

COLLEGE ACCESS CHALLENGE GRANT FUND AWARD

North Dakota has been awarded \$330,000 in federal funds under the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP).

WHAT IS THE CACGP?

The College Access Challenge Grant Program is a new formula grant program authorized by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 and administered through the United States Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and philanthropic organizations through matching challenge grants that are **aimed at increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education**. It is designed to enable states to assist students and their families in learning about, preparing for, and financing a postsecondary education.

HOW MUCH FUNDING WILL NORTH DAKOTA RECEIVE?

Federal funds awarded to the state of North Dakota total \$330,000 for fiscal year 2008. A second year of equal funding is intended if the state makes substantial progress toward the goals of the grant during this first year. (The total amount of federal appropriations for the nationwide program is \$66,000,000 for this fiscal year, with another \$66,000,000 expected for next fiscal year.)

Eligibility for the grant requires the provision of an in-kind match (for North Dakota, the required match was at least \$165,000). That match was secured thanks to Student Loans of North Dakota (SLND/BND) which purchased the license for all North Dakota high schools to use the Bridges On-line Career and Education Solutions. This electronic resource can be used by individual students for college and career planning and helps connect students' interests and skills with occupations and college majors.

HOW WILL NORTH DAKOTA USE THE FUNDING?

Charged by Governor Hoeven with administering the grant, the North Dakota University System will bring together numerous partners representing K-12 education; public, private, and tribal colleges; the Bank of North Dakota/Student Loans of North Dakota; state agencies; and professional associations. These partners will work together to improve the capacity to assist students and their families and will form a network with a plan to reach out to students. Activities will include an annual conference to promote college access which will be coordinated by Bismarck State College's Division of Continuing Education, Training, and Innovation.