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# Mapping Postsecondary Student Success Grants



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Since President Biden planted the seed for a federal college completion fund in the 2021 Build Back Better framework, a small but mighty effort to invest in strategies proven effective at increasing college retention and graduation rates has taken root and begun to blossom. The Postsecondary Student Success Grant (PSSG) program has received nearly \$100 million in Congressional appropriations, administered grants to 22 colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations in 12 states, and garnered the support of House and Senate champions who have introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would authorize ongoing federal investment in innovative, evidence-based reforms to improve student outcomes.

The PSSG program stands out for the growing interest and investment it has received from policymakers on both sides of the aisle, who recognize its unique value-add even in a tumultuous

funding environment. Key to PSSG's appeal are its targeted focus on increasing college completion rates and the promise of strong ROI embedded in its tiered-evidence design.

With limited funds available, eligibility for early grant cycles has focused on institutions that disproportionately serve student populations that are underrepresented among college completers. Two- and four-year colleges that have low financial resources and enroll significant percentages of students from low-income backgrounds, and/or that are designated as Minority-Serving Institutions (including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions), can apply for grants, as can public systems of higher education institutions and states or nonprofit organizations in partnership with an eligible institution.

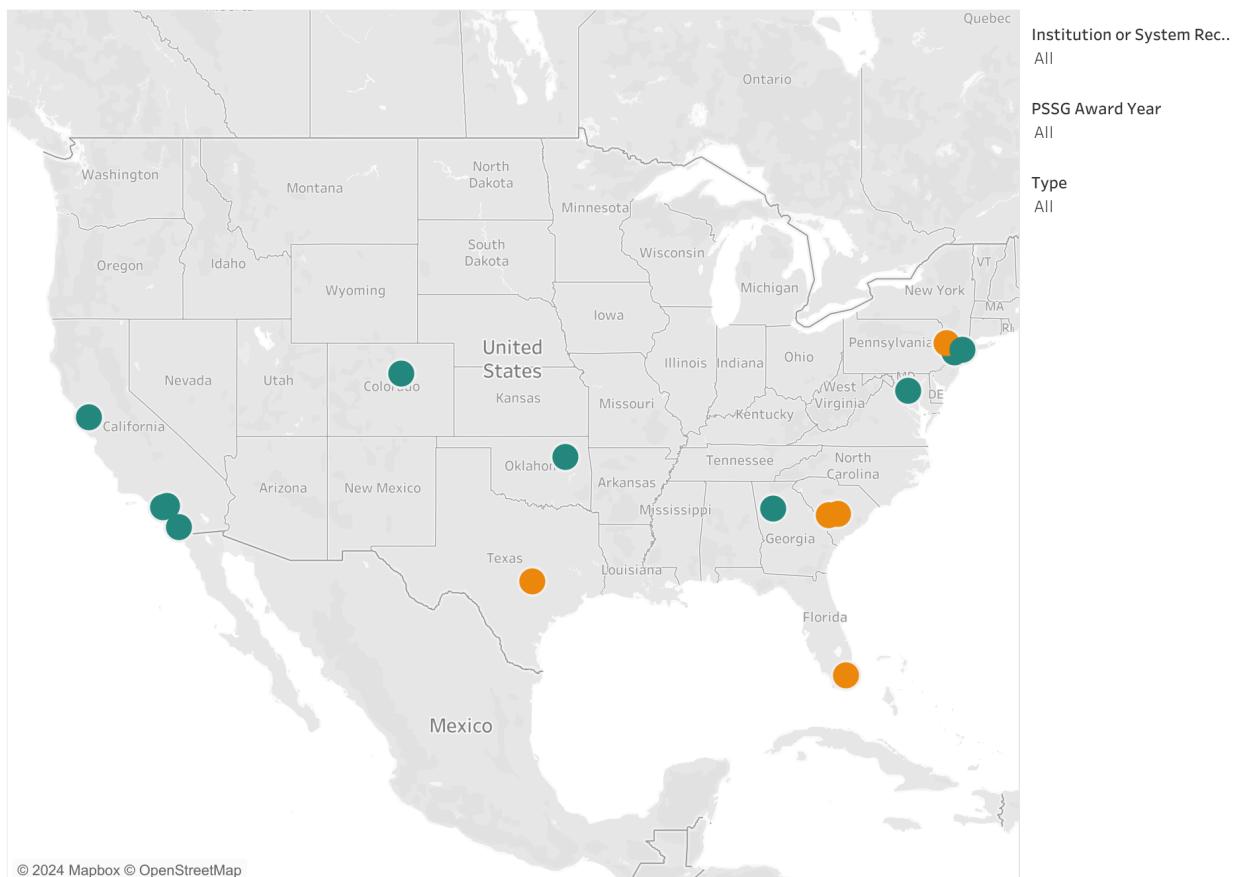
Project proposals for grant funding also need to be grounded in evidence. Starting with the 2023 grant competition, early-phase grants are available to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives that have a demonstrated rationale for effectiveness, and mid-phase/expansion grants are available to support the improvement or scaling of programs backed by a higher standard of evidence to a larger student population and/or on multiple campuses, allowing for further evaluation of their impacts for different student groups or contexts. By funding a mix of promising and proven models, the PSSG program is designed to solidify and expand our knowledge base of what works to advance equitable postsecondary outcomes—supercharging the cost effectiveness of the grant investment.

## PSSG Fast Facts

- **Fiscal Year 2022:** \$5 million appropriated by Congress and awarded by the Department of Education as competitive grants to five grantee institutions in four states.
- **Fiscal Year 2023:** \$45 million appropriated by Congress and awarded by the Department of Education as competitive grants to 10 grantees in six states, among them seven early-phase and three mid-phase/expansion grants and two grantees that are public systems of higher education institutions.
- **Fiscal Year 2024:** \$45 million appropriated by Congress and awarded by the Department of Education to seven grantees in five states by funding down the slate from the 2023 competition. The awards included three early-phase grants and four mid-phase/expansion grants, with one of the latter grantees being a Massachusetts-based non-profit organization in partnership with five California community colleges.

The interactive map below provides additional information about the grants administered to date through the PSSG program—including the recipients' eligibility criteria, the funded amount and duration of the grant project, and the evidence tier associated with the grant.

## Postsecondary Student Success Grant Awardees



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