



Helping Students Thrive

Impact Report



The Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund (LASIF) was established in 2012 as a partnership between the California Community Foundation (CCF) and the College Futures Foundation to increase college access and success in L.A. County. Since its inception it has awarded \$25 million in grants and has grown to become one of the largest college attainment initiatives in L.A. County.

Equity gaps between students based on their race, ethnicity and income directly impact their ability to thrive academically. Only half of all L.A. County students complete high school with the classes required to apply to a four-year college, and just one in five students enrolled in a public university in L.A. County will graduate within four years. LASIF's unique approach evaluates grantmaking decisions through the lens of college completion to reach beyond admission. Multi-year scholarships are combined with college access and holistic support services proven to address the multifaceted needs of vulnerable students.

LASIF Key Elements



Target
Need



Connect with
Services



Leverage
Public Aid



Completion
Focus

While the core LASIF model has remained consistent over its ten-year history, the initiative has undergone important evolutions in response to student needs. In 2017, LASIF added the Young Men of Color Initiative to better integrate specific strategies that support male students. In 2019, the Relief from Urgent Student Hardship (RUSH) Fund was launched to help students struggling to meet basic living expenses persist towards their postsecondary aspirations.

Our Collective Impact

\$25M+
granted

40+
nonprofit partners

7,000+
scholarships awarded

38,000+
students served

LASIF scholars to date, of whom over 90% are Pell Grant or CA Dream Act recipients and more than 91% identify with race/ethnicity groups historically underrepresented in higher education, are completing postsecondary degrees far faster and at higher rates than local and national averages.

LASIF Scholars' Success

DEGREE ATTAINMENT

LASIF scholars National average

LASIF Impact

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE
OR HIGHER**

78%¹

63%³

+15%

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

59%²

33%⁴

+26%

COMPLETION WITHIN 4 YEARS

LASIF scholars National average

LASIF Impact

74%

38%⁵

+36%

76%

51%

+25%

¹ BA completion amongst LASIF scholars no longer enrolled in college (2013-2020) | ² AA or BA completion amongst LASIF scholars no longer enrolled in college (2013-2020) | ³ Completion within six years for 2013 cohort. SOURCE: NCES (2021) Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates

⁴ Completion within three years for 2016 cohort. SOURCE: NCES (2021) Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates | ⁵ SOURCE: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2016) Time to Degree

Impact Story

Amanda Abito

Current Student, Los Angeles Harbor Community College



There is no greater weapon than knowledge and no greater tool than education. These words resonate deeply with Amanda Abito, who from a young age, understood the value of obtaining a higher education, but struggled navigating a system that does not always provide students with access to the resources they need to succeed.

“There is no-one-size-fits all solution when it comes to learning. Having access to an alternative high school program allowed me to re-discover my passion for learning and changed the course of my life.”

Amanda not only found a school model that worked for her, but she also benefited from programming offered by Sharefest, a grantee of LASIF, that works with youth from underserved L.A. neighborhoods. Sharefest empowers youth through leadership development, college preparation workshops, campus field trips and mentoring.

Through Sharefest’s creative writing class Amanda was able to connect with a trusted mentor who believed in her potential and encouraged her to seek out

opportunities she might have passed on, such as the LASIF Action Research Fellowship. “My mentor’s support was instrumental in helping me build my self-confidence. There were times when I sold myself short because I wasn’t attending a prestigious ivy league school and I struggled with social anxiety. I perceived those things as limitations when they were merely challenges that could be overcome.”

Amanda, who is now 20 years old, is finishing her second year at Los Angeles Harbor Community College where she will earn three AA degrees before transferring to a four-year university. Community college allowed Amanda to take advantage of The LA College Promise initiative which waives tuition for the first two years of college for youth graduating from LA Unified high schools.

“I will always be an advocate for community college because it offers great advantages for students such as lower tuition and fees and a more flexible curriculum and class schedule. I was given the opportunity to receive a college education debt free and although my academic goals move beyond community college, I believe the education I am receiving will serve as a solid foundation for my future.”

That future is full of possibilities for this young scholar whose personal mission is to enrich the lives of others in her community. “I look forward to finding a career path that allows me to merge my love of writing and storytelling with community service to become a champion for higher education.”

Throughout its ten-year trajectory, LASIF has impacted the lives of over 38,000 students by supporting community organizations who provide low-income youth with an array of safety net services to ensure they have the support they need to get into college and graduate.

Impact Story

Jahmeel Walker

UC Merced Alumni,
Class of 2016



College was on Jahmeel's radar since he was in 5th grade, but it was not something he thought was tangible. "The process of preparing and applying to college can be extremely overwhelming because you don't know where to start." First-generation students face barriers such as financial burdens and inequitable access to guidance and resources, making their college experience more challenging as they navigate a new environment for the first time. These barriers are compounded for Black students who are directly impacted by the side-effects of structural racism.

"I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a high school that challenged me academically and offered college prep classes, but that wasn't enough. I needed some additional guidance and an action plan."

Jahmeel was able to receive the support and guidance he needed from an organization called the Fulfillment Fund who was working with youth at his high school. The Fulfillment Fund, a grantee of LASIF, offers an array of college access

support services such as in-class college access instruction, one-on-one college counseling and financial aid advising.

Through the Fulfillment Fund Jahmeel was able to connect with a college counselor who believed in him and helped him build his confidence to pursue his dream of a higher education. "Having that additional support from a college counselor was instrumental for me because I didn't know how to navigate the system and didn't know what to expect. I didn't even know if I could become a successful college student." Jahmeel continued to receive personalized support from Fulfillment Fund staff throughout his four years in college, which increased his odds of graduating.

Jahmeel earned his bachelor's degree in political science from UC Merced in May 2016, becoming the first in his family to earn a four-year degree. He is a young professional whose passions range from giving back to his community to pursuing his creative ventures.

"I owe my success to my mother who always believed in me and to the small community who rallied around me and provided me with the tools and resources I needed to pursue my dreams."

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What is **next?**

The lessons learned in these last ten years reiterate the importance of giving beyond a single scholarship toward an integrated set of opportunities to help build brighter futures for young Angelenos. In 2021, the LASIF team commenced a strategic refresh process that engaged various partners. Insights were garnered through a range of approaches including action research led by LASIF scholars, quantitative analysis of LASIF scholar postsecondary trajectories, subject matter experts and key constituent listening sessions.

Beginning in 2022, LASIF will focus more explicitly on multi-sector, multi-agency partnerships that support underrepresented students to obtain a postsecondary credential or degree. In addition to a greater focus on place or population-based collaborations, use of student aid funding will expand to consider additional methods such as emergency grants and paid internships support, as well as more traditional scholarships. Finally, the prioritization of bachelor's degrees was amended to be more inclusive of the multiple postsecondary institutions and pathways that support economic and social mobility.

Donate Today

As we look forward, we are excited about what the future will bring and the opportunity to continue making a difference in the life of youth across L.A. County communities. We invite you to join us in this transformational work by donating today.

For donors with Donor Advised Funds at CCF, please visit DonorConnect to make a grant to LASIF. On the grant recommendation page, click on "Grant to CCF Initiative" under grant type and choose Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund.

For additional information, please contact:

Erin Limlingan, Donor Relations Officer at elimlingan@calfund.org

Kelly King, Education Senior Program Officer at kking@calfund.org

Online


To make a secure, tax-deductible donation online, visit:

calfund.org/lasif-donate

By Check

You may also send checks payable to the California Community Foundation, noting that the donation is for the Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund (LASIF). Checks should be mailed to:

California Community Foundation
221 S. Figueroa St., Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90012



OUR PARTNERS

Lead LASIF Funding Partners (2012-2021)

College Futures Foundation
Draper Community Trust
ECMC Foundation
Kresge Foundation
Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation
Westly Foundation

LASIF 10th Year Student Research Fellows

Amanda Abito, Los Angeles Harbor Community College
Chelsie Cortes, East Los Angeles College
Jamila Cummings, University of California Los Angeles
Daniel Flores, University of California San Diego
Isaac Kim, Dartmouth College
Paul Mate, California State University Dominguez Hills
Edwin Sanchez Huizar, Bowdoin College
Michelle Tapia, California State University Long Beach
Jerry Torres, Pasadena City College
Brenda Valdez-Gutierrez, University of California Riverside

LASIF 10th Year Strategic Refresh Advisory Committee

Lina Calderon-Morin, Southern California College Access Network
Audrey Dow, Campaign for College Opportunity
William Franklin, California State University Dominguez Hills
Elizabeth Gonzalez, College Futures Foundation
Christopher Nellum, Education Trust West
Ashley Pallie, Pomona College
D'Artagnan Scorza, Los Angeles County
Laura Szabo-Kubitz, The Institute for College Access & Success
Alison Yoshimoto-Towery, Los Angeles Unified School District

LASIF 10th Year Strategic Refresh Learning/Evaluation Partners

Capacity to Impact
Education First
John W. Gardner Center

LASIF Community Partners (2012-2021)

A Place Called Home
Angell Foundation
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles
Boys & Girls Club of the Los Angeles Harbor
P.F. Bresee Foundation
Bright Prospect
Brotherhood Crusade
Cal Poly Pomona Project SUCCESS
Cal-SOAP Los Angeles
California State University Dominguez Hills Male Success Alliance
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
College Access Plan
College Match
College Track Los Angeles
Educating Young Minds
Elevate Your G.A.M.E.
Fulfillment Fund
Heart of Los Angeles
InnerCity Struggle
LA Promise Fund
Latino Equality Alliance
Los Angeles County Community

Development Foundation
Los Angeles Education Partnership
Motivating Students Through Experience (MOSTe)
One Voice
Pasadena City College Upward Bound
Project GRAD Los Angeles
Rio Hondo College
Sharefest
Single Stop
SoCal CAN
Social Justice Learning Institute
TxT: Teens Exploring Technology
Thrive Scholars
Uncommon Good
United Cambodian Community
United Friends of the Children
University of California Los Angeles VIP Scholars
University of Southern California College Advising Corps
University of Southern California Neighborhood Academic Initiative
Urban TXT
Walking Shield
Youth Speak Collective

