



Summer 2013

Student Parent Success Initiative (SPSI) Update

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As always, please feel free to forward this e-mail to interested friends or colleagues, or to [contact us](#) to share updates or information relevant to student parents, advocates, and service providers around the country.

Some highlights from this month's update include:

- A new IWPR toolkit highlighting ways to finance campus-based child care;
- A new funding opportunity offered by the Ascend Program at the Aspen Institute; and
- Updated federal legislative and policy developments related to student loans and the SNAP program.

Activities and Publications

- In June, IWPR published a new toolkit, [Financing Child Care for College Student Success](#) that provides information on a wide range of funding sources for campus-based child care for those seeking to expand existing services or build new programs.
- On July 18 members of Congress, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Representative Rosa DeLauro launched a new Economic Agenda for Women and Families, [When Women Succeed, America Succeeds](#). The new agenda focuses on issues including pay equity, paid leave, and child care. IWPR brought student parent Stephanie Brown to Washington D.C. to share her [story](#) on how child care and other supports helped her attain her college degree. For more information on student parents, visit IWPR's [Student Parent Success Initiative](#).
- A new [Quick Figures](#) by IWPR reveals that gender segregation of training services within Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-funded programs reinforces the gender wage gap. More proactive career counseling may encourage women's entry into higher earning, high-demand fields and enhance their chances of reaching economic self-sufficiency.
- IWPR's working paper on *Student Parents and Financial Aid*, a collaboration with the Institute for Higher Education Policy is now available [online](#). The paper provides an overview of key federal

financial aid programs and policies and their implications for college students with dependent children.

- Another working paper, *Prepping Colleges for Parents*, is also available for [download](#). It outlines a variety of promising supports and services that colleges and universities (and sometimes community service providers) have implemented to mitigate common challenges faced by students with dependent children.

Student Parents and Supports in the News

- [Non-profit group hopes to raise \\$1M for NorQuest Day Care](#), *Edmonton Journal*, June 6, 2013
- [Educators Laud Potential for On-Site Child Care at FWHS](#), *Federal Way Mirror*, June 7, 2013
- [Dropping Out of College, and Paying the Price](#), *The New York Times*, June 25, 2013. *To read the full report, see the Hamilton Project paper in the Research and Resources section below.*
- [Adult Students at Penn State Receive Federal Funding for STEM Studies](#), *Penn State News*, July 1, 2013
- [Centenary College in Hackettstown Offers Tips for Adults Thinking About Earning a Degree](#), *The Warren Reporter*, July 1, 2013

Events and Funding Opportunities

- [U.S News STEM Solutions National Conference](#) took place in Austin, Texas from June 17-19, 2013. The conference included [a session](#) on closing the gender gap among students and professionals in STEM fields. Next year's conference will take place in Washington, DC from April 23-25.
- The Aspen Institute is currently accepting letters of inquiry for the [Aspen Institute Ascend Fund](#). The fund focuses on two-generation approaches to ensure economic security for families. The deadline for submitting letters is August 19, 2013.
 - [Investing in Solutions for Two-Generations: The \\$1 Million Aspen Institute Ascend Fund](#), *the Huffington Post*, June 19, 2013

Research and Resources

- In April 2013, the American Association of University Women released a new report entitled *Women in Community Colleges: Access to Success*. Read the full report [here](#). Watch a panel discussion on the report [here](#).
- In April 2013, [the Rethinking Pell Grants Study Group](#) released their report with recommendations on improving the Pell Grant program. Read the full report [here](#).
 - For another perspective on the Study Group's recommendations, see CLASP's response: [Separate and Unequal: College Board Pell Grant Proposal Tackles College](#)

[Completion, Solutions Fall Short](#), *Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success*, April 23, 2013

- [Report Finds Demographics of College Graduates Do Not Reflect Changes in Overall Student Body](#), *American Council on Education*, May 16, 2013
- [Student Debt and the Value of a College Degree](#), *Public Policy Institute of California*, June 2013
- [Forever in Your Debt: Who Has Student Loan Debt, and Who's Worried?](#), *Urban Institute*, June 2013
- [The Hidden STEM Economy](#), *The Brookings Institution*, June 10, 2013
- [A Stronger Nation through Higher Education](#), *Lumina Foundation*, June 13, 2013
- [Informing Students about Their College Options: A Proposal for Broadening the Expanding College Opportunities Project](#), *The Hamilton Project*, June 26, 2013
- [Strategies For Assisting Low-Income Families](#), *The Brookings Institution*, July 1, 2013

Legislative and Policy Round Up

- On July 11, 2013, the House of Representatives eliminated the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from the Farm Bill, reporting that the body plans to vote on the program's funding separately, but has not yet committed to a timeframe. The White House released a [statement](#) signaling the President's intention to veto a bill that fails to address food aid policy.
- The Senate [passed legislation](#) that links the interest rates of Stafford student loans to the financial markets, which decreases rates this fall but also means the rates are subject to increases as the economy improves. The bipartisan bill reverses the doubling in interest rates that [occurred](#) earlier this month when Congress failed to reach a compromise before the deadline.

Student Parent Programs in the Spotlight

The Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County: Enriching Lives and the Community

Benton County, Arkansas.

The Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County (SPSF/BC) is designed to help single student parents lift themselves out of poverty. Since 1984 the organization has provided almost \$5.5 million dollars through scholarships to more than 1,300 parents.

Every year the organization provides about \$439,000 in scholarships to approximately 190 students. The Fund directly pays for remaining tuition and fees after awardees' financial aid is accounted for and provide funds for

basic necessities, such as rent, utilities, transportation and child care. Early in the life of the program, SPSF/BC realized that the inability to cover these basic costs was one of the main barriers student parents face in achieving academic success. By providing these supports, SPSF/BC eliminates the financial and material burdens that, collectively, can derail a single parent's college career.

Each scholarship recipient also receives support services to address other financial, personal, and logistical challenges common to single parents and to maximize their professional opportunities. Such services include: professional and personal counseling, academic and career guidance, tutoring, mentoring, and life skills workshops. Also, the program's large network of volunteers helps SPSF/BC furnish practical essentials, such as clothing, laundry supplies, cleaning supplies, and small appliances.

According to SPSF/BC's Executive Director, Sally Conduff, this holistic approach is responsible for the organization's success in supporting positive outcomes for its scholars. The program helps students overcome some significant challenges: 59 percent of the program's students are victims of domestic violence and about 60 percent are caring for children with either learning or medical disabilities. Even so, in 2012, about 83 percent of the program's graduates entered full time employment and are now living above the poverty line. More information on the program can be found [here](#).

About Us

[The Student Parent Success Initiative \(SPSI\)](#), a project of the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#), is designed to improve supports and services for student parents seeking postsecondary education.

SPSI serves to initiate new research, raise awareness on the need for student parent supports, and foster communication and collaboration among advocates, policymakers, educators, and practitioners.

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