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Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland Receives \$40,000, Two-Year Grant from National College Access Network

Funding Will Support Efforts to Address College Affordability in Ohio

Cleveland, January 10, 2018 – The Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland (the Compact) recently received a \$40,000, two-year state policy advocacy grant from the National College Access Network (NCAN). Throughout 2018-19, the Compact’s state efforts in this project will be focused on making college more affordable.

“We are thrilled by the opportunity to work alongside our members during this critical time in higher education policy,” says Kim Cook, NCAN’s Executive Director. “Conversations around the most important issues facing our students are ramping up, and we look forward to contributing to this dialogue by amplifying the student voice.”

“College affordability is one of the most important issues we face in Ohio,” said Maggie McGrath, Director of the Compact. “The single biggest driver of college enrollment is direct aid to students. With the ever-widening attainment gap between high- and low-income individuals, we need to address this issue in Ohio if we are to make progress toward the state’s 65% attainment goal by 2025.”

The Compact published a [report](#) on the state of college costs and affordability in June 2016, which confirmed that Ohio had higher than average cost of attendance and that the state has disinvested in postsecondary education over the last ten years. In fact, Ohio ranked 45th out of 50 states on affordability (that is, Ohio is the 5th most expensive state to attend college as based on the percent of income spent on educational expenses after accounting for grant aid). Ohio’s low rating is due to (1) low state investment in higher education; (2) tuition costs at public colleges in Ohio that are higher than national average; and (3) low levels of state need-based aid going directly to students.

In Cleveland, college enrollment within one year of graduating from high school has declined from 61% for the class of 2011 to 51% for the class of 2015. From our experience working with students and

families coupled with peer-reviewed research that reinforces our observations, there is strong evidence that the current college affordability situation plays a major role in why students decide not to go to college, and if they do enroll, do not graduate.

The grant is funded by a new \$2.5 million commitment to NCAN from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Compact looks forward to working alongside the 16 other sub-grantees throughout the next two years.

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About the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland

The Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland is a collaborative partnership among the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, 16 colleges and universities, and more than 50 community organizations that seeks to remove the obstacles that prevent Cleveland youth from going to and succeeding in college. Launched in 2011 by Mayor Frank G. Jackson, the Compact's goal is to align the efforts of member organizations to best use limited precious resources and increase the city's number of college graduates.