

**THE ACTIVE ADVOCACY COALITION**

**STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

**Prioritize Access Missouri Funding**

Each year, approximately 45,000 students receive Access Missouri awards, significantly more students than any other state scholarship program. **Over time, Access Missouri awards have decreased; current awards average between $1,600-$1,850 for a 4-year institution (maximum is $2,850).** Missouri students’ ability to successfully access college and persist through to degree completion depends largely on their access to financial resources to cover the ever-increasing cost to obtain a postsecondary education. This is especially true for students with financial need. Expanding Access Missouri to assist more Missouri students in successful pursuit of their postsecondary goals is a win for the student, their families and communities, as well as the state of Missouri. Put Missouri’s limited scholarship dollars where they are most needed.

**Making A+ a First-Dollar Scholarship Program** – All students who have earned the A+ Scholarship through academic and personal achievement in high school should have the benefit of using their A+ Scholarship. Presently, students attending two-year institutions who are Pell-eligible are required to spend their Pell dollars first, meaning they never use the A+ Scholarship for which they have worked so hard. Making A+ a first-dollar scholarship will enable the state’s lowest income students to receive the “free community college” benefit afforded to A+ eligible students with higher family incomes, enabling them to use their Pell grant to continue their studies beyond the term of the A+ scholarship, including in pursuit of a four-year degree.

**In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students**

Each year, students in Missouri graduate from high school with the intention to enroll in, attend, and graduate from college. For some Missouri students, these dreams are out of reach. In the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 legislative sessions, language was added to the preamble of the higher education budget that states that students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are to be charged out-of-state or international tuition rates. Despite having grown up in the United States and attending and graduating from K-12 Missouri schools, **they are being charged the highest rate of tuition at public institutions of higher education.** Based upon data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2008-2012 American Community Survey and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation, there are approximately 13,000 undocumented youth in Missouri currently eligible for DACA.

