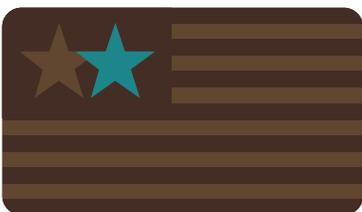


# *INVEST IN THE DREAM* INITIATIVE: SCHOLARSHIPS AND SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

OUTCOMES, INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAY 2017



EDUCATORS FOR FAIR CONSIDERATION

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) is a San Francisco-based non-profit that empowers undocumented immigrant young people to pursue their dreams of college, career, and citizenship in the United States. In early 2014, E4FC launched the *Invest in the Dream* initiative, a competitive grant program that offers matching funds to non-profit scholarship providers nationwide. Its goal is to incentivize those providers to create new scholarship programs or expand current programs serving undocumented students.

Over the past three years, E4FC has awarded \$750,000 in 1:1 matching grants to nineteen community-based and campus-based scholarship providers in sixteen states. These grants have leveraged an additional \$750,000 in matching funds from local donors and other sources, for a total of \$1.5 million in new scholarship support for undocumented students. To date, *Invest in the Dream* scholarships have supported more than two hundred students at public and private, two-year and four-year colleges and universities nationwide. In addition, *Invest in the Dream* has created and nurtured a learning community of scholarship professionals and volunteers, many of whom are working in challenging or hostile political environments.

This report reflects on the three years of experience gained through the *Invest in the Dream* initiative. It begins with a brief, analytical self-assessment and then expands on that self-analysis to include comments and insights from twenty informants, including thirteen grantee representatives, four scholarship recipients, and three allies and funding partners. The report also includes brief profiles of four students and two matching grant donors.

## INVEST IN THE DREAM SELF-ASSESSMENT

- » A scholarship-driven initiative like *Invest in the Dream* has tremendous value but also certain inherent limitations. There is compelling evidence that *Invest in the Dream* scholarships have powerfully affected the undocumented students who have received them. At the same time, scholarships are an expensive investment on a per-student basis. As a national scholarship initiative for undocumented students, *Invest in the Dream* has been groundbreaking, but it is still a modest response to an enormous need.
- » As a challenge grant strategy, *Invest in the Dream* was designed to be a lever that could help scholarship providers attract new support for undocumented students. For some grantees, *Invest in the Dream* challenge grants have brought increased visibility and credibility. However, for most grantees, there is little evidence that the challenge grants have effectively leveraged new support from other sources.
- » The peer community of scholarship providers that has grown out of *Invest in the Dream* may be its most important and enduring accomplishment. Grantees have deeply valued and benefited from national convenings and other learning programs. Particularly for grantees working in hostile political climates, *Invest in the Dream* has become an important source of validation, inspiration and advice.
- » E4FC deliberately chose a diverse cohort of grantees for *Invest in the Dream* and that has been both an asset and a challenge. While grantee diversity has allowed the initiative to reach and support a wide variety of undocumented students, it has been challenging to develop learning programs and to offer support that accommodates the cultural and organizational differences among grantees.

## INFORMANT COMMENTS AND INSIGHTS

- » The *Invest in the Dream* peer community has been helpful to grantees in both practical and emotional ways. Many grantee organizations have borrowed materials or adapted strategies from each other to support donor outreach and student support services. In the distressing aftermath of the 2016 election, many grantees looked to E4FC and each other for support and reassurance.
- » Grantees found the three national convenings hosted by E4FC especially powerful and productive. Many informants asserted that the convenings were among the best professional gatherings they have ever attended, offering real camaraderie and valuable information. However, all agreed that it has been difficult to sustain the energy generated by the convenings. With staff time and resources spread thin, it is hard to maintain regular contact with peers, even when those relationships are valuable.
- » Informants described the increased credibility in their local communities that has come from being selected as an *Invest in the Dream* grantee. Particularly for younger and smaller organizations, the grant was an important organizational milestone that attracted local media coverage and interest from potential allies. Interestingly, grantees have gained credibility even though E4FC is not a large or well-known organization itself – the real value has come from being invited to participate in a national initiative.
- » Informants highlighted three areas of practice where advice and support from E4FC and *Invest in the Dream* colleagues have been especially helpful: developing mentorships and peer support programs; engaging in advocacy and public policy initiatives; and negotiating with colleges to increase institutional aid for undocumented students.
- » While the *Invest in the Dream* scholarships have supported only a modest number of students, those scholarships have been “game-changers” for some, making college enrollment possible and affordable. Many of the scholarship recipients have become highly visible advocates and role models who have positively influenced the culture of their campuses.

## ONGOING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- » *Invest in the Dream* grantees and the undocumented students they support are struggling to navigate a political environment that has changed dramatically since the 2016 election. Informants expressed a range of emotions, from anxiety to renewed determination. Grantees are primarily concerned about the threats facing students, but they also agreed that their own work has become more complicated and uncertain.
- » Informants also spoke in broader terms about the ongoing need for capacity building in the scholarship provider community. E4FC plans to award a fourth round of *Invest in the Dream* grants in 2017 to help current grantees increase their visibility and effectively target their fundraising efforts. Many informants requested training and support for students and staff to build their storytelling skills and help them balance their need to be heard with their need for safety and confidentiality.

# INTRODUCTION

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Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) is a San Francisco-based non-profit that empowers undocumented immigrant young people to pursue their dreams of college, career, and citizenship in the United States. Through direct support and advocacy, E4FC helps talented and highly motivated undocumented young people to achieve their academic and career goals and gain citizenship. Since its founding in 2006, all E4FC programs have been designed by and for undocumented young people with support from committed allies.

E4FC launched the *Invest in the Dream* initiative in early 2014. *Invest in the Dream* is a competitive grant program that offers matching funds to non-profit scholarship providers nationwide; its goal is to incentivize those providers to create new scholarship programs or expand current programs serving undocumented students.

Over the past three years, with generous support from the Heising-Simons Foundation, the Grove Foundation and other funders, E4FC has awarded \$750,000 in 1:1 matching grants to nineteen community-based and campus-based scholarship providers in sixteen states. These grants have leveraged an additional \$750,000 in matching funds from local donors and other sources, for a total of \$1.5 million in new scholarship support for undocumented students. To date, *Invest in the Dream* scholarships have supported more than two hundred students at public and private, two-year and four-year colleges and universities nationwide.

In addition to increasing the pool of scholarship funds available to undocumented students, *Invest in the Dream* has created and nurtured a learning community of scholarship professionals and volunteers who are committed to helping undocumented students succeed. Through annual convenings, webinars and ongoing email and telephone contact, *Invest in the Dream* has affirmed and reinforced the efforts of these grantee partners, many of whom are working in challenging or hostile political environments. *Invest in the Dream* has also helped to build a larger movement of allies and advocates for undocumented students while promoting best practices that enhance the value of scholarship support for undocumented students.

## PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THIS REPORT

This report reflects on the three years of experience gained through the *Invest in the Dream* initiative. It is intended to answer these key questions: What has been learned? What were the most important achievements? What were the most serious challenges? What does the next stage of this work look like?

The primary audience for the report is the *Invest in the Dream* community itself: E4FC, its grantee partners, funders, allies and students who have received support. Later this year, E4FC plans to award a fourth round of *Invest in the Dream* grants to help grantee organizations increase their visibility and fundraising capacity, and the report includes some advice to inform and support that process – particularly in the context of the dramatically changed political environment in which the programs now operate. The report is also intended to serve as an instructive resource for the larger scholarship provider community, offering important lessons learned and suggesting best practices for supporting undocumented students.

As the co-director of *Invest in the Dream* since its launch in 2014, the author of this report is uniquely positioned to reflect on the initiative's goals, achievements and challenges. For that reason, the report begins with a brief, analytical self-assessment that considers the key issues and questions presented in this introduction.

The report then expands on that self-analysis to include comments and insights from major stakeholders in the initiative. The author conducted 45-60 minute telephone interviews with twenty informants, including thirteen grantee representatives, four scholarship recipients, and three allies and funding partners. Interviews were conducted in January-February 2017 and recorded by the author with informant permission. Informants were encouraged to speak candidly and were assured that no statements would be ascribed to any individual or organization by name.

Not surprisingly, the *Invest in the Dream* grantees and funding partners interviewed for this report offered mostly positive comments about the initiative and their experiences. To their credit, informants also offered candid assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of *Invest in the Dream* and the work that remains to be done. Their comments and advice deserve to be considered seriously by E4FC, its funders, and the scholarship provider field.

In addition to a synthesis and analysis of informant comments, the report also includes brief profiles of four scholarship recipients and two matching grant donors. Of course, six profiles cannot fully encompass the wide reach of the initiative or fully capture the diversity of its beneficiaries and supporters. The profile subjects were chosen for practical reasons, because they responded quickly and generously and were available during a brief time window for interviews. Their stories offer a personalized perspective on *Invest in the Dream's* purpose and impact, but there are many more stories that deserve to be told.

# LANDSCAPE AND CONTEXT

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Approximately 65,000 undocumented immigrant young people graduate from U.S. high schools each year, but only five to ten percent of those students enroll in an institution of higher education and even fewer earn a college degree. While no provision of federal law bars undocumented students from pursuing higher education, those students confront a variety of academic, social and financial challenges that prevent many of them from enrolling or graduating. The financial barrier is perhaps the most formidable; undocumented students are ineligible for any federal financial aid to defray the cost of higher education. In most states, they are also ineligible for state aid or the tuition and fee reductions that public colleges and universities offer to in-state residents.

In recent years, a growing number of non-profit scholarship providers have begun to recognize the challenges confronting undocumented students and the compelling case for supporting those students. In response, some scholarship providers have changed their eligibility requirements to consider students regardless of their citizenship or immigration status. Others have gone even further, creating programs or establishing scholarship funds that are explicitly designed to support undocumented students.

This trend gained further momentum in 2012 when the Obama Administration implemented an executive order creating the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA offers Social Security numbers, work permits and temporary protection from deportation to undocumented young people who meet its criteria. To date, more than 750,000 undocumented young adults have applied for and received DACA status, including thousands of undergraduate and graduate students.

Because DACA granted a federally-recognized “lawful presence” status to some undocumented young people, it expanded the number of scholarship providers willing to support them. Many of those providers implemented new policies that extended scholarship eligibility to undocumented students. Just as importantly, many providers began asking how to create safe, respectful application processes and how to offer supportive services that respond to the unique needs and concerns of undocumented students.

Building on that trend, *Invest in the Dream* was launched in 2014; it invited matching grant applications from scholarship providers nationwide and encouraged those providers to extend scholarship eligibility to all undocumented students, not just those with DACA status. The initiative was welcomed by the scholarship provider field, with over 50 matching grant applications submitted in the first year alone.

With the inauguration of President Donald Trump, the landscape has changed dramatically. As a candidate, Trump used harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric and vowed to revoke DACA “on day one” of his presidency. Since taking office, he has moderated his tone somewhat, calling undocumented students “incredible kids” and promising, “We’re going to deal with DACA with heart.” Senior Trump Administration officials insist that they “are not targeting” undocumented students, but a pattern of aggressive and highly publicized immigration enforcement actions has created a climate of fear that directly undercuts DACA and discourages undocumented students from pursuing higher education.

Legislation has been introduced in the Senate that would extend the protections of DACA for another three years, but its chances of passage are unclear. While many higher education leaders have pledged to support and protect undocumented students on their campuses, there is still widespread fear and concern in the entire immigrant community. After the very hopeful three years that launched and nurtured *Invest in the Dream*, the future of college enrollment and scholarship support for undocumented students is now uncertain.

# INVEST IN THE DREAM SELF-ASSESSMENT

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Before reporting and analyzing the comments of key partners and stakeholders, this report offers a brief assessment of *Invest in the Dream* from the perspective of the E4FC team that designed, launched and led the initiative. This section is divided into several subsections that briefly address some of the initiative's important achievements and challenges.

## VALUE AND LIMITATIONS OF A SCHOLARSHIP-CENTERED STRATEGY

At its heart, *Invest in the Dream* is about scholarships, and three years of experience with the initiative have produced some important lessons about both the power and the limits of scholarship giving. As a case study, *Invest in the Dream* also offers useful insights for other funders as they assess the impact of their own scholarship programs or debate the potential value of a scholarship-driven grant initiative.

Scholarship giving is a very popular philanthropic strategy: over \$3 billion in private scholarship funds are awarded in the United States each year. Scholarships offer crucial financial support that helps to make college enrollment possible for millions of deserving students. Scholarships also offer a kind of affirmation that often is worth even more than the dollars themselves. A scholarship award sends a clear message to recipients that someone believes in them and is willing to invest in them.

For undocumented students, the financial support and validation that come with a scholarship are even more powerful. Almost all undocumented students come from low income families and all have experienced feelings of exclusion and uncertainty about their place in this country. For undocumented students, the choice to pursue higher education is an act of tremendous courage and resilience. E4FC launched *Invest in the Dream* with the goal of recognizing their struggle and affirming their determination.

On that basis alone, *Invest in the Dream* has been a very successful intervention. The student profiles in this report offer just a few examples of how scholarships have powerfully and positively affected undocumented students and their families, and grantees have shared many more examples of the impact on other recipients. In addition, the donor profiles in this report offer evidence that donors have been deeply gratified by the results of their giving.

At the same time, *Invest in the Dream* has also highlighted some of the inherent challenges and limitations of scholarship giving – especially when the pool of scholarship funds is relatively small. On a per-student basis, scholarships are a very expensive investment, and some *Invest in the Dream* grantees have found it frustrating to deplete their scholarship funds so quickly on a small cohort of students. As a national scholarship initiative for undocumented students, *Invest in the Dream* may be groundbreaking and compelling, but it is a very modest response to an enormous need.

## VALUE AND LIMITATIONS OF CHALLENGE GRANTS

While *Invest in the Dream* is a scholarship-driven strategy, it is also, just as importantly, a challenge grant strategy. All of the grants awarded by E4FC over the past three years have required the recipient organizations to secure an equal amount of funding from other sources. From its inception, the goal of the initiative was not just to award more scholarships to undocumented students; an equally important goal was to increase the capacity, visibility and impact of the community-based and campus-based scholarship providers that support those students.

The challenge grant strategy has produced some important successes. For at least a few of the grantees, *Invest in the Dream* grants have been a powerful magnet and “seal of approval” that has attracted new support and new

donors. Some of those successes are elaborated in the informant comments in this report. At the same time, it is fair to conclude that the matching grant strategy has had only moderate success. In all three years of the initiative, many grantee organizations have used their own discretionary funds to cover the match; others have successfully solicited matching funding from other sources, but it is not clear that the challenge grants significantly improved their ability to do so.

The *Invest in the Dream* experience offers useful lessons to other funders on the value and pitfalls of awarding challenge grants. Those grants can be powerful tools if funders provide support that is substantial and influential without creating unrealistic expectations. Even with the leverage of a challenge grant, it is difficult for grantee organizations to raise matching funds from other sources and especially difficult to raise new money each year. *Invest in the Dream* is a reminder that challenge grants should offer reliable support that helps grantees attract other funds without pressuring them to scale up too quickly.

After three years, E4FC now recognizes that the future of scholarship support for undocumented students must be forged at the community level where its grantees work. For that reason, the fourth year of *Invest in the Dream* grants will focus on helping current grantees build their capacity to attract scholarship funding from local donors. The informant comments in this report include recommendations to help shape those capacity building grants.

## SCHOLARSHIPS AS A ‘HOOK’ TO CREATE COMMUNITY

*Invest in the Dream* supports scholarships, but E4FC recognized early on that scholarships were only one element of a larger effort to build a national community of support for undocumented students. While the promise of additional scholarship funding was the “hook” that encouraged many organizations to apply for grants, the peer community of scholarship providers that has grown out of *Invest in the Dream* may be its most important and enduring accomplishment.

Over the past three years, E4FC has built and nurtured a community of colleagues who have actively engaged in efforts to advise each other, support each other, and learn from each other’s experience. Informant comments in this report confirm that grantees deeply valued and benefited from the national convenings and other learning programs sponsored by *Invest in the Dream*. The value of those programs was limited only by E4FC’s capacity to offer them and grantees’ capacity to participate.

Many of the grantee organizations work in very hostile political climates and few had deep connections to others in the national movement supporting undocumented students. For that reason, the *Invest in the Dream* learning community has become a safe space and an important source of validation and inspiration for grantees. The value of that space became especially clear in 2016, a divisive election year in which many grantees felt surrounded by hateful, anti-immigrant rhetoric in their home communities.

*Invest in the Dream* hosted three very successful and well-attended national convenings and promoted further learning and sharing through webinars and other programs. E4FC also engaged the *Invest in the Dream* grantees as partners in its Dreamer Intake Service, an online tool that helps undocumented young people explore potential immigration law remedies.

Beyond the circle of grantee organizations, E4FC has partnered with the National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) to present conference sessions and webinars that have generated strong interest in the scholarship provider community. A webinar in April 2017 attracted one of the largest audiences that NSPA has ever recorded for its online continuing education programs. E4FC also published a *Scholarship Best Practices Guide and Self-Assessment Tool*, an online publication designed to help scholarship providers serve undocumented students more effectively and to measure their progress in implementing those best practices.

## A DEFINING FOCUS ON HOSTILE STATES

As noted above, most of the *Invest in the Dream* grantees work in states that are politically hostile to undocumented students. Most of the grantee states do not offer state aid to undocumented students and do not allow undocumented student residents to receive in-state tuition discounts at public colleges and universities. At least one grantee state, Georgia, bars undocumented students from attending some public universities.

This focus on grantee organizations in particularly challenging environments was not built into the original design of *Invest in the Dream*; in fact, the largest share of first year grant applications came from scholarship providers in California, which offers more educational benefits and opportunities to undocumented students than any other state. However, E4FC quickly recognized that the focus on more isolated and hostile states was effective and strategic and it became a key element of the initiative.

It could be argued that *Invest in the Dream*'s limited scholarship dollars would have gone further in states that award public financial aid more generously to undocumented students. But E4FC concluded that it made more sense to support scholarship providers in states where students struggle to find adequate financial support for higher education. Three years of experience with *Invest in the Dream* suggest that this choice was valid and strategic; certainly, that decision helped to define the initiative and sharpened its identity.

## GRANTEE DIVERSITY WAS A STRENGTH AND A CHALLENGE

*Invest in the Dream* was designed to attract grant applications from a widely diverse pool of scholarship providers and it has succeeded in that goal. Over three years, more than 110 campus-based and community-based scholarship providers from 27 states have applied for funding.

From this diverse set of applicants, E4FC has chosen an equally diverse cohort of grantees. For example, some grantees are highly visible, well-established organizations with strong donor bases, while others are very small or young organizations led by volunteers. Some of the grantees focus exclusively on undocumented students, while others consider undocumented students as part of a larger pool of eligible applicants. Some grantees primarily support students who fit the “Dreamer” narrative of the high achieving undocumented student, while other grantees support students attending community colleges or less selective public four-year universities.

In many ways, this diversity has served the initiative well, bringing a variety of perspectives and allowing the initiative to reach many kinds of students in many different settings. At the same time, the diversity of the *Invest in the Dream* community has brought its own challenges.

Most importantly, it has occasionally been challenging to develop a learning agenda that recognizes and respects the differences between the grantee organizations. On a variety of issues – from fundraising to communications to application review procedures – grantees have very different capacities and needs. Grantees also bring very different political styles to the work and have very different ideas about how to effectively advocate for undocumented students.

Despite these differences, the *Invest in the Dream* grantees have consistently demonstrated tremendous respect for each other. Volunteer leaders have learned so much from professional staff – and vice versa. Undocumented student leaders have welcomed the opportunity to learn from allies with deep experience in the scholarship field – and vice versa. As the informant comments in the next section of this report confirm, the grantees found their interactions with their peers very rewarding and for that they deserve great credit.

# INFORMANT COMMENTS AND INSIGHTS

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In interviews for this report, informants reflected on what they gained from participating in *Invest in the Dream* and made recommendations for the future of the initiative. This section of the report divides those informant comments into three major categories: Impact on Grantee Organizations; Impact on Students and Colleges; and Ongoing Needs and Opportunities.

## I. IMPACT ON GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS

The author interviewed thirteen representatives from a diverse group of eight grantee organizations, including grantees funded in each of the three years of *Invest in the Dream*. Informants included organizational founders, leaders and professional staff. While each informant offered a different perspective on the value of participating in the initiative, all agreed that *Invest in the Dream* had positively influenced their organizations, improved their practices and increased their understanding of the challenges facing undocumented students.

### *INVEST IN THE DREAM* INVITED ITS GRANTEES INTO A COMMUNITY AND A NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

As noted above, E4FC made a deliberate choice early in the initiative to support grantee partners in all regions of the country – particularly those working in politically challenging or hostile environments. Some of the *Invest in the Dream* grantees are well-established organizations with long histories and considerable local support; others are small start-up organizations trying to establish their credibility and build their visibility. But almost all have this in common: they often feel isolated and they crave the collegiality and support of other organizations that share their values and goals and understand the challenges that their students confront.

According to the informants interviewed for this report, this sense of community was perhaps the most important contribution that *Invest in the Dream* made to the work of its grantees. By inviting them into the circle of a national initiative, E4FC created opportunities for grantees to meet each other, learn from each other and validate each other.

#### **INFORMANT COMMENTS:**

**IITD “taught us we weren’t alone.”**

**“I felt like I had colleagues where I didn’t before.”**

**IITD “extended knowledge and skills to parts of the country that were behind on this issue.”**

**“It’s really valuable to have other people to work with and to discuss challenges and solutions.”**

**“We didn’t have experience with real life challenges that undocumented students face.”**

**“I thought, ‘that’s a Texas problem, that’s an Arizona problem’ – I didn’t realize it was relevant in (my home state).”**

**“We would be hard pressed to do this work without being able to consult E4FC on matters large and small.”**

The *Invest in the Dream* community was helpful to grantees in both practical and emotional ways. As detailed below, many of the grantees borrowed materials or adapted strategies from each other as they developed plans for donor outreach, mentoring programs and advocacy efforts. Many informants said they were inspired by other grantees to dig deeper or push harder to expand support for undocumented students. And, in the distressing aftermath of the 2016 election, many of the informants reported that they turned to E4FC and other grantees for support and advice about how to protect the students they serve from the threat of deportation or loss of financial support.

While E4FC sought to keep *Invest in the Dream* from being too California-centric, the fact that it is California-led has probably increased its value to grantees. Informants described seeing California as a model state where political and educational leaders have created exciting opportunities for undocumented young people; many grantees reported thinking that “what’s possible in California today may be possible in my state someday.”

Informants also reported seeing E4FC as a model organization that empowers undocumented young people by recognizing their leadership skills and talents and offering them highly visible, highly responsible roles. Informants expressed appreciation for E4FC staff and praised them for promoting a productive and creative atmosphere. One informant thanked E4FC for developing relationships with grantees “based on trust and collaboration.” Another informant added, “The responsiveness and degree of respect is like no other funder or collegial relationship we have.”

## CONVENINGS WERE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL BUT THEIR ENERGY WAS HARD TO SUSTAIN.

While informants were generally positive about their relationships with E4FC and other *Invest in the Dream* grantees, they reserved their strongest praise for the three national convenings that E4FC hosted in March 2015, November 2015 and October 2016.

Without exception, informants cited the value of gathering with colleagues from around the country for a few days of learning and sharing; many wished that the convenings could have lasted longer. Informants praised the well-planned agendas, effective facilitation and informative presentations by E4FC staff, guest speakers and community representatives. A presentation by undocumented students and community leaders at the convening in Phoenix, sharing the history of their struggle and their goals for the future, was especially powerful for many grantees.

It is worth noting that the very diverse group of *Invest in the Dream* grantees found the convenings valuable regardless of their own background, region or experience level. Grantees who were new to the issue reported that they learned a lot, quickly, in a supportive environment. Representatives from undocumented-youth led organizations appreciated the opportunity to network and engage with more experienced scholarship providers. And several informants reported that the convenings were a particularly valuable learning experience and professional development opportunity for the undocumented students who attended with them.

Informants also agreed that the other learning programs and materials produced by E4FC were helpful, even if they didn't have the impact of the convenings. Many informants said that they have come to count on E4FC as a source of good information and advice. Others talked about the helpful support they have received or strong connections they have built with one or two other grantee organizations.

When pressed on the question of how the *Invest in the Dream* learning community could have been even more useful, several informants acknowledged that it was difficult to sustain the energy generated by the convenings. One suggested that E4FC “could have facilitated more ongoing contact between grantees.” However, all the informants recognized that E4FC's own staff and resources are spread thin and all said the same was true for their own organizations. As one informant put it, “Networks are hard to sustain.” Others agreed that it's hard to maintain contact with a national group of colleagues and peers, even when those relationships are valuable. While all the informants wished they could have engaged with their *Invest in the Dream* peers more often, none expressed any disappointment with E4FC as the learning community organizer.

### INFORMANT COMMENTS:

**“I loved the convenings – great networking, problem solving and peer feedback.”**

**“I enjoyed the camaraderie as much as I valued the facts I learned.”**

**Convenings were “worth every minute and every penny.”**

**“The convening I attended was one of the most informative few days of my life.”**

**“Convenings motivate me, but I get home and I can only do so much.”**

**“E4FC offered more than we could take advantage of.”**

**“We could have done a better job of staying in touch and supporting each other.”**

## **INVEST IN THE DREAM GAVE GRANTEES MORE CREDIBILITY IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.**

In addition to the value of a national community of peers, informants described the increased credibility in their own local communities that came from being part of a national initiative.

Particularly for the younger and smaller grantee organizations, selection as an *Invest in the Dream* grantee was an important organizational milestone that attracted local media coverage, financial support and interest from potential allies and partners. The grant funds were important but the recognition was perhaps even more valuable. Several informants equated their selection by *Invest in the Dream* to an early investment of venture capital in a start-up company.

The larger and more established scholarship provider organizations also successfully leveraged value from their selection as *Invest in the Dream* grantees. Even a modest matching grant from E4FC was viewed as a vote of confidence by local donors and allies. As one informant said, “It always helps to show we have support from outside the local area.” And the credibility of the grantees was further enhanced by what they gained from participating in the *Invest in the Dream* learning community. As one informant put it, “We’re proud of the knowledge that E4FC helped us gain. Because of that, and our willingness to be public, we’re seen as content experts in our region.”

Interestingly, all the informants agreed that the grant increased their credibility even though E4FC is not a large or well-known organization itself. None of the grantees seems to have encountered any negative local reaction to receiving a grant from a politically progressive, San Francisco-based program. One informant, expressing a thought shared by several others, said, “It wasn’t the name or identity of E4FC that made the difference – it was the connection to a national initiative.”

## **THE E4FC CHALLENGE GRANT WAS USEFUL TO ALL GRANTEES BUT ESSENTIAL TO JUST A FEW.**

As noted in the Self-Assessment section above, *Invest in the Dream* was explicitly designed as a challenge grant strategy; E4FC’s goal was to use challenge grants as a lever to help grantees attract additional support for undocumented student scholarships from other donors and contributors.

In progress reports and informal conversations over the past three years, a few grantees have indicated that the challenge grant was particularly effective, helping them to attract funds that they otherwise might not have received. However, most grantees have reported that they used existing organizational resources – or donations that did not directly respond to the challenge – to match their E4FC grant.

In informant interviews for this report, selected grantees offered further details that created a clearer picture of the value of challenge grants. Those interviews do not

### **INFORMANT COMMENTS:**

**“We used *Invest in the Dream* as a ‘seal of approval.’”**

**“The large size of the grant brought us credibility and got us press coverage.”**

**“Friends asked me, ‘Is this a national problem?’ I answered, ‘Yes, and we have national support.’”**

**“We could say, ‘We’re partnering with a national organization with its fingers on the pulse of this issue.’”**

***Invest in the Dream* “allows us to speak much more intelligently about an issue we didn’t know much about.”**

### **INFORMANT COMMENTS:**

**“The stories were compelling and the E4FC challenge helped us close the deal.”**

**A challenge grant is “a bigger multiplier than meets the eye.”**

**“Some donors – especially businesspeople – are strongly influenced by a matching grant opportunity.”**

**“The existence of that matching challenge, and the urgency it created, led one donor to invest in this.”**

**“We promoted the grant widely and that, in turn, brought some individual donors around.”**

alter the conclusion that the challenge grants were only a moderate success. However, the interviews offer clearer answers to the questions of where the challenge grant strategy worked best and why it worked well in some cases.

Of the eight grantee organizations interviewed, most suggested that the E4FC challenge grant was “helpful but not crucial” to their efforts to attract additional support for undocumented student scholarships. All the informants agreed that the most important element of their fundraising strategy was simply to tell the stories of undocumented students, highlighting their academic and economic potential and the unfairness of excluding them from higher education. As one informant put it, those student stories are both “appealing and appalling.” Grantees also invoked the E4FC challenge grant in their outreach to potential donors, and it had at least some positive effect. One informant explained its value this way: “There was not one specific gift we could say was a response to the challenge, but it helped us establish a climate of support.”

For two of the eight grantee informants, the challenge grant was especially valuable. One grantee organization – a large and well-established scholarship provider – learned about *Invest in the Dream* and immediately saw it as an opportunity to approach a longtime donor who had expressed interest in supporting undocumented students. In response to the challenge, the donor created a new scholarship fund for that purpose. A second grantee – a small, volunteer-led organization that exclusively supports undocumented students – used the E4FC challenge grant to persuade a donor to significantly increase the size of his contribution.

In some ways, it is encouraging that most grantees didn’t need to over-rely on the E4FC challenge as a giving incentive; most were already generating some support for undocumented student scholarships and used the challenge as just one piece of a larger message to donors. However, all the grantees agreed that it is very difficult to attract new support in a highly competitive charitable giving environment. Their experience with *Invest in the Dream* suggests that the challenge grant was a useful but not a transformative strategy for raising new money.

## ***INVEST IN THE DREAM* INSPIRED CHANGES IN GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES.**

From the inception of *Invest in the Dream*, E4FC recognized that the initiative offered an opportunity to increase support for undocumented students and to influence program practices at scholarship provider organizations. The grantee representatives interviewed for this report confirmed that their exposure to best practices became an essential component of the *Invest in the Dream* experience.

Informants highlighted three areas of practice where advice and support from E4FC and *Invest in the Dream* colleagues have been especially helpful: developing mentorships and peer support programs; engaging in advocacy and public policy initiatives; and negotiating with colleges to increase institutional aid.

### **Mentorships and Peer Support Programs**

To some degree, all nineteen *Invest in the Dream* grantee organizations have developed mentoring and peer advising programs for the undocumented students who receive scholarships. All the grantees understand that financial aid is necessary but not sufficient to help students persist and graduate. While some grantees have developed more structured intervention programs than others, all of them offer some form of peer support or connect scholarship recipients with older students or adult volunteer mentors.

A few of the *Invest in the Dream* grantees have been especially intentional about their mentoring and peer support programs. For example, one grantee organization assigns two mentors to each scholarship recipient: an older student who is a few years closer to graduating and an adult professional working in the student’s field of interest. This intensive level of support requires a lot of effort and a deep pool of mentor volunteers, but the program staff believes it is crucial to students’ success. A second grantee organization that supports students enrolled in distant colleges has organized support groups on those campuses to help undocumented scholarship recipients manage the emotional challenge of being far away from their families.

Not surprisingly, the grantee organizations led by visible and prominent older adult allies were most successful in recruiting other professionals from their communities to serve as mentors; programs led by undocumented young people were more focused on supporting peer networks to empower and affirm undocumented scholarship recipients. Both strategies were effective, and many informants described how they have relied on advice and support from colleagues to help them create or improve their own mentoring and peer advising programs.

## Advocacy and Public Policy Initiatives

One important distinction between the *Invest in the Dream* grantees is the extent to which each was comfortable taking a position on legislative policy issues or influencing public opinion in their states or communities on issues affecting undocumented students.

For some of the grantee organizations, advocacy has always been central to their mission. Other grantees have been more reluctant to take on a highly visible advocacy role, fearing potentially negative reactions from board members, donors or community allies. Ultimately, each grantee has chosen an advocacy approach that is best suited to its organizational identity.

In all cases, the informants agreed that *Invest in the Dream* played a valuable role in helping them understand public policy issues and develop advocacy strategies. They thanked E4FC for sharing articles, materials, website links and other resources; they also praised their *Invest in the Dream* colleagues for modeling efforts to influence public policy and inform public opinion.

A few of the grantees have been especially passionate in their commitment to public policy advocacy. Those grantees have organized public forums, written op-eds and letters to the editor, met with legislators, or testified before legislative committees. At some of the grantee organizations, advocacy efforts have been driven by organizational founders or senior staff members, who capitalized on their visibility, credibility and relationships with powerful business and political leaders. In other cases, the advocacy strategy was designed and driven by undocumented or formerly undocumented young people themselves, including scholarship recipients, staff members and student interns.

One informant, particularly proud of the role that undocumented young people have played in his organization's efforts to shape public policy in his state, described it this way: "We didn't have to tell students what to do. They realize they have a voice and they want to use it." Another grantee added, "We don't believe in poster children – we expected students to do the research and to know what they were talking about."

In most cases, these advocacy strategies have produced fairly modest results; many of the grantees continue to struggle against hostile political forces in their states. At the same time, every grantee can name at least a few positive outcomes: legislators who began to see the issues differently; corporate leaders who became allies; positive stories in local media. While a few informants wished that E4FC could have offered more training or support around advocacy, others praised *Invest in the Dream* for helping them make a case to their communities and for encouraging undocumented students to take their place at the forefront of those efforts.

## Leveraging Institutional Aid

A third area where *Invest in the Dream* has been influential is in the relationships that grantees have cultivated with colleges. Several grantee informants credited *Invest in the Dream* for encouraging them to negotiate with colleges to secure the best "deals" for undocumented scholarship recipients. With advice and support from E4FC and their *Invest in the Dream* peers, grantee organizations have developed strategies to persuade colleges to increase institutional financial aid for undocumented students.

Grantees have been particularly effective in their negotiations with small, moderately selective, private four-year colleges and universities. For many undocumented students, those colleges are an ideal choice, offering a

challenging curriculum in a welcoming, supportive campus environment close to home. However, tuition at those colleges is often prohibitively expensive.

In interviews for this report, several informants shared stories of how they persuaded private colleges to increase institutional aid for *Invest in the Dream* scholars. Essentially, they told the colleges: “If you offer undocumented students enough financial aid, then we’ll help you find the students you want, and we’ll ‘sweeten the pot’ with an additional scholarship.” A number of private colleges responded positively, significantly increasing the aid they were otherwise prepared to offer.

It is important to note that a majority of *Invest in the Dream* scholarship recipients attend community colleges and other public institutions, which remain the most affordable and practical option for most undocumented students. However, it is encouraging that *Invest in the Dream* has been an effective lever to help some undocumented students attend private colleges – and the results have been good for students and colleges alike.

## II. IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND COLLEGES

While the *Invest in the Dream* scholarship grants have supported only a modest number of students, informants suggested that the scholarships powerfully affected those students who received them. Informants also recognized that the impact of the initiative extended well beyond the scholarship recipients themselves. By raising the visibility of undocumented students and affirming their struggle, *Invest in the Dream* has broadly influenced college students, faculty and administrators and has reshaped campus culture in important ways.

### *INVEST IN THE DREAM* SCHOLARSHIPS HAVE BEEN “GAME-CHANGERS” FOR SOME STUDENTS.

E4FC launched *Invest in the Dream* knowing that scholarship support is very hard for undocumented students to secure. As a general rule, privately-funded scholarships are highly competitive: Many scholarship providers consider dozens or even hundreds of students for each potential scholarship award. For undocumented students, the challenge is even greater, since they are excluded from eligibility from many private scholarship programs.

In addition, most privately-funded scholarships are quite modest in size. Students often apply for many different scholarships, and even the most successful applicants must find a way to cover their unmet need. Once again, the challenge is even greater for undocumented students who receive no federal grants or loans and sometimes must pay higher tuition rates.

In the face of those challenges, informants asserted that the *Invest in the Dream* scholarships have been “game-changers” for students who received them. Every

### **INFORMANT COMMENTS:**

**“We’ve changed the way that colleges think about supporting undocumented students.”**

**“The colleges are taking a risk by accepting our students, but they become the best students they have.”**

**“I told the colleges, ‘I can help you find great students if you make me a deal!’”**

**“The colleges have invested in our students in every way possible.”**

### **INFORMANT COMMENTS:**

**“Scholarship funds are the most important thing that *Invest in the Dream* has offered.”**

**“Some students couldn’t swing it without our financial support.”**

**“For some, it made the difference between going to a four-year college instead of community college.”**

**“Scholarships helped convince families that there’s value in higher education.”**

**“I wouldn’t underestimate the value of the scholarship money.”**

**“Money is a symbol of how you’re valued. Dollars convey respect.”**

informant shared stories about how the scholarship made enrollment possible for students who thought they could not afford college. Even those grantees who awarded very modest scholarships were convinced that they had real impact.

One grantee expressed regret that her organization could not award larger scholarships but still offered evidence that those scholarships have been very helpful. Another informant explained that the undocumented students his organization supports are pursuing a college degree by taking a few courses at a time: “They’re on an eight-year track. They’re working and they’re committed to the long term.” A third informant noted that her organization carefully assesses students’ financial need to ensure that they do not take on unsupportable debt. She thanked *Invest in the Dream* for significantly expanding the pool of funds her organization could offer to undocumented students, adding, “Without E4FC, we would have had more no’s than yes’s.”

Informants described all the scholarship recipients as remarkably motivated and undaunted by the financial challenges they face. Several informants – including the four students interviewed for this report – described a process of cobbling together funds from family, savings, employment income, institutional aid and other sources to pay for college tuition and living expenses. But one student informant spoke for many when he said, “If it weren’t for this scholarship, I wouldn’t be here.”

### **FOR SOME STUDENTS, OTHER SUPPORTS WERE ALMOST AS IMPORTANT AS THE MONEY.**

In addition to providing financial support to students, *Invest in the Dream* grantees have offered a variety of other supports that informants described as equally meaningful. As one student phrased it, “Money for college is important but money is useless unless you have a plan for where you want to go.”

As noted above, many of the grantee organizations have created peer support networks that offer opportunities for undocumented students to encourage and advise other students and to celebrate their successes. Some of the grantee programs have created a space for undocumented high school students to meet on a regular basis; some also offer tutoring, standardized test preparation, college advising and assistance with college applications. Once students matriculate, many of the programs look for ways to sustain those peer support networks, connecting scholarship recipients with others on their campus or online.

In addition, all the grantees have created mentoring programs that allow students to seek advice and support from older volunteers or program staff. While the style and intensity of the mentoring programs varies across grantee programs, all the informants agreed that mentoring is a crucial element of the support they offer.

Students described their relationships with mentors this way: “My mentor is the coolest.” “He’s always there – he provides support and he knows my story.” “He has opened doors for me.” “She understands all the demands on me.” Several student informants said they were inspired by their mentors to offer support to other students following in their footsteps. As one student said, “I can help others while helping myself.”

### **SOME OF THE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS HAVE BECOME HIGHLY VISIBLE ADVOCATES AND ROLE MODELS.**

Comments from grantees, college partners and students themselves suggest that many of scholarship recipients have assumed visible leadership roles and have positively influenced the culture of their campuses. In some ways, that is a predictable outcome: many of the *Invest in the Dream* scholarship programs are designed to identify and support highly motivated and responsible students with leadership qualities. However, the stories of undocumented student achievement and influence are still remarkable.

Informants suggested that many undocumented students have a choice to make – to avoid the spotlight and remain focused on their own future, their families and their personal responsibilities, or to become a more visible advocate, role model and representative of the larger undocumented community. Many of the *Invest in the Dream*

scholarship recipients have chosen the former, with complete respect and support from their peers and mentors. Others have taken the latter route. Those students are speaking out in classrooms and community settings. They are featured in school newspapers and public forums. They are founding and leading organizations that advocate for undocumented students. They are challenging laws and policies designed to exclude them.

Informants described those students' efforts with real pride and with real evidence of their impact. Particularly at smaller private colleges – and at institutions with limited histories of admitting undocumented students – the *Invest in the Dream* scholarship recipients have influenced admissions policies, financial aid policies, curriculum and co-curricular programs. They have educated their classmates and effectively engaged faculty and institutional leaders. In return, they have been encouraged to pursue their goals of graduate study and professional careers and, most of all, their dreams of life as American citizens. In that sense, the real story of the impact of *Invest in the Dream* has yet to be written.

### III. ONGOING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Finally, the informants interviewed for this report were asked to reflect on the future of this work and to advise E4FC on strategies for allocating the technical assistance grants that will be awarded later in 2017. Because the interviews were conducted in the first two months of the Trump Administration, many of the informants inevitably focused on the dramatic changes in the political landscape and how those changes might affect undocumented students and any efforts to support them. However, informants also spoke in broader terms about the ongoing need for fundraising advice and capacity building assistance among *Invest in the Dream* grantees and in the larger scholarship provider community.

#### GRANTEES AND STUDENTS ARE STRUGGLING TO NAVIGATE A CHANGING POLITICAL CLIMATE.

In the current political environment, scholarship providers confront some of the same questions and risks that affect undocumented students themselves. Informants for this report – including grantees, donors, college partners and students themselves – expressed a range of responses, from anxiety to renewed determination. No one is backing down or walking away, but there is great uncertainty at this moment about how to move forward.

The larger scholarship provider field appears to be reacting similarly to the *Invest in the Dream* grantees. In response to an informal poll of its members by the National Scholarship Providers Association in February 2017, all the respondents expressed their commitment to maintaining support for current scholarship recipients. However, there is less certainty about how new federal policies might affect future scholarship decisions. Some scholarship providers have also expressed concern that their student records could be subpoenaed or that they may be a target of other federal immigration enforcement actions.

First and foremost, informants for this report expressed concern about the threats facing undocumented students themselves: the increased threat of detention or deportation; the threat of separation from family; the potential loss of financial support for college and graduate students; and the risk that undocumented young people may lose the opportunity to work or to pursue their career choices. For some of these students, DACA is a lifeline, as long as it remains intact. For undocumented young people with no DACA protections, the risks are even greater. While all

#### INFORMANT COMMENTS:

**“Because of the election, more people know about this issue, but more of them have the wrong idea.”**

**“We weren’t emotionally prepared for our responsibility to students in this climate.”**

**“Now we’ve turned our attention to protecting our students.”**

**“Our message is: We’re doing fine, we need to stick together, we’re not going anywhere.”**

**“Some undocumented students are coming back to the community we built”**

students interviewed for this report expressed determination to stay positive, they acknowledged that there is great fear and distress all around them.

After expressing their primary concern for undocumented students, scholarship providers also discussed the potential impact of the new political order on their own work. Several spoke about how their efforts to raise funds for undocumented student scholarships have become more complicated. While they hope that the Trump Administration's harsh policies and divisive language may make it easier to attract support for undocumented students, they are concerned that the threats may drive some supporters away. As one informant put it, "Donors may feel some reluctance to support this because there is a lower probability that students will succeed. But perhaps more givers will decide they have to do something."

Informants also spoke about the balance they must now strike between highlighting undocumented student stories and protecting the identities of those students. If they speak too publicly about the students they're supporting, it may attract unwanted attention from immigration opponents or make them targets for federal enforcement actions. As one informant put it, "We need a way to connect to those who are sympathetic without raising the ire of those attempting to intimidate, harass, or deport."

Finally, the informants talked about the emotional toll that all of this is taking on their own colleagues and organizations. Many described feeling heartbroken that so much of what has been achieved in the past few years may now be at risk. All the informants thanked and praised their *Invest in the Dream* colleagues for their encouragement and emotional support. Some went further, urging E4FC to promote and facilitate "self-care and caring for each other" in the difficult months and perhaps years ahead.

## **ALL GRANTEES NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT BUT MOST AREN'T CLEAR ON WHAT FORM IT MIGHT TAKE.**

As noted above, E4FC plans to invite proposals from the current cohort of *Invest in the Dream* grantees for a fourth round of grants in 2017.

Unlike the first three years of the initiative, the 2017 grants will not directly support scholarships for undocumented students. While E4FC is still formulating a fourth year strategy, its goal is to help grantees expand and sustain their support for undocumented students.

In interviews for this report, informants were asked to describe the kinds of support that they would find most helpful. While all the informants welcomed the idea of technical assistance or capacity building grants, only a few had specific thoughts and suggestions for E4FC to consider. Several of their suggestions are quoted in the inset box on this page.

One common theme among almost all informant comments was a need for advice to help grantees increase their fundraising capacity. As previously noted, many of the *Invest in the Dream* grantees are small and volunteer-led organizations, with limited fundraising experience; that's especially true of the five undocumented student-led organizations first funded in 2016. Even the older and larger grantee organizations acknowledge that they could use more training and advice to help them attract and sustain scholarship support.

### **INFORMANT COMMENTS:**

**"I need advice on who I should be targeting. Perhaps a fundraising consultant could help me learn how to approach foundations or individual donors."**

**"Help us train our students in effective social action strategies."**

**"Help us offer more support to parents."**

**"Support a fund to help students cover filing fees or pay for low-cost legal assistance."**

**"Fund an intern or employee to track our mentoring program – the number of matches and quality of relationships."**

**"Could E4FC 'hit the road' with us and help us make the case to donors? There's some magic in the work you do that would really help us."**

Another widely-expressed theme was a request for advice and support around communications and storytelling. As noted above, *Invest in the Dream* grantees have found that their most effective fundraising strategy is simply to tell the life stories of undocumented young people in their communities – or, even better, to create opportunities for those young people to tell their own stories. That kind of storytelling may be harder in the current political climate than in the recent past, but it is also more important than ever before. Informants urged E4FC to offer training and support to scholarship professionals and to undocumented students to build their storytelling skills and to help them balance their need to be heard with their need for safety and confidentiality.

# CONCLUSION

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As this report illustrates, *Invest in the Dream* has been many things for the past three years: an experiment; an inspiration; a community; a source of much-needed financial support for students; and an opportunity for learning and sharing best practices. The initiative was launched at a time when the political landscape seemed increasingly hopeful for undocumented students; *Invest in the Dream* capitalized on that momentum and created some of its own, generating widespread enthusiasm, interest and support in the scholarship provider community and the higher education sector. Even if some political battles must be re-fought, and new battles loom, there still is much to be proud of and to build on.

As a scholarship-driven initiative, *Invest in the Dream* enters the ongoing debate between scholarship advocates and skeptics over the value of scholarship giving. Skeptics might argue that those funds could have been better spent on broader efforts to educate, organize and energize undocumented young people. Scholarship advocates might respond that it is impossible to calculate the ultimate impact of the *Invest in the Dream* scholarships – impossible to know what those two hundred students will achieve or how much they will influence the world around them. If scholarship giving is an act of optimism, then scholarship support for undocumented students is a profound statement of hope for the future.

Perhaps both advocates and skeptics are correct. The *Invest in the Dream* scholarships have been an important investment with at least some measurable impact. But they should be seen as just one component of an ongoing effort; one more strategy to support and affirm undocumented young people; one more way, quite literally, to “invest in the dream.” For over ten years, E4FC has offered a variety of programs and resources that have helped to empower and give voice to the undocumented community, and that work continues.

# STUDENT PROFILES

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## BRAYAN

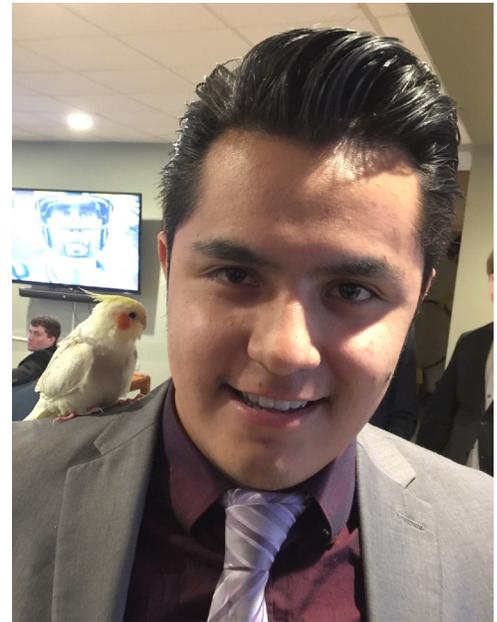
Growing up in Athens, Georgia, Brayan loved science and technology: “I grew up watching the Discovery Channel,” he says. He did well in school and knew that he wanted to pursue a career in aerospace engineering or medicine. But he also knew that his options for higher education were limited; under current Georgia law, undocumented students are barred from attending the state’s top three public universities. Brayan dreamed of attending Georgia Tech but knew that was not possible.

As a high school student, Brayan met Betina Kaplan and JoBeth Allen, the leaders of U-Lead Athens, and became involved in the tutoring and college advising programs that U-Lead volunteers offer for undocumented students. He decided to apply to private colleges in Georgia; even though those colleges didn’t offer a major in aerospace engineering, he knew that he could complete the pre-requisite courses and then transfer to another institution.

And that’s exactly what he did. With support from U-Lead, he applied to transfer to the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. U-Lead gave him a stipend to travel to Chicago for an interview and campus visit, and when he was admitted, U-Lead offered him a scholarship that made it possible for him to enroll.

Brayan says that being so far from home is hard on him and even harder on his family. But he has found a comfortable place at IIT, where he works on interesting projects with a talented and respected engineering faculty. He has also become involved in the Undocumented Students and Allies group, which is asking all students at IIT to contribute to an endowment fund to support undocumented student scholarships. That effort has allowed Brayan to share his story with many other students who have been very supportive and encouraging.

Brayan expects to graduate from IIT in 2018 and plans to work for a while before considering graduate school. He wants to help support his family and knows that his engineering degree will immediately open up good job opportunities. “I would love to go back to Georgia,” he says, “but I’m not sure.” He is sure of this: U-Lead has made an important difference in his life and he is grateful for the scholarship funding and the many other supports that U-Lead continues to offer.



# TABITHA

For a long time, Tabitha has known that she wanted to be a lawyer. The path to achieving that personal goal has been long and challenging, and there are further barriers still ahead, but Tabitha is undaunted. She is interested in climate change and water resource management and hopes to use her legal training to influence environmental policy. She says she may even run for public office someday.

Tabitha was born in Guyana and she moved with her family to the Caribbean island of St. Maarten when her father sought construction work there. Without legal status, she could not attend school in St. Maarten, so her family moved again to Jacksonville, Florida, where her grandparents lived.

As a high achieving student, Tabitha knew that she wanted to pursue higher education. Many people encouraged her to apply for the Bright Futures Scholarship, which fully covers tuition for outstanding Florida students at the state's flagship public university, but Tabitha found it hard to tell those people that she was undocumented and ineligible for the scholarship. After graduating from high school, she lived at home for two years to take care of her younger siblings, but she became increasingly depressed.

After deciding, "I just can't stay home anymore," Tabitha began volunteering for the local Rotary Club, helping to support homeless people and refugees. She came to the attention of the Evangelical Immigration Table, a coalition of religious leaders who advocate for generous immigration policies that are consistent with biblical values. A pastor in Orlando encouraged her to apply to Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville.

Trevecca offered Tabitha a sizeable scholarship but it wasn't quite enough. That's when she met Dr. Michael Spalding, the founder of Equal Chance for Education in Nashville. ECE provided the remaining financial support that she needed to enroll and also introduced her to a mentor who works as a lobbyist at the Tennessee state capitol. "My mentor is the coolest," she says. "She's very politically active and a great role model."

Tabitha's four years at Trevecca were a great experience: "They invested in me in every way possible," she says. She widely shared her story and was featured in the school newspaper, generating strong support from the faculty and other students. While she occasionally heard some hostile comments about immigration on campus, she says, "It wasn't personal and wasn't directed towards me." She adds that she took advantage of some of those moments to help people understand the issues better.

Now that she has graduated from college, other changes lie ahead for Tabitha. Earlier this year, she married a young man who is pursuing his doctorate at Yale; he is a U.S. citizen, so she has submitted a petition to adjust her immigration status. While she feels somewhat conflicted about gaining citizenship through marriage, it only reinforces her motivation: "With this new privilege I've acquired, I feel even stronger about the need to advocate on my community's behalf."



## MONICA AND JUAN

The bonds of family are strong for Monica and Juan. They are sister and brother – Monica is four years older than Juan – and both share dreams of higher education, professional careers and a good life for their families.

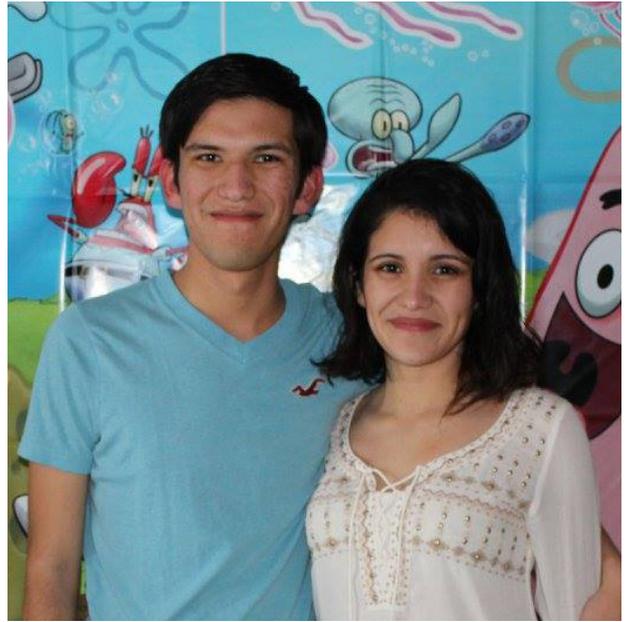
They came to the United States from Mexico twelve years ago. Monica says she spoke no English at all: “I had to look up every word in the dictionary.” After six months in Texas, they moved with their mother to Columbus, Indiana, where Monica had to repeat the seventh grade. She knew that her family’s undocumented status would make their life challenging but she was also driven to succeed.

Monica is now a single mom with a two year-old son. When she obtained DACA status, she was able to enter a nursing program at Ivy Tech Community College. She earned her LPN degree and now is pursuing an RN degree.

Juan graduated from high school in 2015 and found a full-time job at a bank, where his supervisors quickly recognized his skills and increased his responsibilities. He also knew that he wanted a college degree, so he enrolled at the joint campus of Indiana University and Purdue University in Columbus. Juan now works part-time at the bank and attends school part-time; he hopes to complete a business degree in five years.

Both Monica and Juan have earned the respect and support of Matt Souza, a senior administrator at IUPUC who also helped to establish a donor advised scholarship fund at the local community foundation. That fund has provided scholarship support, mentoring and encouragement to both sister and brother. Monica says the scholarship “shows I can really be what I want to be.” Juan adds that Matt “understands all the demands on me” but still encourages him to give back to the community. He spends time mentoring a high school student.

Both Monica and Juan are concerned that DACA is fragile at the moment, which makes their future plans more uncertain. Juan says that “people at work know I have DACA, but I don’t just tell everyone my situation.” Monica is worried that she may not get to be a registered nurse, and “that’s hard after all the hours I’ve put in.” But both sister and brother remain hopeful and focused on their goals. As Monica puts it, “I just want to show my son what’s possible.”



# DONOR PROFILES

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## SHANNON MAYFELD

For some people, the value of supporting scholarships for bright, capable and needy students is easy to understand. Shannon Mayfeld is one of those people. “I’ve seen how education changes the entire arc of a family’s life,” he says – including his own. Shannon grew up without much money; he paid his own way through college and went on to earn a law degree. After managing a successful environmental consulting practice, he recently changed careers and has just completed training at a Methodist seminary.

If Shannon instinctively understood the value of scholarships, his wife Kristy came to know it through her daily interactions with immigrant students in the local public schools, which their own children attend. They both also quickly grasped the particular power and impact of scholarships for undocumented students. Shannon was vaguely aware of what U-Lead Athens was doing to support and advocate for undocumented young people in his community. He was “looking to get more involved” and then: “I got on fire when I met one of the students.”



As he met other young people who U-Lead supports, his commitment quickly deepened. “These students are enormously impressive,” he says. “They would crawl over broken glass to go to college.” He drove one student to Atlanta to help him get his DACA card and he met others whom he describes as equally determined. He adds, “If you were building a business that required this kind of drive, you’d hire these kids.”

Several *Invest in the Dream* grantee organizations have used their E4FC challenge grant to effectively motivate other donors, but Shannon’s support for U-Lead may be the very best example. When the founders of U-Lead told him they needed to raise matching funds to secure a substantial grant from E4FC, he recognized the “concrete, immediate, valuable nature of the opportunity.” Shannon says he “might have donated a smaller amount to assuage my conscience,” but “the matching challenge, and the urgency it created, forced us to stretch.” He dug down to give more and convinced his business partner to contribute, too.

Shannon now considers himself an activist, not just a donor. He is deeply distressed by the ugly anti-immigrant rhetoric in the country and, in particular, in Georgia. “We’ve seen this kind of bigotry here before – it’s at work again in the same way.” He worries about what comes next, but hopes that the Trump Administration’s hostility to immigration may actually increase support for organizations like U-Lead: “Perhaps more givers will decide they have to do something.”

Having already made that choice for himself, he offers this advice to scholarship providers for attracting donors: “You need to find someone for whom it’s personal,” he says. “People want to see that their giving has a personal impact on someone’s life.”

# THE MYSUN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Myron and Sunny Glassberg were long-time residents of St. Louis who were deeply devoted to their community. Mr. Glassberg died in 1991 and Mrs. Glassberg died in 2013, at age 94. The charitable fund they created together, The Mysun Charitable Foundation, has for years supported a wide variety of education and environmental initiatives, including several much-beloved public spaces in St. Louis. The Mysun Charitable Foundation also has been a longtime supporter of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, a nearly 100 year-old organization that provides financial support and advice to local students pursuing higher education.

Four years ago, The Scholarship Foundation board decided to open its scholarship application process to undocumented students with DACA status; the board recognized that supporting those students affirmed its most important values and priorities as an organization. As a grantee for all three years of *Invest in the Dream* – and a deeply committed advocate for undocumented students in Missouri – The Scholarship Foundation has been an adviser and role model for other scholarship providers nationwide.

As part of its grant application to E4FC, The Scholarship Foundation approached Mysun to request support for the required matching funds. Cynthia Crim, a foundation program manager at Commerce Bank in St. Louis, which manages Mysun, says that the trustees immediately looked favorably on that request. With a long history of supporting The Scholarship Foundation, the trustees knew the organization well. When Cynthia heard a presentation by Faith Sandler, The Scholarship Foundation's executive director, on the acute challenges facing DACA students in their state, it made an even more compelling case for their support.

Cynthia says that the E4FC challenge grant certainly played a role in the Mysun decision; she notes that “leveraging other dollars is important” to the trustees. She adds, “It helped that The Scholarship Foundation has a wonderful track record. They didn't have to do a hard sell on their ability to deliver.”

In this uncertain political moment – and in the particularly harsh climate of Missouri – the trustees will meet later this year to discuss how to sustain their commitment and attract additional support for The Scholarship Foundation and for DACA students. Cynthia recognizes that some other potential donors “may be a little more apprehensive” about investing in those students – but, as The Mysun Charitable Foundation can tell them, “It just feels right.”

# APPENDIX OF INFORMANTS

## 1. INVEST IN THE DREAM GRANTEES

ORGANIZATION	INFORMANT(S)		INTERVIEW DATE
Berks County Community Foundation / Greater Reading Immigration Project	Franki Aitken/ Myrna Fuchs		1/30/17
College Now Greater Cleveland	Bob Durham/ Elton Lytle		2/1/17
Equal Chance for Education	Michael Spalding/ Molly Haynes		2/1/17
Golden Door Scholars	Kacey Grantham		1/25/17
Heritage – The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County	Matt Souza		1/24/17
New York State Youth Leadership Council	Ivan Rosales		2/13/17
The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis	Faith Sandler/ Karin McElwain-West/ Felipe Martinez		2/7/17
U-Lead Athens	JoBeth Allen		1/26/17

## 2. STUDENTS

NAME	INSTITUTION		INTERVIEW DATE
Brayan	Illinois Institute of Technology		1/30/17
Juan / Monica	Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus/ Ivy Tech Community College		2/8/17
Tabitha	Trevecca Nazarene University		2/8/17

## 3. FUNDERS/ALLIES

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE	INTERVIEW DATE
Cynthia Crim	Commerce Bank, St. Louis – Trustee for The Mysun Charitable Foundation	Foundation Program Manager	2/7/17
Christy Majors	Queens University of Charlotte	Assistant Vice President for Financial Services	2/10/17
Shannon Mayfeld	Private donor		1/31/17

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jay Sherwin is an independent consultant who works with foundations and other non-profit organizations to develop strategic plans, design programs and initiatives, implement rigorous outcome evaluations and improve communications. Before launching his consulting practice, Jay spent twenty years as a grantmaker for five national, regional and community foundations, specializing in efforts to promote college access and completion for students from low-income and under-represented communities. From 2007 to 2010, he served as Vice President for Programs at College Access Foundation of California; during that time, the foundation awarded over \$50 million in grants, supporting more than 20,000 scholarships for low-income and first generation college students, including hundreds of undocumented immigrant students.

# ABOUT US

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## EDUCATORS FOR FAIR CONSIDERATION (E4FC)

Founded in 2006, Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) empowers undocumented young people to achieve education and career goals through personal, institutional and policy transformation. We envision an America where all young people can pursue and complete an education with confidence and without constraint. For more information, please find us online at [www.e4fc.org](http://www.e4fc.org).