

# First Scholars Program Development

**Grant Type:** *Dollar and capacity building*

**Grant Amount:** *Multiyear funding (5 years) ranging from \$850,000 to \$1.2 million, plus management support and convening*

**Organization:** *The Suder Foundation*



## What was the objective of your grant or initiative?

Our organization provides start-up funding (over 5 years) for the creation and development of a First Scholars program, a holistic student success program for first-generation college students.

Awards provide 4-year public universities with seed funding for scholarships and program operations, along with management support and curriculum and collaborative opportunities.

## What was your approach?

Our organization strives to work in partnership with the universities we fund, so we develop multilayered relationships on each campus. Our staff includes campus liaisons who work with the program coordinators on the ground to ensure the successful operation of each program site and data collection to demonstrate success.

Our leadership also plays an active role in sustainability efforts. Facilitating connections and planning convening events for various levels of administrators have increased engagement and created a sense of larger purpose beyond individual campus programs.

At the University of Kentucky, the administration created a new position and Office of First Generation Initiatives to oversee various programs targeting these students. For that and the other six universities in this network, first-generation students are at the forefront of campus training and fundraising campaigns. The network continues to pursue collaborative opportunities in a number of areas.

Our board members are also looking at impact in a new light as they discuss whether we should retain the original vision of impact through further expansion of the First Scholars program or meet our mission on a wider scale by funding alternate programs.

## What were the outsized results?

An unanticipated result is that First Scholars acted as a catalyst to shift the campus culture, driving additional efforts to raise awareness of the unique challenges and potential of first-generation college students.

