

Stakeholder Group Summit Outcomes and Plans

Scholarship Stakeholder Group

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Pre-Summit Stakeholder Group Assumption Targets and Proposed Activities

Will address assumptions 2–8

- Coordinate an Internet database of scholarship information
- Streamline the scholarship application process
- Seek to hire a community scholarship coordinator to oversee a volunteer office that disseminates scholarship information and assists with student scholarship applications and essays

Summit Report in Brief

Who attended?

Attendees included representatives from financial aid and scholarship programs of McLennan Community College, Texas State Technical College, and Baylor University as well as representatives from local and state government, the Waco Foundation MAC Scholarship Program, the Heart of Texas Workforce office, the Waco ISD, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

What the stakeholder group considered

We discussed that students need guidance and more awareness of scholarship availability. We see a need to ensure they understand the full range of opportunities, beyond their postsecondary freshman year, including those pertaining to technical and associate degree programs as well as four-year degrees.

We discussed the need to provide information to parents in grades 1 through 12 to address assumptions 2 through 8. We believe we can directly impact assumptions 7 and 8 with our work.

What will be our success?

Success will be ensured when all parents and students have all the assistance and information needed to acquire scholarships for which they qualify. Success will also include the numbers of students applying for scholarships and the number of students completing postsecondary education programs.

Discussion

Nationally, it is reported that scholarship opportunities are not being found and claimed. Students and their parents are often too busy to search out scholarship opportunities, yet they often respond well to organized programs to assist their search. The local community is fortunate to have the availability of the MAC Grant Scholarship program and the Waco Foundation program, which provides assistance with FAFSA application forms and tuition assistance to low-income families. However, much more can and should be done to assist the community.

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"There's something built into our very human nature that says to give is to receive...when we care for other people, when we serve others, something in us begins to kick in and we begin to realize the value of life."

– Jimmy Dorrell,
Executive Director
Mission Waco

The group discussed a website to assist parents and students in their search for and access to scholarship funds. It was suggested that the website include assistance available from local businesses, including tuition reimbursement programs, and other related information such as how to obtain a GED. The details of a website were discussed, such as clear information on application requirements, realistic chances of obtaining assistance, and application timelines.

Consideration was given to creating a speakers' bureau of trained persons who could make visits to schools and other venues concerning scholarship opportunities. As an extension, the group considered an initiative to assist students with scholarship essays, giving editorial assistance and valuable critical review.

The group discussed working with students and parents starting with the 8th grade, raising awareness of postsecondary opportunities and tuition assistance if needed. Mentoring by older students and others was considered as a means to provide information and assistance.

The group considered additional resources needed to provide scholarship outreach and assistance and scholarship fundraising that might be required to fully serve the community.

First-Year Action Items and Assumption Targets

- Put a scholarship administrator in place to work with the MAC Program
- Start the program for reviewing scholarship and application essays for students
- Start putting together information for the website
- Begin working with local scholarship providers to put together a "common application" for the smaller local scholarships to be used on the website
- Make a list of people in the community who would be willing to speak to groups of students of all ages about college opportunities and financing
- Publicize the availability of speakers to schools, churches, and other organizations

Long-Range Proposals

- Website in place for local scholarship information that is kept up-to-date
- Have all the local small scholarships taking advantage of the "common application"
- Scholarship administrator making presentations at high schools along with the MAC Program
- Seniors and their parents receiving assistance through the website and appointments with the scholarship administrator
- Volunteer speakers trained and speaking at parent nights, school assemblies, church youth meetings, etc. about college, scholarships, and financial aid availability

Other Ideas Being Considered

The only other ideas are some improvements on our original ideas such as offering the website in Spanish, using RSVP to help put together speakers for the speakers' bureau, and creating a list of volunteers willing to review student essays.

"We can often think of examples of one or two children who have made it ...who are the success stories of their neighborhood or of their community. What would it look like if we were to gather together in such a way to see that same kind of change and hope for an entire school, for an entire neighborhood?"

– Jon Singletary, Director
Center for Family &
Community Ministries
Baylor University