



**U.S. Conference of Mayors and USA Funds Announce Multi-Year Partnership**  
*National Program Focuses On College And Career Readiness*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 22, 2015) The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and USA Funds today announced a multi-year partnership to promote innovative programs that prepare students for college and careers.

“With the increasing skill demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, mayors are particularly concerned that all students graduate from high school fully prepared for college and careers,” said Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. “This partnership with USA Funds, focused on college and career readiness, will highlight our ongoing and excellent work to ensure that America’s students are provided high quality education and strong, foundational standards in school as well as rigorous career and technical education programs and college completion goals.”

USA Funds has awarded USCM a \$320,000 grant to support the new National Education Pathways With a Purpose partnership. As part of the initiative, USCM will award competitive grants to mayors to recognize and expand creative initiatives that they have developed in their communities to advance both college and career readiness and college completion. Cities will be recognized for developing strong and enduring collaborations between K-12 and higher education systems and employers to address college preparation and long-term career success.

“This partnership advances USA Funds’ focus on what we call ‘Completion With a Purpose,’ to increase college completion rates and create pathways for students to successful and rewarding careers,” said USA Funds President and CEO William Hansen. “We are promoting ‘Completion With a Purpose’ through partnerships at many levels, including at the local community level, with mayors and other local leaders. We look forward to joining with the USCM to highlight best practice models that improve student outcomes and strengthen communities.”

Although details of the Education Pathways With a Purpose grant program will be announced at a later date, the four key elements of “Completion With a Purpose” include:

- **Streamlining key education transitions.** Smoothing the path – especially for disadvantaged students – at key junctures in the education process, for example, high school graduation, the transition to college, and transferring from a community college to a four-year college or university.

- **Facilitating smoother pathways from campus to the workplace.** Improving the alignment between the skills graduates take with them from college and the needs of employers, as well as providing better preparation for employment for students throughout the education pathway.
- **Promoting innovative approaches to college and career preparation.** Tapping technology and other innovations to provide quicker, less-costly, more effective paths to completion of high-quality postsecondary education and training programs.
- **Building new frameworks for data-driven decision-making.** Providing parents, policy makers, employers and education providers with better data for making decisions about which college to choose, which higher education or workforce development initiative to fund, which colleges are producing the best-qualified employees.

The cities selected to receive National Education Pathways With a Purpose grants will be announced during the 83rd Annual Conference of Mayors, June 19-22 in San Francisco. The conference also will feature a forum to disseminate best practices in mayor-led education and workforce development initiatives.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors Jobs, Education and the Workforce Standing Committee currently chaired by West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon examines all education and workforce development issues to strengthen the ability of cities to meet the needs of their citizens, particularly economically disadvantaged individuals, those with serious skill deficiencies, dislocated workers, and others with special barriers to employment, including youth.

Over the last several years, the Jobs Committee has discussed and adopted several resolutions pertaining to college completion and affordability. The mayors have specifically called for increased access to higher education and success by restructuring and dramatically expanding college financial aid, addressing college completion and strengthening the higher education pipeline to ensure that more students succeed and complete their degree, and investing in community college to equip a greater share of young people and adults with high-demand skills and education for emerging industries.

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### **About the U.S. Conference of Mayors**

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,210 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find us at [usmayors.org](http://usmayors.org), on [facebook.com/usmayors](https://www.facebook.com/usmayors), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/usmayors](https://twitter.com/usmayors).

### **About USA Funds**

USA Funds is a nonprofit corporation that supports Completion with a Purpose, building a more purposeful path for America's students to and through college and on to rewarding careers and successful lives. USA Funds pursues its nonprofit mission through philanthropic activities and

partnerships, policy research, and programs and services that enhance preparation for, access to and success in higher education. Learn more at [www.usafunds.org](http://www.usafunds.org).

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