

# POSTSECONDARY LEADERSHIP CIRCLE ACTIVATION FUND

## Systemic, Measurable, and Sustainable Strategies for Student Parent Success

### Postsecondary Success for Parents

Ascend at the Aspen Institute's Postsecondary Success for Parents (PSP) initiative raises awareness of and shares recommendations to better support the one in five students enrolled in college who are parents. We work with systems, institutions, and students who are parents to ensure families have access to the resources necessary to achieve their educational goals, ultimately advancing their family's economic mobility and well-being.

**Ascend at the Aspen Institute** is a catalyst and convener for diverse leaders working across systems and sectors to build intergenerational family prosperity and well-being by intentionally focusing on children and the adults in their lives together. We believe in the power of co-creation. We are a community of leaders – well-connected, well-prepared, and well-positioned – building political will that transforms hearts, minds, policies, and practices.

**The Aspen Institute** is a global nonprofit organization whose purpose is to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve society's greatest challenges. It is headquartered in Washington, DC and has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, as well as an international network of partners. For more information, visit [aspeninstitute.org](http://aspeninstitute.org).

Ascend's Postsecondary Success for Parents initiative launched the Postsecondary Leadership Circle Activation Fund to implement systemic, measurable, and sustainable strategies on community college campuses that lead to increased attainment for student parents with a special focus on single mothers.

### PARTNERS



[El Paso Community College](#) (El Paso, TX) is enhancing its student parent identification, data collection, and analysis processes and conducting an institutional 2Gen analysis that will lead to family-friendly policy and practice changes.



[Long Beach City College](#) (Long Beach, CA) is developing a hybrid one-stop resource for student parents and creating a multimedia outreach campaign to reach current and potential student parents in the community.



[Los Angeles Valley College](#) (Valley Glen, CA) is analyzing the friendliness and accessibility of supports for student parents as well as creating a multimedia outreach campaign to reach student parents with the goal of increasing college and community support.



[Montgomery College](#) (Montgomery County, MD) is enhancing its student parent identification, data collection, and analysis processes and creating a professional development curriculum for staff and faculty related to student parent rights and best practices.

# Faculty as Change Agents for Student Parent Achievement



In July 2024, Ascend convened Postsecondary Leadership Circle Activation Fund (PLCAF) Partners and experts to engage in knowledge and resource sharing to help plan and implement their systemic, measurable, and sustainable Fund strategies. Select convening sessions focused on leveraging faculty support to increase persistence and completion for parenting students, including a designing thinking activity to share tactics for faculty engagement.

## Key Tactics

### Gaining Faculty Buy-In

- Survey student parents about faculty engagement and share the findings.
- Uplift positive stories about faculty impact on student parents.
- Leverage faculty student parent champions to raise awareness with peers.
- Provide recognition and incentives to faculty who participate in student parent efforts.
- Invite faculty to attend events focused on student parents and their families.

### Creating Effective Professional Development

- Hold faculty focus groups to gather feedback on curriculum and training modality.
- Design and facilitate training with student parents.
- Include student parent statistics and focus on the opportunity to impact academic outcomes.
- Lead with empathy and highlight real-world student parent experiences.
- Provide faculty with student parent and peer mentors.

### Leveraging Faculty Experience

- Collaborate with faculty to solve challenges with student parent accommodations.
- Partner with faculty to create a student parent feedback loop that informs policy and pedagogy.
- Develop a community of practice with faculty to identify promising practices.
- Create an evidence-based pilot with faculty to capture the impact of interventions on student parent outcomes.

### Positioning Student Parents in Faculty Relations

- Leverage graduate student parents who are teaching and research assistants.
- Arrange student parent presentations during faculty gatherings.
- Create paid student parent positions that liaise with faculty.
- Organize student parent-faculty relationship building activities.
- Establish a student parent-faculty committee.



**“When you open the classroom to be more inclusive, it doesn’t just benefit student parents, it benefits all students.”**

**James Hodge, Adjunct Professor, Montgomery College**



Scan to learn more.

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