

uAspire Policy

uAspire envisions a financial aid system that puts students at the center. uAspire works to simplify the pathways to state and federal aid, make college costs transparent to students, and ensure resources are distributed to those who would most benefit.

Policy Impact Model

uAspire uniquely operates at the intersection of policy and practice. Informed by the expertise and experiences of advisors, students, and educators, the uAspire policy team advocates for policies and funding to transform financial aid and higher education systems.

The policy team **advocates for policies and funding** at the **federal** level and in states where we advise students—**California, Massachusetts, and New York**—and then **supports higher ed institutions and government agencies** to implement student-centered policies.

Policy Priorities

Advocacy focuses on improving the financial aid process at each step for the students uAspire serves - students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students.

Increase Access to Financial Aid

Students need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and/or state applications to determine their eligibility for financial aid. uAspire supports policies to increase FAFSA and state financial aid application completion.



Simplify Financial Aid Processes

Financial aid processes should be straightforward and seamless for students and families to navigate. Students confront a detrimental lack of information and transparency when paying for college, and their decisions are only as good as the information available. Clarity around costs, financial obligations, and loan responsibilities is crucial. Financial aid communications should be written for a student audience and definitions need to be standardized.

Increase Investment in Resources for Students

Only 28.9% of students from low-income high schools graduate from college within six years. Of those who don't graduate, 87% name college costs as a reason why. It is important to increase investment in the Pell Grant and state financial aid. Meeting students' basic needs of food, housing, and transportation will ensure they can focus on academic success. Increasing funding for programs that mitigate college costs and support students graduating, such as CUNY ASAP, will increase degree completion.

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Advancing Impact

uAspire advances progress towards policy goals through:

Student Advocacy

Coaching college students navigating financial aid systems on how to advocate to make these systems work better, so policymakers are hearing directly from those most affected by policies.

Thought Leadership

Increasing awareness throughout the field about financial aid policy solutions through policy briefs, events, presentations, social media campaigns, opinion pieces, and media coverage.

Strategic Partnership Development

Collaborating through coalitions and cultivating relationships with government officials, higher education institutions, and system leaders to advance advocacy goals.

Policymaker Education

Informing policymakers about key financial aid issues and solutions through student stories, research, and uAspire practitioner expertise.

¹ National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, "High School Benchmarks," Sept 12, 2024.

² Gallup Research Hub, "State of Higher Education 2024 Report," accessed Feb 4, 2025.