

How to Get Started: Strategically Designing Community Foundation Scholarship Programs for a Focus on Equity and Attainment

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john w. gardner
center for youth and their communities



Our Vision:

All students have an equitable opportunity to achieve social and economic mobility through higher education.

Our Mission:

NCAN's mission is to build, strengthen, and empower communities and stakeholders to close equity gaps in postsecondary attainment for all students.

john w. gardner **center** for youth and their communities

The Gardner Center's mission is to:

- improve and strengthen the well-being of youth, their families, and communities;
- inform policy and practice in the fields of education and youth development; and
- promote equity in organizations and systems that support youth.

To advance this mission, the Gardner Center conducts community-driven research, engaging communities to understand the potential for inquiry to advance equity. The Center helps partners build their capacity to develop researchable questions, collect and interpret data, and use findings as part of an inquiry process.



SESSION GOAL

Understand how to move toward scholarship programs that maximize impact and focus on targeted populations of students from low-income households, students of color, and first-generation students, ultimately advancing college readiness and completion.

AGENDA

- Overview
- Strategic, need-based scholarship programs: what and why?
- Four basic components for scholarship program transformation
- Using data to inform program design and stakeholder engagement
- Wrap-up

Overview



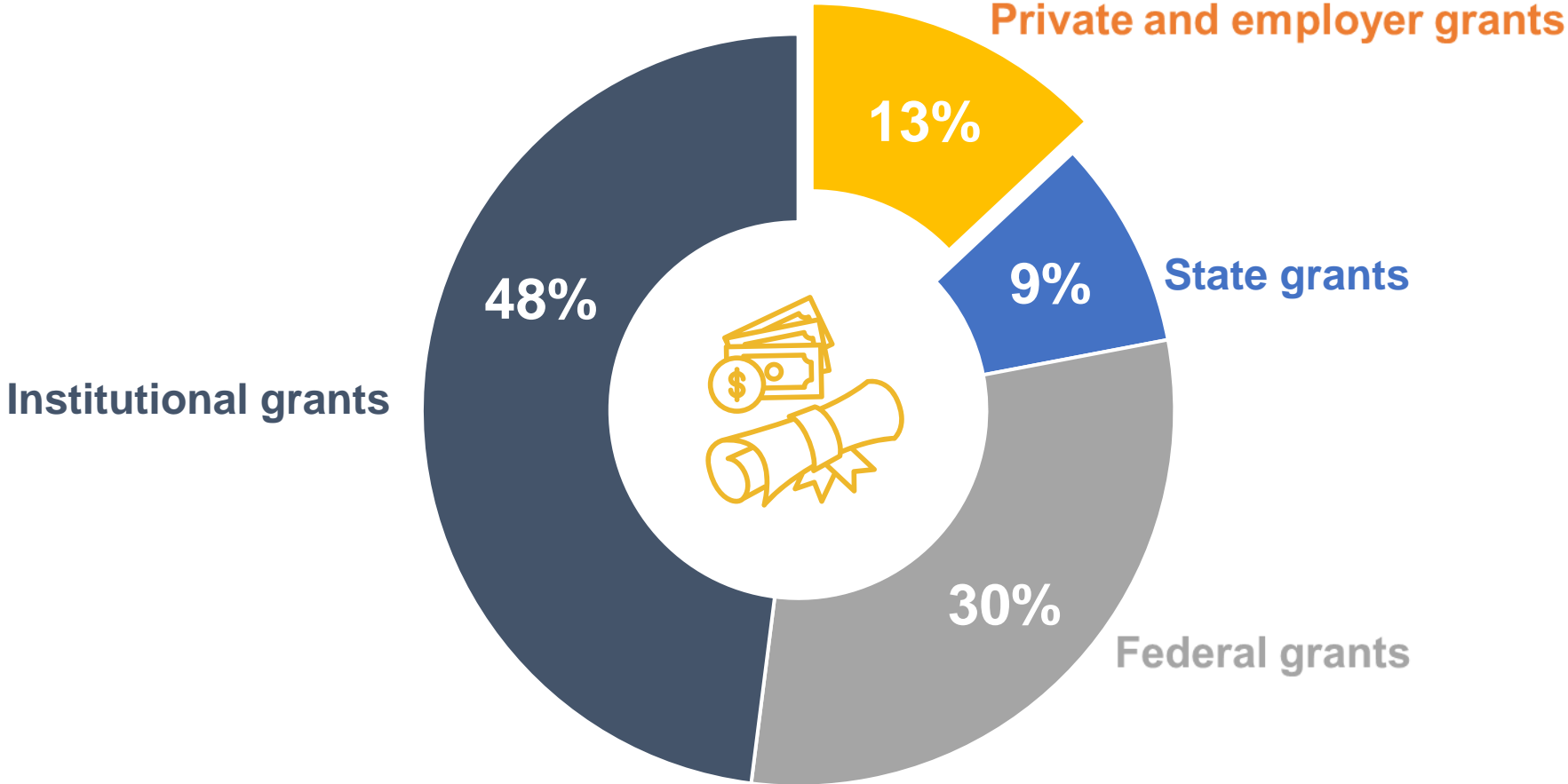
Philanthropic Landscape

- Competition
- Donor-centric focus only
- Education-related giving is popular
- Scholarships viewed as a burden, not an asset

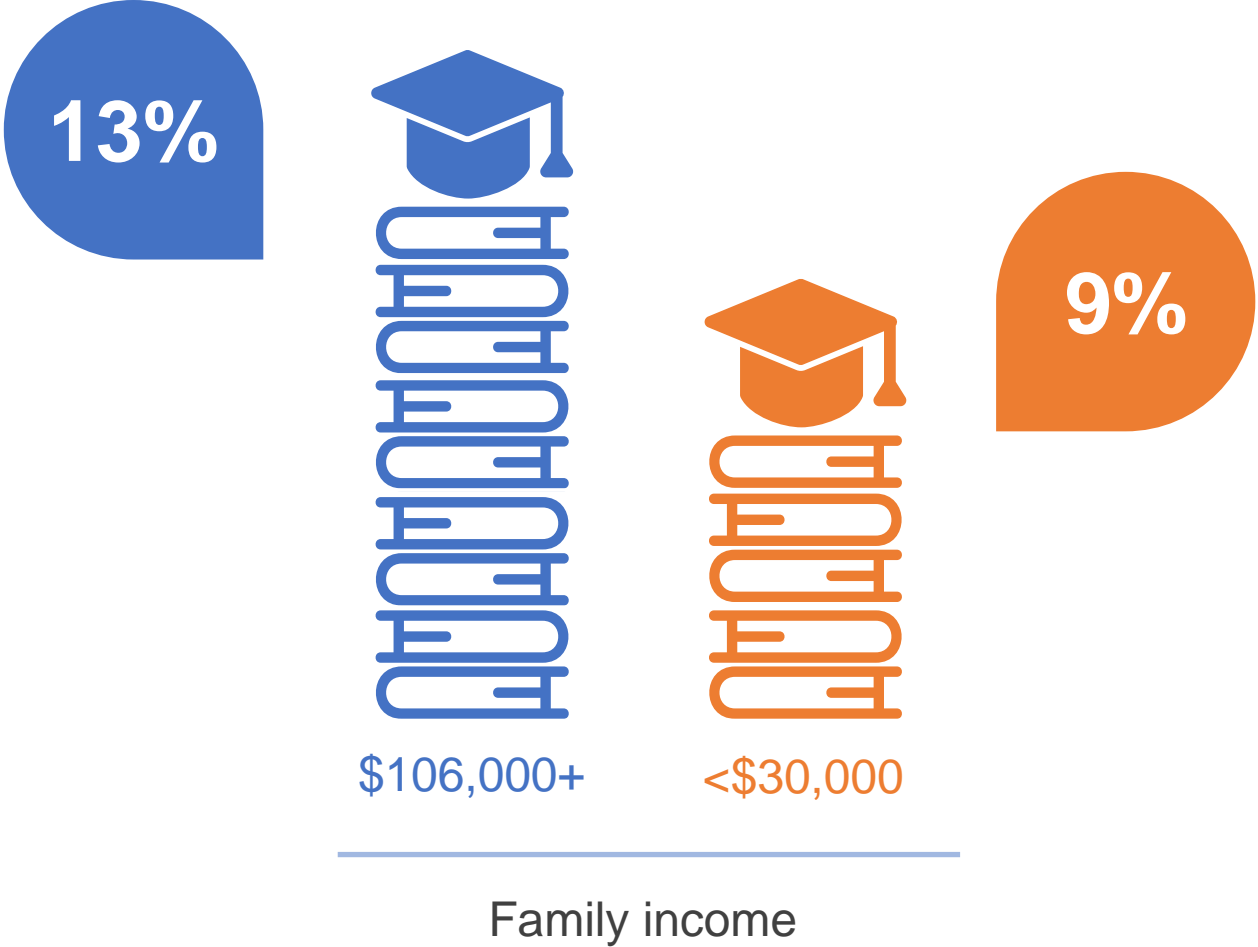
Education Landscape

- Student demographics, assets, needs
- Academic content, relevancy, value
- College prep and financial aid information
- College costs and affordability
- College and career knowledge
- Technology and tools (for delivery of academic content and supports)

The Financial Aid Ecosystem



More Scholarships Go to Students with Means



Community Foundations & Scholarships

Community Foundations play a major role in awarding scholarships in regions across the United States

Community Foundations manage legacy funds and work with living donors and families

Traditional scholarship approaches often lead to inequities and rarely increase degree attainment for the community

This is an opportunity to shift the paradigm

Strategic Need-Based Scholarship Programs



Strategic, Need-Based Scholarship Programs: What and Why

- Recipients: targeted populations
- Amounts: reflect full cost of attendance, leveraging all aid sources
- Structure: renewable awards
- Supports: access and success services

For scholarship donors, the return on investment is higher when the impact is greater.

Four Basic Components for Scholarship Program Transformation



Four Basic Components

1. Understanding the college prep, degree completion, and economic data
2. Assessing the foundation's current scholarship program
3. Educating and informing current and prospective donors
4. Effectively measuring and reporting the impact of the scholarship program

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Understanding the college prep, degree completion, and economic data

- Student characteristics, demographics, and readiness
- Regional workforce trends
- Available student support services, providers, and scholarship programs

2 Assessing the foundation's current scholarship program

- Scholarship guidelines and processes for barriers and effects
- Outreach, messaging, tools, application requirements
- Evaluation forms, award amounts, payment guidelines

3 Educating and informing current and prospective donors

- Foundations excel at accommodating donors
- Foundations are sometimes reluctant to proactively educate donors
- Donors are eager to make an impact and to be shown that impact

4 Effectively measuring and reporting the impact of the scholarship program

- Student persistence and completion data
- Financial aid packaging
- Scholarship attrition rate and history
- Data release forms

Using Data
& Inquiry
to Inform
Program Design
& Stakeholder
Engagement



DATA TO ACTION

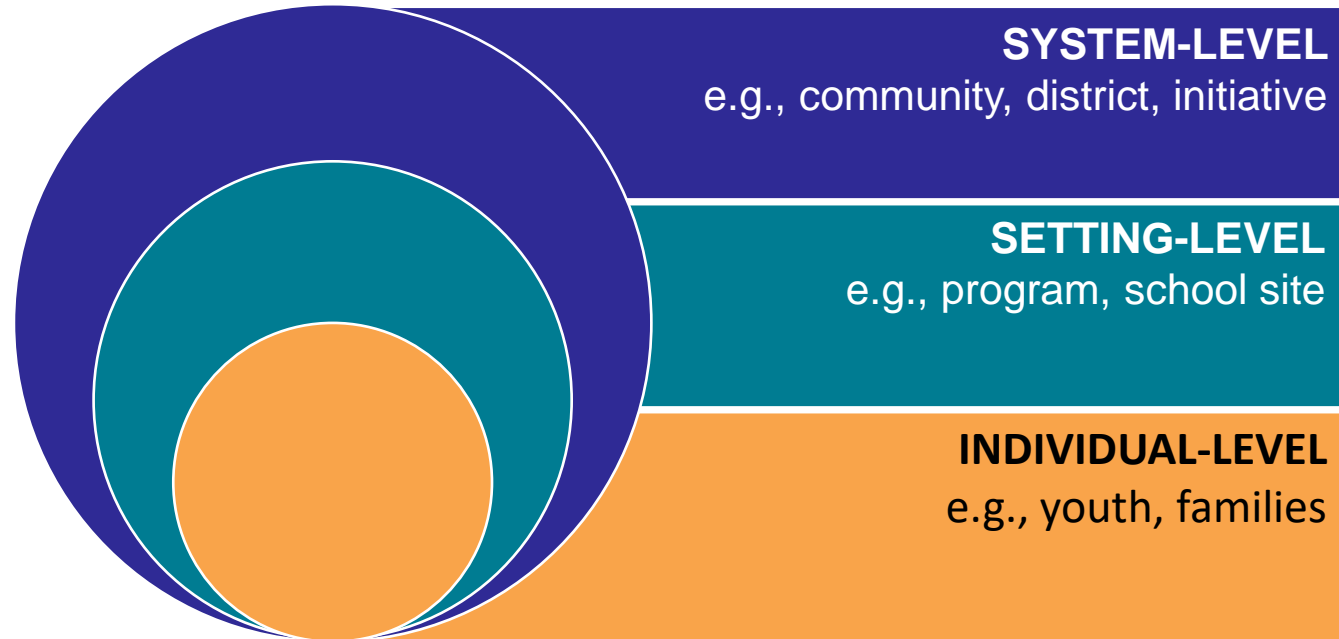
By employing a systematic approach, scholarship programs can:

- Focus on actionable, context-specific indicators of college readiness and completion
- Use inquiry and data to design and improve strategies that advance college readiness and completion
- Monitor progress toward goals to better understand successes and challenges

THREE KEY ELEMENTS OF A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

1. Tri-Level Lens
2. Indicators
3. Cycle of Inquiry

System Element 1 TRI-LEVEL LENS



System Element 2 INDICATORS

An indicator is a variable that has a predictive relationship with the desired outcome.

EXAMPLE INDICATOR

Knowledge of admissions criteria, application process, and financial requirements to complete college

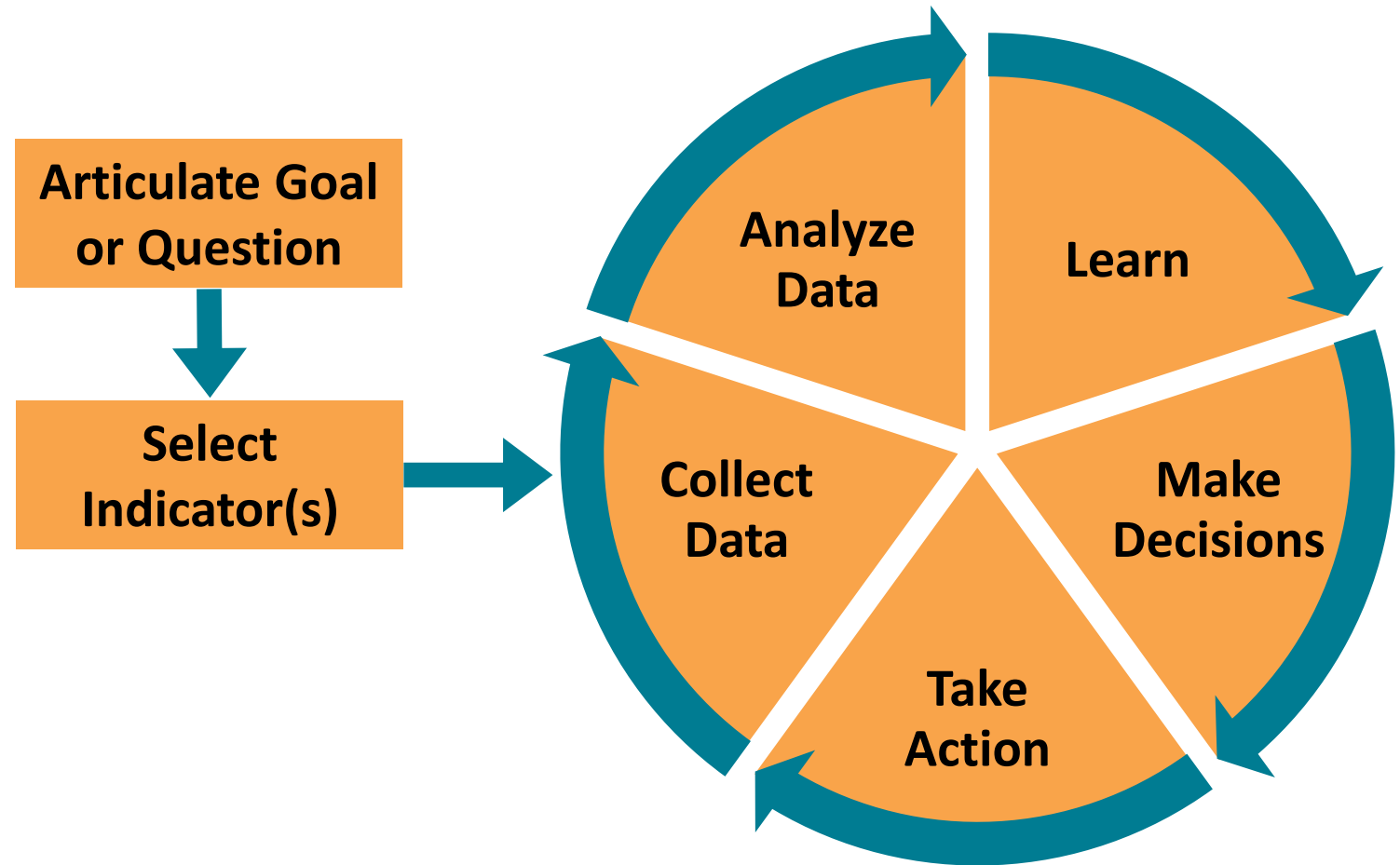
Criteria for Selecting Indicators

- Research-Based
- Measurable
- Malleable
- Actionable
- Meaningful / Impactful

EXAMPLE MEASURE

FAFSA completion and submittal

System Element 3 CYCLE OF INQUIRY



DATA DRIVEN INQUIRY

- **Identify Needs:** Findings from landscape data scan; local needs; opportunity gaps
- **Program Design:** How needs inform program design; program characteristics
- **Lessons Learned:** Findings from ongoing inquiry
- **Program Evolution:** How execution can incorporate lessons learned into ongoing learning and program improvement

CONSIDER

What is a critical goal for your scholarship program?

What kinds of data do you collect about students who apply for and receive your scholarships?

What would you like to know to help you understand progress toward your goal, and help you improve your scholarship program?

What would you like to know to support college completion for students who apply for and/or receive your scholarships?

Wrap-Up



REFLECT

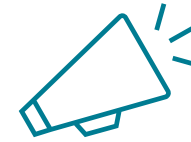
**Any
questions?**



**Any
surprises?**



**Any
“aha” moments?**



THANK YOU!

www.gardnercenter.stanford.edu

www.ncan.org