ONLY ONE IN SIX STUDENTS FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE.
STUDENT ADVISING Page 6
Support high school and college students to access financial aid and navigate higher ed systems

TRAINING & TECH ASSISTANCE Page 10
Build counselors’ financial aid knowledge, skills, and resources

POLICY & SYSTEMS CHANGE Page 11
Remove financial barriers to college degree attainment through advocacy and partnerships

OUR SOLUTION
Dear Friends,

In an ever-changing world, we at uAspire are fashioning new visions of who we must become for the communities we serve and the future they seek. The societal shifts of today demand a more educated and inclusive workforce, one that requires us all to imagine and build new educational pathways and systems that are truly affordable, equitable, and accessible to underrepresented communities.

In this 2022 annual report, we are proud to share many of our accomplishments including our updated financially safer schools model, interventions to support stopped-out students, new strategic partnerships with community colleges, and systems change work with higher education institutions. For so many students, the pathway to a college degree isn’t straight; it is a twisty path with stops and starts, too often without a clear roadmap to success. This means uAspire must continue to reshape systems and access points that will unlock financial aid dollars, create new solutions to affordable educational pathways, and help improve the economic mobility of the students and families we are here to support.

We must never forget that our most foundational resource is each other and the strength of those bonds is what can activate the rebuilding and reimagining of a world that works for everyone. Our vision is to create a future without racial and economic barriers to a meaningful and successful life, and we are taking active steps to invest in and build our organization to deliver that vision. We hope you will take this journey with us to achieve that goal.

Adelante juntos / Forward together,

Jaclyn Piñero
CEO

Kerry Ann James
Board Chair
OUR IMPACT

540,000 STUDENTS

- California: 2,348 STUDENTS
- Massachusetts: 4,300 STUDENTS
- New York: 3,523 STUDENTS

ADVISING 10,171 STUDENTS
TRAINING 291,000 STUDENTS
SYSTEMS CHANGE 238,000 NATIONWIDE
10,171 HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS ADVISED

92% Identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or Person of Color
67% First-generation college students
75% Low-income backgrounds

In 2022 we:

- Expanded advising for college students to four years
- Created a Financially Safer Schools framework to help students identify and apply to colleges where they’re likely to experience better outcomes
- Strengthened our support of stopped-out students and developed early interventions
- Distributed $30,400 in emergency aid to 435 students to alleviate unexpected financial burdens

92% Identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or Person of Color
67% First-generation college students
75% Low-income backgrounds
uAspire students are 80% more likely to graduate college than their peers

- **College Enrollment**
  - uAspire Students: 59%
  - National Average*: 49%

- **2nd Year Persistence**
  - uAspire Students: 81%
  - National Average*: 76%

- **Graduation in Six Years**
  - uAspire Students: 54%
  - National Average*: 30%

No one in my immediate family went to college so I didn’t know what to expect. When uAspire advisors came to my classroom senior year they said the program would follow you from high school into college and that really pushed me to engage—I knew I needed the help.

After my mom passed away in my senior year, I felt a lot of pressure. It confirmed that I had to go to college. Then the pandemic hit a few months later and I started struggling with my schoolwork. I was unmotivated and stopped replying to my advisor’s messages. I was going through a lot, and she wasn’t pushy, just persistent, and that really benefited me.

When I originally filled out my FAFSA I didn’t know I had to put the schools I wanted to attend on the form. My advisor, Victoria, noticed I wasn’t getting any financial aid offers and caught the mistake. She made me aware of my options and helped me plan. When we reviewed my financial aid offer from UC Davis it turned out I wasn’t going to pay out of pocket for school expenses at all and I didn’t think that was possible.

Throughout college, Victoria helped me with scheduling classes, reaching out to academic counselors, and taking a gap semester. When questions come up, I just shoot her a text and get an answer right away. I’m lucky to go through this process with an advisor who is like a mentor.

I’m thankful for all the guidance because I wouldn’t be here right now without it. uAspire is important in Oakland communities like mine where a lot of kids don’t know where to start. Advisors give students the tools to reach opportunities that they couldn’t imagine reaching alone.

There were so many moments when I felt like I wanted to give up but didn’t because I realized I have a unique opportunity and I can’t waste it. College is showing me that I can stick with something and finish it. I’m accomplishing something that most people in my family didn’t have the opportunity to do and I hope that makes my parents proud.

I felt confident going into college knowing I wouldn’t have to struggle financially. —MICHIELE
“Your financial contribution to my education is bringing the dreams I have of my future that much closer to being a reality. You have impacted the trajectory of my life in a significant way.” - WinningEdge Scholarship Recipient

SCHOLARSHIPS

Managed the application process, applicant review, and distribution of $264,000 for:

- Bowdoin Apartments
- CharlesNEWTown
- WinnCompanies
- Massachusetts General Hospital
- uAspire Last Dollar
“Now, our advisors not only help students apply to schools, they empower them to be conscientious lifelong consumers: asking questions, seeking out answers, and getting the help they need.”

– Maria Rebecchi
College Success Foundation
POLICY SPOTLIGHT

ADVOCATING FOR MASSACHUSETTS STUDENTS

Ending Hunger on Campus
Advanced a bill to establish the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative by meeting with legislators, securing sponsors, sending advocacy letters to the Ways and Means Committees, and testifying at a Joint Committee on Higher Education hearing.

Closing Statewide Affordability Gaps
Our report, No Way to Pay: Financial Aid is Not Enough for Massachusetts Students, found that students with expected family contributions of zero must cover bills over $10,000 to enroll in college, and are expected to finance their education with debt. The study was presented at a briefing for the Legislature’s Public Higher Education Caucus and used in coalition building and budget advocacy.

“Money is already a major concern for many of us at community colleges. Food competes with books, transportation, and rent when it comes to prioritizing expenses for college.” - Lesley, uAspire Policy Fellow, testifying for the Joint Committee on Higher Education
2022 POLICY FELLOWS

“My biggest takeaway from being with uAspire is that your voice matters. It’s important to be in the room. It’s important to be a part of the decision-making because at the end of the day, these decisions are being made on our behalf and it should be for the best interest of the students. My goal is to not only address the problems but to prevent them for the generation after us.”

- DEBBIE
Class of 2022 Graduate
Shippensburg University

“uAspire does a really good job of making sure that the student as a whole has their needs met. That’s what my projects are focused on: How can we expand the support for students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds like me. Throughout the year I’ve been advocating for the Hunger-Free Campus bill and the transcript trap bill which makes sure that schools can’t retain your transcript for fees owed to an institution.”

- TV
George J. Mitchell Scholar
Trinity College Dublin
Increasing FAFSA Completion at MassBay Community College

“When I first filled out the FAFSA on my own, I was told that my income was too high and I didn't qualify. I reached out to uAspire and the counselor recommended that I apply for a special circumstance because I lost my job during COVID. I had lots of questions about the form and they always responded quickly and were so patient. With uAspire's help, I was able to get financial support when I reapplied.” - Julieta, MassBay Student

“A third of our enrollment happens mere weeks before classes start, and we were unable to sit down with every student and help them complete a FAFSA,” says Lisa Slavin, associate vice president for enrollment management at MassBay. “I realized we needed a new strategy.”

uAspire designed a student support program in collaboration with Lisa. Throughout the year, uAspire hosts virtual events to walk students through the FAFSA and financial aid process. With uAspire’s help desk, students get their questions answered by a uAspire advisor over text, phone, or Zoom.

“The help desk is remarkable,” says Lisa. “At this very moment, a student can text uAspire and get an immediate response from a counselor.”

“The uAspire advisors are 100% up to date on the latest research and exceptional at helping students fill out these overwhelming forms. In such a short time, students have come to trust uAspire—going directly to them with questions. This is a perfect match—my financial aid staff and uAspire’s team are working together fluidly, and we’re seeing the results in completed FAFSAs.”

“If this program were implemented at all community colleges, I think it would have a significant impact on student success,” says Lisa. “We know that financial barriers are one of the main reasons that students leave school. Helping students on the front end with financial resources could make all the difference.”

> Read MassBay case study
Improving Financial Aid Communication at the University of California

“We frequently hear that students don’t understand our offer letters,” says Shawn Brick, executive director of student financial support at the University of California (UC), “but we don’t know what students don’t understand. We struggle to convey our offers clearly, as do many institutions.”

Shawn engaged uAspire to review the offers, and also to improve cost and financial aid communication overall at nine UC campuses. uAspire led an introductory webinar for the financial aid offices, executed a survey of financial aid practices and language across institutions, and conducted focus groups with financial aid staff and students. uAspire then delivered a broad set of recommendations for the whole UC system and a set for each of the nine schools.

“The most enlightening aspect of this process was hearing what our students have to say,” says Shawn. “Hearing what they need to know was invaluable.”

According to Shawn, there were three significant results from the engagement:

• Development of best practices for financial aid offers and websites
• Creation of a glossary of financial aid terms to be used across all schools
• Recognizing the need to clarify the way health insurance costs are addressed for students

“One of the recommendations focused on clarifying costs, billing, and refunds,” says Kerry Franzetta, associate director of financial aid and scholarships at UC Berkeley, “and we incorporated our learning into a financial aid navigation guide that we send to admitted students. It has a worksheet for students to calculate what they owe, and we know it’s effective because they’re bringing it to meetings with our counselors.”

> Read UC case study
Thank you to our supporters for making our work possible.

$1,000,000+
Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation*

$500,000 - $999,999
Anonymous

$250,000 - $499,999
Access Education Fund at The Boston Foundation
Barr Foundation*
College Futures Foundation*

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U.S. Bank
U.S. Bank Foundation
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- Murtha Cullina LLP
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- Rohda Family Charitable Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. John Spurr, Jr.

### $1,000 - $2,499
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*MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENT / THIS LIST REFLECTS GENEROUS SUPPORT RECEIVED BETWEEN JULY 1, 2021 AND JUNE 30, 2022*
## Financials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$7,827,416</td>
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<td>Program Revenue</td>
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<td>Other Revenue &amp; In-Kind</td>
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<td>Government PPP</td>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>General Administrative</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td><strong>$7,723,282</strong></td>
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<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>$2,817,149</td>
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<td>Net Assets at End of Year</td>
<td><strong>$9,260,383</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,443,234</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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