

California State University East Bay Foundation to Help Hayward Students in their Quest to Graduate with \$500,000 from AT&T

One of 18 Recipients of \$10 Million in Contributions to Programs Across U.S.

Hayward, California. September 22, 2016 — Due to the California State University East Bay Foundation's success supporting and motivating underserved students in the Hayward Promise Neighborhood Initiative, it has been selected as one of 18 recipients nationwide that will share in \$10 million from AT&T through the Aspire Connect to Success Competition. Hundreds of organizations applied to the competition, which is part of [AT&T Aspire](#), the company's signature philanthropic initiative to help students succeed in school and beyond.

Aspire Connect to Success funding recipients deliver integrated student supports, focus on college or career preparation, and/or provide mentoring or peer-to-peer supports to help underserved students graduate. The Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN) Initiative is a program that aims to improve the lives and academics of more than 11,000 residents and 6,000 students in the ethnically diverse, low-income Jackson Triangle neighborhood. This is the second time the program led by Cal State East Bay has received support from AT&T. The first contribution of \$276,000 was awarded two years ago, and had an almost-immediate effect on the success rates of students at both Tennyson and Hayward high schools.

"One reason the Hayward Promise Neighborhood Initiative is so successful is because of the dedicated dropout prevention specialists that are embedded in high schools and engage with students every day," said Dr. Carolyn Nelson, Cal State East Bay dean of the College of Education and Allied Studies and principal investigator for HPN's federal funding. "With AT&T's previous support, we saw a 6 percent increase in the graduation rate at Hayward High School and at Tennyson High there was a 5 percent increase in graduation rates over the past two years. This new contribution will allow us to maintain and expand the infrastructure that supports the work of our specialists and provide even more opportunities for students."

Through a competitive request for proposal process, the 18 non-profits, including California State University East Bay Foundation, were selected based on their effectiveness in helping students graduate ready for career or college. Selected programs use evidence based approaches to serve students and are able to demonstrate quantitative results.



“Young people need a high school diploma to stay on track for college and career success,” said Ken McNeely, President, AT&T California. “Our company’s future, as well as the country’s, is dependent on today’s young people. Through Aspire, we support programs like the Hayward Promise Neighborhood Initiative that invest in students so they achieve their highest potential in school, in the workforce and in life.”

On an average day, Hayward Promise Neighborhood Initiative dropout prevention specialists check in with at least 100 students per day. Interactions range from a just quick conversation in the hallway, to emotional sit-downs. The specialists make referrals to support services to help students get back on track toward graduation, re-engage with school and work directly with teachers to develop a strategy to support the students.

The program currently includes two specialists who work with high school administrators to support at-risk students. The new \$500,000 contribution from AT&T will support the specialists for the next two years and an additional specialist will be added at Mount Eden High School part-time this fall.

“Young people need to feel like somebody has their back,” said Anthony Jackson, a dropout prevention specialist at Tennyson High School. “I was once in their shoes. I had the same excuses, played the same games, and told my teachers the same things. I feel like I am these kids and I think that is what allows me to advocate for them and lets me break down the stories they want to give to their teachers and people in power or in authority. I am always trying to get people to understand the value of this work.”

About Philanthropy & Social Innovation at AT&T

AT&T is committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its community initiatives, AT&T has a long history of investing in projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic achievement; or address community needs. AT&T Aspire is AT&T’s signature philanthropic initiative that drives innovation in education by bringing diverse resources to bear on the issue including funding, technology, employee volunteerism, and mentoring. Through Aspire, we’ve passed the \$250 million mark on our plan to invest \$350 million in education from 2008-2017.

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