



# MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY AND EQUITY

## BREAKING BARRIERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The **Maryland Alliance for College Affordability and Equity** is a coalition of non-profit organizations throughout Maryland that assist students from low-income, first-generation and marginalized families pursuing the promise of higher education. The Alliance works to identify barriers and advocate for changes to address these barriers to State policymakers and agencies.

College degree attainment is central to achieving the “American Dream” of social and economic mobility. Unfortunately, structural barriers exist for children of low-income families, which make the path to that degree rockiest for those who need this benefit the most. Through our work with students in middle, high school and college, we found there were myriad ways to discourage students and their families from attempting or completing a college degree. The goal of the Alliance is to remove the systemic, administrative, legal, and regulatory barriers limiting low-income students’ access to college.



The **Alliance** works together to educate legislators about policy matters that negatively impact college bound low-income students. We educate members of the Maryland General Assembly, the Governor’s Office, the Maryland Higher Education Commission and others about the challenges and pitfalls vulnerable students have when accessing public higher education resources.

**This year, the Maryland Alliance seeks to educate and raise awareness about the need to:**

- 1. Support the needed corrections to the administrative provisions in HB 923 focused on student financial assistance.**
- 2. Conduct a program analysis, based on principles of simplicity and equity, to consolidate and better implement Maryland’s need-based financial aid programs.**
- 3. Enhance funding levels for college access outreach programs for middle and high school students from low-income backgrounds.**
- 4. Streamline the administration of the Next Generation Scholars to facilitate access for students and families.**



## WHY THIS MATTERS

In 2022, the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) reported that Maryland had \$60.2M in unclaimed Pell Grant funds up from \$58.3M in 2021. Students who are eligible are not even applying for vital resources or don't complete the application process. This means that students who were eligible for those funds are not accessing them and need the right supports to do so. Research shows that students who don't enroll in college immediately following high school are less likely ever get a college degree.



## WHAT WE DO

We have achieved gains in improved access for our students to state need-based grants for college as well as state funding that supports the college access and completion outreach efforts of community-based nonprofit organizations with missions to serve students from low-income backgrounds. We have worked to educate legislators on the following:

### 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- **HB 734** - Provided an administrative fix that prevents Pell eligible students from being disqualified for a GA grant due to a modest increase in family income.
- **HB 664** - Required all state school districts to develop FAFSA outreach plans.

### 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- **HB 923/SB 662** - Aligned state income verification standards with federal standards for GA Grants. Improved access to the Next Generation Scholars program by removing barriers for those who could be eligible for the support.

The **Alliance** members have more than 100 collective years working to achieve equity representing students across Maryland. Their student demographics cut across all racial, ethnic, cultural and geographic strata to ensure fairness of opportunity for all.

CASA, Inc.  
CollegeTracks, Inc.  
CollegeBound Foundation  
Collegiate Directions, Inc.  
Community Youth Advance, Inc.  
End Time Harvest Ministries

FAME - Foundation for the  
Advancement of Music & Education  
First Generation College Bound, Inc.  
Hillside Children's Center/Hillside  
Work-Scholarship Connection  
It Takes A Village to Help Our  
Children, Inc.

Joe's Movement Emporium  
KIPP Baltimore  
Maryland Business Roundtable for  
Education, Inc.  
MERIT Health Leadership Academy  
The Training Source, Inc.  
YMCA of Central Maryland

