
- The Enrollment Report illustrated that overall college enrollment declined from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 by about 5,000 students. November 2021.
- “Legislative Aid Reports,” December 2021.
- The annual Student and Faculty Diversity Report found that 39,120 minority students were enrolled at Iowa colleges and universities last fall, representing 19 percent of enrollment. Since these reports began in 1992, the number of racial and ethnic minority students enrolled in Iowa’s colleges and universities has increased by about 300%. March 2022.
- Presented “Evaluating the EFC to SAI Transition,” at a meeting of the independent college presidents. March 2022.

# COMMUNICATIONS

**180K**

Visits to website

**3.4K**

Followers on social media

**98K**

Free publications given away

**30.4K**

Digital newsletter subscriptions

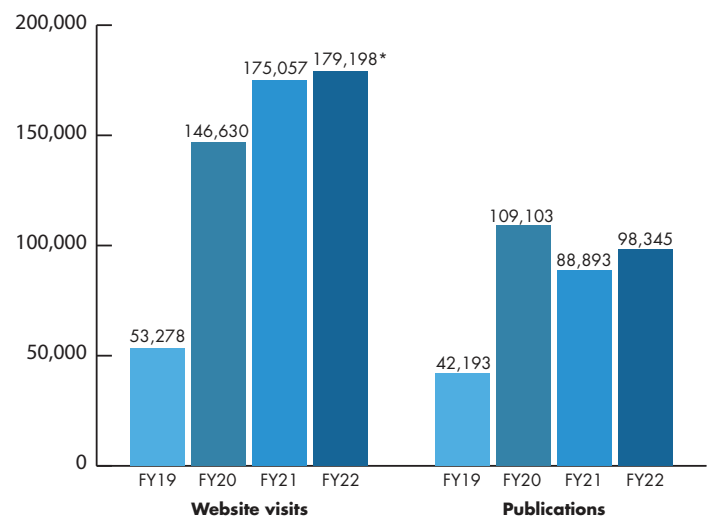
## Daily, weekly, and annual outreach

Through digital and print media, Iowa College Aid puts information in the hands of college-bound students and their families. We maintain websites and social media accounts for both the agency and this past year the website underwent a relaunch. This upgrade put IowaCollegeAid.gov on a much more mobile-friendly platform that helps more Iowans find the resources they are looking for, regardless of how they access the website.

We reach followers daily through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and weekly through our e-newsletters. We also produce annual publications in English and Spanish to help students and families navigate the process of applying for college and financial aid. In FY22, visits to our agency website continued to increase as more Iowans engage with our programs. Distribution of our publications also more than doubled over the last four years, driven by increases in the promotion of Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship and the continued growth of the Course To College program. Our social media following and newsletter subscriptions continued their growth and have seen 81 percent and 200 percent increases, respectively since 2017.



## Year-over-year metrics



\* Only accounts for an eight-month period as website visitors were not tracked during the website migration and transition.

# FINAL FY22 OPERATING EXPENSES

	STATE APPROPRIATED PROGRAMS	STATE MANDATED/ UNFUNDED PROGRAMS*	POSTSECONDARY REGISTRATION	FEDERAL GRANT/ PROGRAMS	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	FFELP/PLP COLLECTIONS, ASCENDIUM**	TOTALS
FY2022 number of programs	14	3	1	5	3	2	28
FY2022 state appropriation/grant (scholarship)	90,782,674						90,782,674
<b>FY2022 state admin/fees/ other</b>	<b>591,534</b>		<b>449,269</b>	<b>6,264,788</b>		<b>3,951,218</b>	<b>11,256,809</b>
Personnel	734,856	171,591	458,819	1,470,085	865,414	29,469	3,730,234
Travel	5,111	1,194	3,191	10,224	6,018	205	25,941
Supplies, printing, postage & equip repair	23,451	5,476	14,642	46,914	27,617	940	119,040
Rent, communication & prof/outside serv.	84,700	19,778	52,884	169,442	99,748	3,397	429,947
State legal, audit, state reimbursements	46,620	10,886	29,108	93,264	54,903	1,870	236,650
Advertising & publicity	1,604	375	1,002	3,210	1,889	64	8,145
State transfer/reimbursements/IT exp	158,767	37,072	99,128	317,614	186,974	6,367	805,922
<b>Total operating cost</b>	<b>1,055,108</b>	<b>246,370</b>	<b>658,773</b>	<b>2,110,752</b>	<b>1,242,564</b>	<b>42,311</b>	<b>5,355,879</b>
Aid to individuals				1,131,772			1,131,772
State aid					40,000		40,000
Grants to K-12 schools/communities (sub grants)				119,212	469,463		588,675
Scholarships/grants	87,486,769	6,000		3,406,145			90,898,914
Unexpended funds			23,262	-30,058			-6,796
Total expenditures (incl. scholarship)	88,541,877	252,370	658,773	6,767,881	1,752,027	42,311	98,015,240
Fund committed for scholarship and aid	4,321,378						4,321,378
<b>Total expenditures (non pass-through)</b>	<b>1,055,108</b>	<b>246,370</b>	<b>682,035</b>	<b>6,737,823</b>	<b>1,752,027</b>	<b>42,311</b>	<b>10,515,675</b>
<b>Net gain/loss</b>	<b>-463,574</b>	<b>-246,370</b>	<b>-232,766</b>	<b>-473,035</b>	<b>-1,752,027</b>	<b>3,908,907</b>	<b>741,135</b>
<b>Overall % total expense</b>	<b>90.33%</b>	<b>0.26%</b>	<b>0.67%</b>	<b>6.90%</b>	<b>1.79%</b>	<b>0.04%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

\*Related to Chapter 261 of Iowa Code—Branstad State Fair Scholarship, loan programs

\*\*Great Lakes Higher Education Corp. & Affiliates changed its name to Ascendium Education Group on November 15, 2018



**Because College Changes Everything**

**IOWA COLLEGE AID**

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