



For Immediate Release

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**With a \$1.5 million grant, Florida College Access Network to support regional networks that build a college-going culture and lay out clear paths to postsecondary education**

**Tampa, Fla.** – Helios Education Foundation has announced a three-year, \$1.5 million grant to the [Florida College Access Network](#) (Florida C.A.N.!), aimed at boosting the number of Floridians who hold a college degree or high-quality postsecondary credential. The funds will help Florida C.A.N.! support the development of local college access networks (“LCANs”) throughout the state that are comprised of regional leaders representing local governments, businesses, school districts, higher education institutions, nonprofit agencies and foundations working together to build a college-going culture in their communities.

Florida C.A.N.!'s *Big Goal* is for 60 percent of working-age Floridians to hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by the year 2025. It works to achieve this goal through thought leadership on policies to increase college readiness, access and completion and by supporting collaborative initiatives to increase attainment rates at the local level. Florida C.A.N.! will utilize some of the Helios funds to provide grants to local college access networks working to achieve these goals.

“We are grateful to have Helios as a partner in this important work,” said Florida C.A.N.! executive director [Laurie Meggesin](#). “Florida needs a well-educated workforce to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century global economy, yet there is a significant gap between Floridians’ current education levels and employers’ workforce needs. A high school diploma is simply not enough today for many Floridians to qualify for well-paying jobs. Communities can work together to close the achievement gap and in the process, raise the quality of life for their residents as a whole. The Helios grant will go a long way in helping to support such efforts.”

[Paul Luna](#), president and CEO of Helios Education Foundation, said “It is critical that we continue to provide students with pathways to postsecondary success, and creating local college access networks helps to achieve that goal. Helios is pleased to support the work of Florida C.A.N.! whose leadership in this area will help to ensure more Florida students earn a postsecondary degree or credential.”

**About Helios Education Foundation**

*Helios Education Foundation is focused on creating opportunities for individuals to succeed in postsecondary education by advancing the academic preparedness of all students and fostering a high-expectations, college-going culture in Arizona and Florida. The Foundation focuses its investments across the education continuum in three key impact areas: Early Grade Success, College and Career Readiness and Postsecondary Education Success.*

*As an engaged foundation, embedded in communities across both states, the Foundation is contributing its leadership, expertise and financial resources to better prepare students for college and career and to compete successfully in a globally-competitive economy. Since 2006, Helios has invested over \$138 million in education-related programs and initiatives in Arizona and Florida. For more information about the Foundation, visit [www.helios.org](http://www.helios.org), or join us on [facebook](#), [twitter](#) and [youtube](#).*

**About the Florida College Access Network**

*The mission of the Florida College Access Network is to create and strengthen a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to improve college & career preparation, access, and completion for all students. Our Big Goal is to increase the percentage of Florida residents who hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential to 60% by the year 2025. [www.floridacollegeaccess.org](http://www.floridacollegeaccess.org).*

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