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Tri-Cities College Access Network Receives \$50,000 Startup Grant

August 1, 2011 – Lansing, MI – The [Michigan College Access Network](http://micollegeaccess.org) (MCAN) is pleased to announce the Tri-Cities College Access Network has received a \$50,000 startup grant to begin implementation of its college access strategy.

Local college access networks coordinate programs, services and resources that lower the barriers preventing students, particularly low-income and/or first-generation, from pursuing postsecondary educational opportunities. Leaders in education, the nonprofit sector, business, government and philanthropy work together to design a local strategy to foster a college-going culture and dramatically increase the college participation and completion rates.

“We are just thrilled to have been selected for this Start-Up grant,” said Ann Tabor, President of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation. “Over the past nine months, dozens of people have been meeting to outline plans and programs that can be put in place for students of all ages – from preschoolers to adult learners. We are all ready to get these programs started in our community and begin changing those numbers.”

The Tri-Cities College Access Network is a comprehensive community effort to address the issue of growing poverty in the community by increasing both the number of young people and adults in the community who choose post-secondary education as a required part of their lives and who are prepared to succeed in earning a post-secondary degree or valuable credential. Currently in Ottawa County, only 27% of residents have a B.A. degree.

“The MCAN grant review team thought the Tri-Cities Network had a well-crafted implementation plan with realistic timelines and strategies, along with strong support from the community and the local schools,” said Brandy Johnson, director of the Michigan College Access Network. “We were especially pleased to see the range of programming for students from Pre-K to adults returning to school.”

Currently, 35.6 percent of Michigan’s 25 to 64 year olds possess at least an associate’s degree, ranking Michigan 33rd among all states. Michigan’s rate lags behind the national average of 37.9 percent. It is MCAN’s goal to increase Michigan’s postsecondary educational attainment rate to 60 percent by the year 2025.

MCAN supports the creation, expansion and sustainability of 37 local college access networks. Funding from The Kresge Foundation and a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education made this round of grants possible. The next round of grants will be awarded in September 2011.

Our Goal: 60% college attainment by 2025

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About Michigan College Access Network

As the leader in the state's college access movement, MCAN's mission is to dramatically increase Michigan's college participation and completion rates, particularly among low-income and first-generation college students of all ages. MCAN also supports two statewide college access initiatives: MichiganCAP, a one-stop-shop for students to plan, apply and pay for college at www.michigancap.org, and KnowHow2GOMichigan, a public awareness campaign designed to encourage and prepare low-income students and their families to take the necessary steps toward college (www.knowhow2gomichigan.org).

For more information, visit www.micollegeaccess.org. You can also find MCAN on Facebook at www.facebook.com/micollegeaccess.

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