

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HCM STRATEGISTS ANNOUNCES FIRST THREE FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID ADVOCACY (FFAA) FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS**

*Campaign for College Opportunity, National College Access Network and  
Thurgood Marshall College Fund to Receive Nearly \$500,000 in Grants for Advocacy Work*

Washington, D.C. – May 24, 2016 – HCM Strategists, one of the nation’s leading advocacy and public policy firm, today announced the first recipients of the Federal Financial Aid Advocacy (FFAA) Fund, which is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The three organizations— Campaign for College Opportunity, National College Access Network and Thurgood Marshall College Fund—were selected from a competitive group of 17 applicants and will receive a collective total of \$492,300 for their respective projects.

“The FFAA Fund was formed for the specific purpose of supporting advocacy activities that will expand engagement in federal policymaking for financial aid programs,” said Terrell Halaska, managing partner at HCM Strategists. “We are thrilled to announce our first round of grant recipients, all of which are embarking on incredibly important work designed to advocate how federal financial aid can better serve students and, ultimately, improve postsecondary attainment rates and the taxpayers’ return on investment.”

The FFAA Fund grant recipients, approved projects and individual grant amounts are:

- **Campaign for College Opportunity** (\$180,000): Campaign for College Opportunity (Campaign) is a California-based alliance of civil rights, business and education leaders, which works to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college. For its FFAA Fund project, the Campaign formed a consortium with the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and Southern California College Access Network. The Campaign and its partners will advocate for streamlining the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and consolidating federal financial aid programs by targeting federal policymakers representing California, leaders from various industries and students.
- **National College Access Network** (\$132,300): The National College Access Network (NCAN) works to overcome barriers that underrepresented students face on their path to postsecondary credentials. For its FFAA Fund project, NCAN formed a consortium with

Scholarship America and the National Campus Leadership Council and will implement a series of tactics designed to support advocacy for federal student aid simplification, including the development of a New Voices Coalition and and Advocacy Institute.

- **Thurgood Marshall College Fund (\$180,000):** Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is the only organization that supports the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Through its #INTHEBLACK Financial Aid Advocacy Campaign, TMCF will amplify ideas around loan repayment and financial responsibility, while educating and activating the HBCU community, targeted members of Congress and TMCF corporate partners.

The FFAA Fund will give a total of \$1 million in short-term grants this year (up to \$200,000 each); more than \$500,000 is still available for appropriate advocacy projects. The FFAA Fund is now accepting additional applications until June 24, 2016. Interested applicants are invited to join one of three informational webinars taking place in late May and early June that will focus on how to conduct effective advocacy. More information about the FFAA Fund, its application process, funded projects and the informational webinars is available at: <http://hcmstrategists.com/ffaafund>.

For further information about HCM Strategists or the FFAA Fund program, please contact [FFAAFund@hcmstrategists.com](mailto:FFAAFund@hcmstrategists.com).

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#### **About HCM Strategists**

HCM Strategists is a public policy and advocacy consulting firm focused on advancing effective solutions in health and education. HCM utilizes a network of relationships at the state and federal level to work collaboratively with nonprofits, foundations and corporations.

- We ALIGN by connecting a problem to a policy and to practice.
- We ADVOCATE by capturing attention and strengthening public will to action.
- We ADVANCE by pursuing change through finding common ground, proposing specific solutions and forging strong alliances.

Terrell Halaska, Kristin Conklin and Michael Manganiello joined forces because they share a vision of and passion for change. Achieving policy change takes a combination of high-level government experience, an understanding of people's struggles, a network of strong relationships, a keen analytical ability, and the skills to find fresh, creative approaches to addressing issues. When you can enlighten all participants by capturing their attention, finding common ground, and building strong alliances, success is within reach. The result is change that improves our communities and enhances quality of life.