

## ABSTRACT

### A COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME, RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A GRANT PROPOSAL

By

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Low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students encounter barriers which prevent them from attaining postsecondary education. The barriers include insufficient parental and school support, lack of motivation and self-confidence, socioeconomic status, lack of social capital in high schools and colleges, and inadequate or insufficient resources. Previous research identified college readiness programs as a way to promote academic success and college attainment for low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students. The purpose of this thesis project was to write a grant proposal to secure funding for a college readiness program for low-income racial and ethnic minority students enrolled in Hawthorne high schools in Hawthorne, California. The purpose of the proposed program is to strengthen students' academic and personal skills and provided resources that enabled students to complete high school and move onto postsecondary education. Research on existing college readiness programs was used for the development of this proposed program. The submission and funding of this grant project was not required for the successful completion of this project.



A COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME, RACIAL AND  
ETHNIC MINORITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A GRANT PROPOSAL

A THESIS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A 15-year-old girl was rushed to the hospital because she was “bleeding-out.” She was diagnosed with bleeding ulcer in stomach and intestine. After being hospitalized for about a month, she was discharged with treatment and recovered. Due to the circumstance, she missed over 2 months of school. Education was very important to her, therefore, she took advantage of “home study” and completed missed assignments. She loved and enjoyed school, she graduated with honors from high school. When she was 19 years old, she was rushed to the hospital for the same health problem. Physicians could not stop the bleeding, she was given multiple blood transfusions, but she kept “bleeding-out.” The primary physician informed her mother that the only option was surgery, but the chances of survival were very low. Although she was in critical condition, she prayed to Jesus Christ for her life, she had a dream to fulfill. Her dream was to achieve a master’s degree with the emphasis on children, youth, and families. She wanted to help children and youth who grew up without their parents. It took her 3 years to recover. When she was 23 years old, she had another surgery due to complications with previous surgery. Ever since, she has lived a healthy life.

My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, thank you for giving me the opportunity to live. Thank you for making my dream a reality. Thank you for blessing me with good health, strength and ability to pursue my dream. Without your boundless support and guidance everything that I have accomplished would not been possible. Thank you for blessing me with so much. I dedicate this degree to you, my father Jesus Christ. Now, I ask you to

bless me with good health, strength and guidance, so that I use this degree to serve and bless others. “It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to the most high.” Psalm 92:1. “I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.” Psalm 9:1.

Mom, thank you so much for all your hard work. You sacrificed so much, you took the role of a mother and father, and I appreciate you so much. It was very difficult not having you with me, but I always understood that you had to work to support us. Thank you for your infinite love, support and guidance. Mom, you always worried about my health, you did not want me to enroll in college, but I told you that there was nothing to be worried about because Jesus had left me here to accomplish my dream.

To the love of my life, thank you babe for your endless love, encouragement, patience, and support. I am fortunate to have such an incredible boyfriend. Jesus placed you in my life at the perfect time, when I started college and needed support and guidance. Thank you for always being there when I need you. You have always believed in me and encouraged me to follow my dreams. Every time I was frustrated over the thesis, you comforted me and reminded me that this journey was almost over. Honey, thank you so much for helping me with Romeo, you know what my dog means to me.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the United States, college enrollment among low-income racial and ethnic minority students has generally increased. However, low-income minorities continue to average lower levels of educational attainment compared to middle- and high-income students (Pew Research Center, 2014). In 2012, 50.9% of low-income high school graduates enrolled in a two or four-year college compared to 58.4% in 2007. Middle and high-income students' rate rose from 64.7% in 2007 to 80.7% in 2012 (Pew Research Center, 2014). In 2012, 88.2% of Whites compared to only 39.6% of African Americans and 35.6% of Hispanics attained an associate's degree. An estimated 27.6% of Hispanics and 25.4% of African Americans attained a bachelor's degree compared to 91.3% of Whites. In addition, 19.3% of Hispanics and 16.4% of African Americans attained a master's degree compared to 81.5% of Whites (Pew Research Center, 2014). Researchers claim that Hispanics and African Americans who lack a bachelor's or master's degree are more than likely to encounter economic, social, and psychological problems throughout their life (Stearns & Glennie, 2009).

Low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students encounter barriers which prevent them from attaining postsecondary education. The barriers include insufficient parental and school support, lack of motivation and self-confidence, socioeconomic status, lack of social capital in high schools and colleges, and inadequate

or insufficient resources (Perna, 2009). It is evident that more research and program development should be done to improve the numbers of low-income racial and ethnic minority youth engaging in higher education. Findings have shown an urgent need for intervention during the important stages of the high school years to empower low-income racial and ethnic minority youth to attain higher education (Somers & Piliawsky, 2009).

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the thesis project was to write a grant proposal to secure funding for a college readiness program for low-income racial and ethnic minority students enrolled in high schools in Hawthorne, California. The proposed project exceeded at expanding services at Richstone Family Center for high school students residing in the Hawthorne community. The purpose of the proposed program was to strengthen students' academic and personal skills. The program provided resources that enabled students to complete high school and move onto postsecondary education. The program requirements included current enrollment in Hawthorne high schools, with a 2.5-3.0 GPA, and their family income must not have exceed 150% above the poverty rate.

The program will be held between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at Richstone Family Center. The program will include academic counseling, peer interventions and support groups, leadership development, time management, career development, college tours, college scholarship assistance, life skills workshops, financial aid workshops, assistance with SAT/ACT review and exam, study skills workshops, essay writing workshops, library research, and parent workshops. This program will provide volunteer opportunities for parents.

### Multicultural Relevance

The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) estimated a total population of 84,633 people in Hawthorne, California, of which 42% of the families lived below poverty line. In addition, Richstone Family Center in Hawthorne served 13,907 children and families in 2010, of which 93% lived below the poverty line (Richstone Family Center, 2014). Richstone will be the host agency for the proposed college readiness program. The program will empower and prepare low-income racial and ethnic minority students to succeed academically and attain postsecondary education. The program will serve low-income racial and ethnic minority students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the Hawthorne community.

Taking in consideration that the Richstone center serves predominantly low-income minorities, of which 91% are Latinos and 5% African Americans, the program will be prepared to provide essential college readiness services and resources to low-income racial and ethnic minority Latinos and African American students. However, the program will take in consideration other low-income racial and ethnic minority students who meet the program requirements. The program will have bilingual in Spanish social workers and tutors. The workshops for Spanish speaking parents and volunteers will be facilitated in Spanish and handouts will be provided in Spanish. The program will give the opportunity to low-income racial and ethnic minority families to become more involved in their child's educational life.

### Social Work Relevance

As stated in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (2014), the primary mission of social workers is to help people in need and enhance the well-

being of individuals and society, especially people who are vulnerable and live in poverty. It is essential that social workers advocate for low-income racial and ethnic minority students who encounter various barriers to succeed academically. It is imperative that social workers challenge the educational system and help students reach their academic potential. This college readiness program will include social workers who will advocate and support students' success. The social workers will provide a variety of resources that will prepare students for postsecondary education.

#### Conceptual Definitions

*Low-income:* Low-income households are defined as having less than two-thirds of the national median (Pew Research Center, 2014).

*Racial and ethnic minority:* Racial and ethnic minority includes Asian American, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native (Blustein et al., 2010).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review includes existing literature about factors that affect rates of high school completion and enrollment in postsecondary education among low-income racial and ethnic minority youth. The factors reviewed span individual, parent, school, and community levels, which are interrelated and overlap in many ways. A college readiness section is included to identify programs that have been successful at improving education outcomes for low-income racial and ethnic minority youth.

#### Individual Level Factors

The literature suggests several factors at the individual levels that may contribute to high school dropout or non-enrollment in college. Some of the factors include age, learning disabilities, and race and ethnicity. Although most low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students have encounter barriers that hindered them from completing high school and attaining higher education, many manage to overcome obstacles and succeed academically (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011).

#### Adolescents' Age Stages

Age is an important factor to consider because this issue specifically affects adolescents in high school settings. According to Castellanos, Parent, Vitaro, Tremblay, and Séguin (2013), adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal

adulthood. Adolescence is categorized in three different stages, early adolescence ages 11-13 years old, middle adolescence 14-16 years old, and later adolescence 17-19 years old (Castellanos et al., 2013).

During the early stage, the need for belonging, a sense of identity, and friendships becomes essentially important for adolescents. At this stage the need of approval from parents and peers is critical for adolescents (Castellanos et al., 2013). Adolescents at this stage are not necessarily engaged in education. For most adolescents, education is essentially not important at this stage, many fall behind in grades, struggle with peer pressure, and encounter behavior challenges. Saxton et al. (2010) say that at the end of the early stage of adolescents, many are likely to drop out of school and many engage in substance use.

During middle adolescence, competence and uniqueness become important. At this stage, adolescents focus on their interests, aptitudes, and abilities. Adolescents begin forming groups of friends who share similar qualities as their own, and they experience falling in love for the first time during this stage (Castellanos et al., 2013). During the early years of this stage (14-15), adolescents are distracted from education due to peer pressure and romantic interests (Saxton et al., 2010). As a result, adolescents become disengaged with education, contributing to low-grades, retention, and school dropouts. However, at the age of 16, adolescents begin thinking about graduating from high school; therefore, academics is taken more seriously at this age (Saxton et al., 2013).

In the course of later adolescence, worthiness plays an important role. Adolescents begin to strive toward personal standards of integrity and morality. At this stage adolescents feel pressure to succeed socially, academically, and financially. Self-

esteem is affected by how well the adolescent lives up to self-expectations (Castellanos et al., 2013). Saxton et al. (2010) state this stage is detrimental for adolescents. At this stage adolescents determine whether they will graduate from high school and enroll in college.

### Learning Disabilities

Another factor that has been linked to high school dropout and non-enrollment in college is learning disabilities. In the United States, the number of students with learning disabilities has been rapidly increasing (Ahrens, DuBois, Lozano, & Richardson, 2010). Extensive literature has shown that students with learning disabilities face serious academic challenges, which hinders them from achieving academic success. Research has shown that low-income racial and ethnic minority students with learning disabilities are more likely to struggle with high school courses specifically math and English (Ahrens et al., 2010). In addition, a large number of students with learning disabilities have significantly lower grades compared to students in general education. Some low-income racial and ethnic minority students with learning disabilities remain in high school longer and enroll in college late. Additionally, low-income racial and ethnic minority students who enter college are more likely to be academically unprepared which may potentially reduce the likelihood of completing college (Ahrens et al., 2010).

Despite the difficulties, Kleirnet, Jones, Sheppard, Harp, and Harrison (2012) found that within the past 10 years there has been a tremendous increase of students with learning disabilities enrolling onto community colleges or other post-secondary education. In recent years, many colleges have offered opportunities for students with learning disabilities (Kleirnet et al., 2012). Most students with learning disabilities are



highly motivated to complete high school and succeed in college. Moreover, low-income racial and ethnic minority students with learning disabilities are as likely to graduate from high school and attain post-secondary as their peers in general education (Kleirnet et al., 2012). Students' relationships with teachers, counselors, and academic advisors have played a positive outcome in students' academic performance and educational attainment (Ahrens et al., 2010). Researchers indicated that learning disabilities generally prevent low-income racial and ethnic minority youth from achieving academic success; however, it was shown that students with learning disabilities have strong support systems that enable them to attain academic success (Ahrens et al., 2010).

### Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity is another individual predisposing factor associated with high school dropout and college attainment (Blustein et al., 2010). Society holds low expectations for students based on their ethnic and racial background. Therefore, race and ethnicity have a negative impact on youth's academic achievement. Blustein et al. (2010) revealed that low-income minority youth are conscious about the unfairness in the educational system associated with race and ethnicity and foresee they may not be equipped to complete high school and attain higher education.

Blustein et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study to explore high school students' narratives about the association between school, work, and societal expectations of their academic future associated with their racial and ethnic background. The sample varied along psycho-educational intervention and developmental status. Using consensual qualitative research, the narratives showed two domains, students' perceptions of society's expectations based on race and ethnicity and students' perception

of the role of their race and ethnicity in future academic success. The semi-structured interviews included questions pertaining to the association between school, work, and about the role of race and ethnicity in academic success.

Thirty-two urban high school students participated in the study of which nineteen were females and thirteen were males (Blustein et al., 2010). Sixteen ninth grade and 16 twelfth grade students participated. Thirteen students were self-identified as (1) Caribbean American, (2) six African American, (3) five multiracial, (4) four Latino/a, three White, and (5) one Lebanese. Results reveal that 75% of students in the sample were ambivalent about how their race and ethnicity would impact their future academic success and 25% of the students had an idea about how race and ethnicity would impact their future academic success. Twelfth percent of the students reported that the issue with race and ethnicity has negatively impacted their academic success during high school by hindering them from participating in college readiness curricula. Twenty-two percent reported society expects low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students to drop out of school (Blustein et al., 2010). Although most of the students described low societal expectations based on their racial and ethnic background, they were unsure in what ways or how their race or ethnicity would impact their future academic success (Blustein et al., 2010).

#### Parent Level Factors

The role of parents and family factors in contributing to high school dropout and non-enrollment in college has been well-documented (Quezada, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2013; Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014; Zhan & Sherraden, 2011). Studies have shown that factors such as parental involvement (Quezada et al., 2013), family income (Mih, 2013), family

structure, parents' years in the United States, and parents' education (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014) are factors that affect students' academic success.

### Parental Involvement

Research suggests that parental involvement is a factor related to high school dropout and non-enrollment in college. Research shows that parent involvement reduces negative behavior and improves self-confidence, attitude toward school, and academic success (Quezada et al., 2013). Parent involvement has been measured by parents' relationship with the educational system such as attendance at parent-teacher meetings, school workshops, their child's activities, and helping with homework and projects, as well as their relationship with the child (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014). Parent participation makes a significant difference in whether a child graduates from high school (Quezada et al., 2013).

Supportive family relationships are associated with students' academic performance and engagement in higher education (Jain & Cohen, 2013). Most parents who provide adequate structure, guidance, support, and protection have stronger relationships with their child that may enhance the child's academic performance (Jain & Cohen, 2013). Kennedy and Ceballo (2013) agree that meaningful relationships between youth and parents are positive experiences that may promote academic success. Youth with high levels of family support generally show significantly higher grades than their peers who lack parental support (Howard, Budge, & McKay, 2010).

### Family Income

The literature indicates that family income is a factor that contributes to high school dropout and non-enrollment rates (Mih, 2013). Malik and Irshad (2012) reported that low-income minority parents are more likely to have less influence on guiding their children through high school completion and college process than middle- and high-income parents. Most low-income families work long hours in order to provide for their children (Marks, 2013). However, a great number of low-income families lack financial resources to enroll children in extracurricular activities, tutoring, and college readiness programs (Park & Denson, 2013). As a result, it is likely to affect students' ability to access resources that may prepare them for high school graduation and college enrollment (Mih, 2013).

An (2013) indicated that low-income parents are generally enthusiastic about their children's academic success and make efforts to help their children with academic expenses. Also, Howard et al., (2010) indicate that although parents may restrict their children from participating in college readiness programs due to difficulties with high program cost and transportation, if the programs are provided free of cost, they would enroll their children.

### Family Structure

Family structure is another factor that is related to high school dropout and non-enrollment in college. Single-parent families have been significantly increasing in the United States and this growth is predicted to continue (Hornberger, Zabriskie, & Freeman, 2010). Many single-parent families face poverty or near poverty and often face difficulties providing their youth basic necessities for college preparation (Doherty

& Craft, 2011). Most single-parents hold two jobs and are more likely to have difficulties finding leisure time to meet the needs of their youth during the challenging years in high school (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014). Youth in single-parent families are more than likely to carry family responsibilities such as working a part-time job or caring for their siblings (Briggs, Miller, Orellana, & Cox, 2013). Additionally, youth in single-parent families are more likely to develop depression and emotional distress, economic hardship, and they have lower educational achievement (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014). Youth from single-parent families are at increased risk of dropping out of high school (Doherty & Craft, 2011).

On the other hand, Hornberger et al. (2010) found that single-parents do not spend significantly less time with their children than dual-parent families. According to their study, dual-parent families also work long hours, limiting time spent with their children. Briggs et al. (2013) indicate that single-parent families possess several strengths such as enhanced abilities to handle a variety of situations, and youth in single-parent families are more likely to assume more household responsibilities than youth from dual-parent families. Although youth from single-parent families are more likely to drop out from high school, in some cases the single-parent family structure can be a factor in contributing to academic success (Briggs, Miller, Orellana, & Cox, 2013).

#### Parents' Years in the United States

Parents' years in the United States may contribute to youth's academic success. For example, literature shows that generally low-income racial and ethnic minority parents' years in the United States significantly affect whether a child may complete high school and attain higher education (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014). Marks (2013) state

that youth from families who have been in the United States longer than 15 years are more likely to complete high school than their peers whose families have been in the United States for 10 years or less. Moreover, families who have been in the United States for over 15 years have generally learned about the educational system and gained knowledge about how to access resources.

Viramontez-Anguiano (2014) found that many youth from low-income minority families who recently immigrated to the United States are inspired to complete high school because they want to be successful in the United States and they view education as a key to success. However, most encounter language barriers of which many are placed in general class settings instead of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. As a result, students fail courses and some drop out of school (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014). Most low-income racial and ethnic minority youth who recently immigrated tend to have challenges coping with the educational system, therefore, some receive lower grades than their peers who have been in the United States longer than 10 years (Marks, 2013).

Viramontez-Anguiano (2014) claims that low-income minority youth who recently immigrated to the United States have the same academic potential as their peers who have been in this country for longer periods of time. Yet, some encounter peer pressure and language barriers which enable them to graduate from high school on time and enroll in college. Marks (2013) found that although parents' years in the United States may impact children's academic achievement, many low-income racial and ethnic minority youth thrive with their own abilities and determination to achieve academic success.

## Parents' Education

Researchers have found that many low-income minority parents who lack higher education generally have challenges accessing resources due to lack of social support networks (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011). Additionally, most low-income minority parents are not familiar with the educational system nor are they educated about the importance of attaining higher education (Alon, Domina, & Tienda, 2010). These situations negatively affect high school completion and college enrollment among low-income racial and ethnic minority youth (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011).

On the other hand, parents who achieved higher education generally have established relationships with the educational systems (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011). Parents have easier access to resources which may benefit children academically. In addition, parents with more education have stronger social support networks within different community systems compared to low-income minority parents (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011). Alon et al. (2010) stated that children of college-educated parents are more likely than offspring with less educated parents to pursue higher education.

Zhan and Sherraden (2011) conducted a study to examine the relationship among household assets, educational expectations of youth and parents, and youth's college attainment. Participants include 750 mothers of which 66% were White, 17% were Black, and 18% Hispanic. The average age of the participants was 34, ranging from 29 to 37. The researchers found that the more education completed by parents, the higher likelihood that their children will achieve higher academic success. The researchers also found that mother's expectations regarding educational attainment serve as a motivation for youth to complete high school and enroll onto college. Based on the study, 18% of

mothers expected their children to complete high school, 30% expected their children to enroll in college, 39% expected them to complete college, and 11% to take further education after college graduation. Compared to mother's expectations, youth's expectations were higher. Twenty-seven percent of youth expected to enroll onto college, 39% expected to complete college, and 24% expected to pursue higher education after graduating from college. Parents with higher education serve as role models for their children. Youth tend to see their parents' educational success as a goal for their own education (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011).

### School Level Factors

Schools in urban districts have higher levels of segregation, higher concentrations of poverty, lower academic achievement, and higher teacher-turnover (Rose, 2013). Low-income racial and ethnic minority youth in urban schools have a reduced likelihood to graduate on time from high school, and those who graduate are usually not prepared to succeed in college (Hazel, Pfaff, Albanes, & Gallagher, & 2014). Ou and Reynolds (2012) stated that low-income racial and ethnic minority youth attending urban schools are less likely to complete high school, enroll in college, and attain post-secondary education. Although much of the literature has focus on the negative aspects, most urban school district's mission is to empower youth to graduate from high school and enroll in college (Hazel et al., 2014).

Rose (2013) conducted a study to examine how school curriculum and pre-college educational opportunities influence educational attainment. Participants include 12,144 eighth graders and high school students from different urban schools. The researcher used data from National Education Longitudinal Study a series of secondary school



longitudinal studies. The researcher found that students from urban schools are as likely to perform well as students from suburban schools. Moreover, there is slight difference between urban and suburban schools pertaining to academic measures. For instance, a great number of low-income racial and ethnic minority students attending urban schools generally score high on standardized math, writing, reading, and science tests. A large number of students in urban schools have strong academic skills and abilities to complete high school and attain higher education. Furthermore, in 2012, approximately 88% of low-income racial and ethnic minority students in urban districts graduated from high school and enrolled in college (Rose, 2013).

### School Resources

Most urban school districts tend to have lower levels of funding and are less able to provide college preparatory courses. Thus, those factors may mitigate the effect on high school graduation among low-income racial and ethnic minority youth (Palardy, 2013). Insufficient or inadequate resources could hinder quality instruction and access to college readiness programs, thereby, influencing school achievement (Jimenez-Castellanos, 2010). It is essential that urban school districts provide college readiness programs, extracurricular activities, counseling, and tutoring programs. Students receiving these resources will more than likely have a heightened opportunity to attain higher education (Azzam, 2010). Palardy (2013) reports that financial aid plays a significant role in college enrollment decisions for most low-income racial and ethnic minority students. However, knowledge of financial aid process is inadequate at many urban schools which tend to become a barrier to college matriculation.

## School Practice and Structure

Urban districts generally have less rigorous and less academic oriented curricula. The rigor of the high school curricula such as math and English courses is a predictor of college enrollment (Palardy, 2013). Low-income racial and ethnic minority students are particularly vulnerable to experiencing academic challenges (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). A large number of low-income racial and ethnic minority students enter ninth-grade unprepared for high school courses which makes it difficult for them to attain good grades. In addition, many students struggle throughout high school courses; therefore, they fail courses or drop out (Azzam, 2010). This situation negatively affects students' academic performance preventing them from completing high school and enrolling in college (Palardy, 2013). School administrators and teachers should provide early intervention and address the academic needs of students (Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). Roderick et al. (2009) suggested that the most proactive way to help youth promote college readiness is to align high school curricula and graduation requirements with college readiness standards.

Teachers and school administrators have made strong efforts imposing school and classroom practices (Colber, 2011). Palardy (2013) indicated it is important to have proper disciplinary practices in urban schools to control the high levels of negative behavior. Colbert (2011) added proper disciplinary practice has improved negative behavior among youth in urban schools. In addition, academic counseling is provided to improve negative behavior and it prevents student failure and dropouts. Moreover, teachers in urban communities have served as role models for many low-income racial and ethnic minority students. Mih (2013) found that many teachers in urban schools are

highly involved in students' academic success. Teachers keep students engaged by providing exciting classroom instruction and activities. Keeping students engaged has helped improve course grades and standardized test scores. Moreover, teacher engagement has helped many low-income racial and ethnic minority students graduate from high school and enroll in college. Colbert (2011) reported that urban schools possess significant protective factors that have empowered students to complete high school and attain high education.

### Community Level Factors

#### Community Violence

Community violence negatively affects low-income racial and ethnic minority youth from completing high school and attaining higher education (Jain & Cohen, 2013). Researchers have identified community violence as direct and indirect experience of violence (Howard et al., 2010). Additionally, direct experiences are generally described as instances of victimization, whereas indirect exposure is defined as being a witness to. Kennedy and Ceballo (2013) clarified that direct exposure to violence includes physically experiencing beatings, muggings, stabbings, or being shot, and indirect contact includes witnessing violent acts or hearing about instances of violence, as well as viewing violence through the media.

#### Community Violence and Education

In the United States, most low-income racial and ethnic minority youth in urban communities are exposed to high levels of community violence which hinders them from completing high school and enrolling in higher education. Howard et al. (2010) conducted a study to examine the negative impact of exposure to violence on symptoms

of distress and academic performance. Participants were 174 low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students, of which 97 were females and 77 were males. Researchers collected data from a set of urban high school students. However, data did not include exact numbers of racial and ethnic minority participants. Therefore, the researchers use data that was collected in classrooms during regular school hours as part of a school-wide classroom assignment. The assignment consisted of a “High School Experience Survey” (Howard et al., 2010, pg. 67) which was an intervention assignment required by the high school. The survey was available in English and Spanish, depending on language preference of the student participating.

Furthermore, 93 females and 75 males reported exposure to community violence. About 94% of youth who reported exposure to community violence also reported high levels of distress and anger. Seventy-six percent of youth who reported exposure to community violence reported suffering from depression and anxiety because someone they knew had been stabbed or shot. Sixty-nine percent of youth who reported exposure to community violence reported high levels of post-traumatic stress, anger, and physical distress due to beatings. Forty-three percent of the students who were robbed reported high levels of anger, shame, and behavior problems. Thirty-nine percent of the students who were victims of stabbings or shootings suffered from post-traumatic stress, physical distress, and anger. Thirty-five percent of students who reported exposure to community violence through witnessing a murder(s) reported high levels of post-traumatic stress, worrying, and were afraid (Howard et al., 2010).

Howard et al. (2010) found that witnessing and experiencing violence affects youth’s academic performance resulting in inability to graduate from high school and

attain higher education. From 94% of students who reported exposure to community violence, 82% had significantly lower grades compared to their peers who did not experience exposure to community violence. Seventeen percent of the students victims of stabbing stopped going to school for almost a year. Thirteen percent of the students who reported victims of shootings moved to a different school district. Six percent of the students victims of stabbings and shootings dropped out of school based on data from the set of urban high school students. The showed that exposure to violence is detrimental to youth's wellness and academic achievement.

Findings have shown that exposure to violence hinders many low-income racial and ethnic minority students from completing high school and enrolling in higher education (Howard et al., 2010). Kennedy and Ceballo (2013) found that witnessing and experiencing violence leads youth to develop low self-esteem, inability to focus, and feelings of hopelessness. In addition, the researchers found that youth with higher exposure to community violence had significantly lower grades compared to their peers who were not exposed to community violence (Howard et al., 2010). Howard et al. (2010) reported that chronic community violence affects youth's health, mental health, and academic achievement. Additionally, youth who are worried, sad or fearful are less able to focus on learning and are less likely to perform to the best of their abilities. Youth who experienced high rates of community violence had notably higher dropout rates than their peers who did not experience community violence (Howard et al., 2010).

#### Community Resources and Services

Existing literature shows that community resources and services in urban communities have been effective helping youth complete high school and enroll in higher

education (O’Neil, Fragala, & Ideishi, 2012). For instance, dropout prevention programs, after-school tutoring programs, and out-of-school programs are fundamental examples of community-based programs. Community-based programs in urban communities usually operate during after-school hours and weekends and are generally free of cost for low-income minority youth (Eccles & Templeton, 2011).

Many community-based programs offer resources and services with a focus on promoting high school completion and college enrollment (O’Neil et al., 2012). In addition, programs provide adequate provisions for physical and psychological safety, appropriate levels of structure and adult supervision, and building supportive and respectful relationships with adults and peers (Eccles & Templeton, 2011). The programs are linked with academic performance, leadership skills, career development, social identity formation, emotion regulation, and psychological well-being (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2013). Moreover, some programs provide counseling and support groups, which help students express their feelings, provide social and emotional support, and increase motivation and self-esteem (Miller et al., 2013). Community-based programs are associated with higher grades generally preventing low-income racial and ethnic minority youth from dropping out of school (O’Neil et al., 2012). Low-income minority youth who participate in community-based programs are likely to complete high school and enroll in college (Abele & Iver, 2011). It is evident that community resources and services such as community-based programs can help improve educational outcomes for many low-income racial and ethnic minority youth (O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

### Programs to Reduce High School Dropout and Increase College Enrollment

For decades, programs to reduce high school dropout and increase college enrollment have been used with students at risk of failure in high school (Torres, Zenner, Benson, Harris, & Koberlein, 2010). Many of these programs provide academic preparation, leadership development, mentoring, financial assistance, social and emotional support, family involvement, service learning opportunities, and nurturing aspirations (Rose, 2013). College readiness programs generally draw the attention of students and their families to college aspirations, college enrollment, and college attainment (Jackson, 2014). Moreover, college readiness programs have addressed structural and institutional barriers relating to access and equity in higher education. Studies have indicated that college readiness programs have positive educational outcomes for low-income minority youth.

### Advancement Via Individual Determination

A college readiness program that has created positive educational outcomes for low-income racial and ethnic minority youth is Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) (Miller et al., 2013). The AVID program's mission is to increase the number of students prepared for college. The AVID program serves approximately 4,500 schools in 45 states in the United States, serving more than 400,000 students from fourth-to-twelfth grade. The program supports low-income minority students by enhancing their study and organizational skills. The program encourages students to take more challenging classes, provides opportunities for students to gain public speaking and team building skills, and prepares students for a four-year college (Miller et al., 2013).

Students in AVID are provided with skilled tutors to help them with their studies, college tours, and resources to apply for scholarships, grants, and colleges (Miller et al., 2013).

Over the past thirty years, AVID has helped many students graduate from high school and attain post-secondary education. In 2012, about 95% of all AVID students applied to a four-year college and approximately 90% of all AVID students were accepted to four-year universities (Miller et al., 2013). Since 2001, the majority of AVID students attending four-year universities were on track to graduate in four years, and over 80% of the students were maintaining A and B averages in college.

#### Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) is another program that provides college readiness services to low-income minority students (Miller et al., 2013). Jackson (2014) found that GEAR-UP is a federal program funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the program provides federal funding for 213 states and partnership grants serving over 748,000 low-income students in 48 states. Moreover, since 1999, the GEAR-UP program in California has impacted approximately 256 schools and about 440,000 students have benefited from program services.

The program is designed to enable low-income minority students to succeed in high school and increase college enrollment and post-secondary education among low-income minority students (Jackson, 2014). In addition, GEAR-UP is designed to help students develop learning and study skills and become academically and financially prepared to enroll in college. GEAR-UP provides college scholarships and offers state and partnership grants to low-income minority students (Miller et al., 2013). The



scholarship components are designed to increase college success and raise the expectations of many low-income students and families (Miller et al., 2013).

In 2010, 78% of GEAR-UP students applied to a four-year college and about 62% of all the students were accepted to a four-year college (Jackson, 2014). Additionally, 88% of the students applied to a two-year college and 85% were accepted (Jackson, 2014). Approximately, 55% of low-income racial and ethnic minority students applied to a four-year college and 43% were accepted. A total of 62% of low-income racial and ethnic minority students applied to a two-year college and 57% were accepted. Most of the GEAR-UP students attending colleges were in good academic standing. The GEAR-UP program had been effective in preparing high school students for high school completion and college enrollment (Jackson, 2014).

### TriO

TriO is a federal outreach and student services program in the United States designed to provide educational services to low-income minority middle and high school students (Torres et al., 2010). The programs are administered, funded, and implemented by the U.S. Department of Education. TriO includes eight programs targeted to serve low-income minority students from middle school to college programs.

TriO provides early intervention and early awareness and prepares low-income minority students for undergraduate programs (Torres et al., 2010). The programs are held at 1,000 colleges including community colleges, universities, and agencies in America. TriO's mission is to provide educational opportunities regardless of economic circumstances, ethnic background or race. Approximately 2,700 of TriO programs serve 866,000 low-income minority students in sixth through twelfth grade. TriO's programs

have demonstrated positive educational outcomes for many low-income minority students. TriO's high school graduation rate for low-income racial and ethnic minority youth was 85%, college enrollment 72%, and college attainment 59% in 2009 (Torres et al., 2010).

#### The Young Men's Christian Association Youth Institute

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Youth Institute (YI) in Long Beach, California, is a community-based organization that offers programs for low-income racial and ethnic minority youth (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). The goals of YI include improve academic achievement, leadership skills, career readiness, and help youth remain engaged in school. The program is based on two components: the year-round academic support program and summer technology program. Youth receive a \$500.00 stipend for successfully completing the summer program. Thereafter, youth are able to voluntarily participate in the year-round program throughout their high school and college years (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Involvement opportunities include academic and personal advising, homework assistance, community service, community leadership positions, field trips, equipment check-out, weekend leisure activities, and social work support. Youth may also qualify to receive a stipend for returning as mentors for future summer programs or work as paid interns. Moreover, YI has a college readiness program that assists youth in completing college, financial aid, and scholarship forms. Youth are taken to college field trips and receive guidance selecting the courses needed to transition to higher education (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

In 2010, O'Donnell and Kirkner (2014) investigated the effects of participation in the YI on school attendance, test scores, and grades. One hundred eighteen YI high

school students participated in the study, of which 43% of the students improved school attendance, 31% of the students improved their academic grades to a higher grade level, and 17% of the students moved from basic to proficient or proficient to advance.

Community-based programs like YI help students increase their self-esteem and self-confidence which motivates them to stay in school and work toward academic success.

### Higher Education Opportunity Act

Improving access to educational resources and increasing higher education opportunities for low-income racial and ethnic minority youth is necessary to prevent high school dropout and increase college enrollment. Over the past years, federal educational policy have focus on increasing student achievement (Palardy, 2013). For instance, the Obama administration has invested billions of dollars of federal funds on educational reforms to increase high school graduation and college enrollment rates.

Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) provides opportunities for low-income minority youth to attain higher education (Johnson, 2014). HEOA provides financial aid in forms of grants, loans, and work study for low-income minority youth. AHEOA funds post-secondary institutions such as trade schools, colleges, and graduate and professional schools. HEOA provides individual support and services relating to academic, social, and vocational goals. In 2010, approximately 67 grants were awarded to colleges and universities around the United States (Johnson, 2014). This policy is necessary to encourage low-income racial and ethnic minority students to enroll in college and attain post-secondary education.

## Conclusion

This literature review targeted topics related to factors that affect low-income racial and ethnic minority youth in terms of completing high school and achieving post-secondary education. Some of the individual factors include age, learning disabilities, race and ethnicity. Adolescence is categorized in three different stages and each stage affects adolescents' in high school settings (Castellanos et al., 2013). Adolescents struggle with autonomy, self-identity, and self-esteem. Therefore, lose focus in class settings, leading to lack of academic performance. Learning disabilities is a factor that affect high school students from completing high school and enrolling in higher education (Ahrens et al., 2010). Most youth with learning disabilities encounter challenges with course subjects and standardize tests, positioning them at risk for academic failure. However, in the last decade, students' self-determination has created a tremendous increase of students enrolling in higher education (Kleirnet et al., 2012). Youth's academic achievement is also affected by race and ethnicity. Race and ethnicity impacts youth academic achievement by limiting access to college readiness curricula and participation in pre-college activities (Blustein et al., 2010).

The role of parents and family factors is essential. Parent involvement and family structure proves to enhance youth's academic performance (Quezada et al., 2013). Family income, parents' years in the United States, and parents' education are factors that determine secure access to resources and college enrollment. In addition, school level factors comprised school resources, school practices, and structure. Insufficient or inadequate resources, school practices, and structure hinder quality instruction and access to college readiness programs, thereby, influencing school achievement (Jimenez-

Castellanos, 2010). Students receiving these practices have a heightened opportunity to attain higher education (Azzam, 2010).

Moreover, community factors include community violence and education, and community resources and services. Youth exposed to high levels of community violence are at risk of dropping out of high school and veto college enrollment (Howard et al., 2010). Yet, community resources and services are effective helping youth complete high school and enroll in higher education (O'Neil, Fragala, & Ideishi, 2012).

College readiness programs are necessary to reduce high school dropout and increase college enrollment. Many low-income racial and ethnic minority youth have limited access to adequate curricula and college readiness resources that may enable them to enroll in higher education (Jackson, 2014). College readiness programs provide numerous opportunities needed such as academic preparation, leadership development, mentoring, financial assistance, social and emotional support, and family involvement (Rose, 2013). Youth receiving adequate services generally have higher college aspirations, most enroll and complete college (Jackson, 2014).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### Identification of Potential Funding Source

A variety of methods were utilized to locate funding for the grant proposal. A thorough search of local, state, federal, and national funding opportunities for educational related programs was conducted. Internet search engine such as California State University Long Beach Library, Google, Google Scholar were used with keywords and phrases “federal funding for college readiness programs” “funding for low-income college students,” “outreach programs for youth,” “academic success among poor and racial and ethnic minority students,” “student success grants funding sources starfish,” “education grants,” “grants for racial and ethnic minority youth,” “college readiness grants,” “funding for nonprofit youth organizations,” “funding for education nonprofits,” “college readiness funding,” “funding for low-income minority youth in high school,” “outreach grants,” “state grants for youth,” “funding for after school tutoring programs,” “afterschool program grants,” “college readiness program grants,” “funding for high school dropouts,” and “California state funding for nonprofits.” In addition, web links such as [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), [www.lbnp.org](http://www.lbnp.org), and [www.ca.gov/grants](http://www.ca.gov/grants) were utilized to locate grants.

From the internet searches, 11 foundations were identified as potential funders for the proposed college readiness program. The list of 11 potential funders provided information about the foundations background, program areas, funding history, geographic focus, fields of interest, and limitations. In order to refine the search, the following keywords were utilized “education,” “youth,” “high school students,” “community,” “dropout prevention,” “education services,” “after school programs,” “

tutoring,” “homework assistance,” “career guidance,” “educational planning,” “college tours,” “youth services,” “college readiness,” “scholarship opportunities,” “financial aid assistance,” “low-income,” minority youth,” “parent engagement,” “mentors,” “family involvement,” “post-secondary education,” “racial and ethnic minority youth.”

Based on the refined search, the list was diminished to five foundations. The program areas, geographic focus, and limitations were carefully reviewed. The foundations identified include Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, Kresge Foundation, New Profit Inc., Kenneth T. & Eileen L., Norton Foundation, Inc., and Ahmanson Foundation. Each foundation website was carefully reviewed, and analyzed the funder’s interest areas, mission, application requirements, application guidelines, types of grants provided, funding provided to programs, grant making restrictions, and evaluation criteria.

Although, Kresge Foundation’s education program focuses on expanding student access to higher education, particularly for low-income racial and ethnic minority students, the foundation was eliminated due to lack of concentration on after school programming, educational planning, tutoring, and college tours. The New Profit Inc., Foundation provides funding for college access programs with an emphasis on increasing the number of low-income and underrepresented students entering and completing higher education. It was not selected since it does not concentrate on career guidance, educational planning, college tours, tutoring, and homework assistance.

Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Foundation was not chosen because the education area was linked with science, and science is not an area of concentration for the proposed college readiness program. Ahmanson Foundation has a higher emphasis on providing funding for cultural projects in the arts and health care, not necessarily education, therefore, it was eliminated. The list of potential funders was narrowed to one foundation Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation. The Dwight Stuart Foundation was chosen for the proposed college readiness program as the primary focus of the foundation is education and it is intended to meet the needs of the population for the proposed program.

### Criteria for Selection of the Grant

The Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation was selected for the proposed college readiness program because of the foundation's strong focus on education and college readiness. Foundation's education area includes college readiness, educational planning, career guidance, field trips, homework assistance, and tutoring. The education area specifically meets the criteria for the proposed grant project. The proposed college readiness program is intended to offer tutoring and homework assistance, it will help students improve their grades and prepare them for high school completion. Students will have the opportunity to participate in college readiness workshops particularly covering college application, financial aid, scholarship opportunities, career guidance, and educational planning. College tours will be offered, it will give students the opportunity to visit different colleges.

The foundation's mission is to brace non-profit organizations that provide direct services to low-income minority children and youth, so they gain the values, skills, and confidence to achieve their potential (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). Richstone Family Center is a non-profit agency that provides direct services to low-income minority children, youth and families. The proposed program will expand services for youth, so they gain the knowledge and skills necessary to graduate from high school and enroll in higher education. The foundation's vision is "All children and youth should have the opportunities and resources to reach their potential" (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). The foundation's mission and vision enforces low-income minority youth to realize their potential which is the goal of the proposed college readiness program.

The proposed program's objective is to provide educational resources and equip low-income racial and ethnic minority youth to graduate from high school and enroll in higher education. The foundation website showed a higher rate of funding opportunities for youth education. Followed by youth leadership and youth mentoring, such is a positive factor for the proposed project (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). The



Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation is the most adequate and beneficial foundation for the proposed college readiness program.

#### Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation

The Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation was established in 2001 by Dwight L. Stuart, Sr. to benefit and serve the needs of children and youth in Los Angeles, California (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). Stuart lived in Los Angeles most of his life. He was a strong supporter of youth mentoring, therefore, he focused on youth development, K-12 educational barriers, and foster care (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). The Board of Advisors of the Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation is composed of Stuart's four sons and his sister (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014).

The primary focus of the foundation is education. The objective is to support and strengthen programs that provide a well-rounded education for children and youth. It includes in-school, before and after-school programs that enhance and strengthen academic skills (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). Children and youth have opportunities to participate in new educational activities. The primary purpose of these programs is to develop skills and knowledge, in addition to, values such as respect, teamwork, integrity, patience, tenacity, and self-discipline (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). The programs offer educational planning, college readiness, career guidance, homework assistance, tutoring, youth employment, field trips, creative writing, language arts, literacy, cultural enrichment, and recreation (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). In addition, the foundation supports three other funding areas mentoring, leadership, and school readiness (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014).

The foundation required a grant application and a letter of inquiry with the following descriptions organization's mission, objectives, and services. Additionally, the need for the program, services provided, program staff, target population, the range of participants, the location of the program, the geographic region served, and how often the services were provided (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014). Moreover, the

foundation required the total organization budget, the total program budget, and the amount requested. Lastly, a copy of the organization's 501(c)(3) IRS letter was required (Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, 2014).

#### Partner Agency

Richstone Family Center was the host agency for this grant project. The agency is a nonprofit social services organization operating since 1974. Richstone serves the community in the greater South Bay, predominantly Hawthorne. Richstone's mission is dedicated to preventing and treating child abuse, strengthening families, and preventing violence in families, schools and communities (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

Richstone provides services to children and families who are living in poverty and are impacted by violence, crime, poor housing and low educational expectations (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

Richstone center's services aim at preventing and treating child abuse and strengthening and educating families. Richstone services are facilitated at the center, in the community, and at schools. The services include therapy and counseling for individuals, groups, and families, home visitations, transitional living, parenting and anger managements classes; care-a-van services; after school programs for elementary and middle school students; and support groups for elementary and middle school children (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

Richstone served 13, 907 children and families in 2010-2013, of which 4% were between 0 and 5 years old, 7% between 18 and 24, 15% between 13 and 17, 17% between 10 and 12, 24% between 25 and 64, and 33% between 6 and 9 years old (Richstone Family Center, 2014). In addition, 91% were Latinos, 5% African-

Americans, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% White, and 1% other not identified.

Approximately 50% had an annual household income of \$17,000, 34% between \$17,000 and \$25,000, 12% between \$25,000 and \$35,000, 1% between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and 1% of the population earned \$50,000 and over (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

Although 15% of youth receive essential services such as individual, group, and family counseling, they will benefit from the addition of a college readiness program. The director of programs at Richstone, Jolie Laurent, has given permission to use the agency for this grant proposal thesis. The director has indicated that this program is needed and is excited about expanding services at Richstone for low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students in Hawthorne.

#### Target Population

The target population for the grant project consists of 60 low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students in Hawthorne, California. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) showed that approximately 14% of the total population in Hawthorne consist of adolescents between 14 and 19 years old. The Richstone Family Center in Hawthorne was the host agency for the program. Currently, the center provides services to approximately 14,000 children and families, of which 15% are between the ages of 13 and 17. The program target students in the Centinela Valley Union High School District. The district consists of two high schools, Leuzinger High School and Hawthorne High School. According to the Centinela Valley Union High School District (2014), Leuzinger had 2,639 students, of which 269 were seniors and 130 transferred to a two or four-year college in the 2012-2013 school year. Hawthorne High School had 2,903 students, of

which 291 were seniors and 137 transferred to a two or four-year college in the 2012-2013 school year.

### Needs Assessment

The method for assessing needs was based on information received from recent local and national studies that identified the needs for low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students and barriers to college enrollment. The college readiness program was created by thoroughly searching the positive and negative outcomes of college readiness programs, thus, scholarly journals and government websites were utilized. Additionally, college readiness programs such as The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Youth Institute who serve low-income minority high school students was utilized in designing this program to be comprehensive. YMCA Youth Institute has been successful in providing educational services to low-income minority youth. Evidenced- based methods were assessed to determine the appropriate way to recruit and retain students in the program. The program integrated college readiness practice that was shown to reduce high school dropouts and increase college enrollment among low-income racial and ethnic minority youth. During the program development process, the director of programs of the host agency, Jolie Laurent, was consulted to identify the needs of the target population.

CHAPTER 4  
GRANT PROPOSAL  
Organization Summary

In 1974, the Richstone Family Center was incorporated as a non-profit social services agency. Three years later, the State of California awarded Richstone a grant as one of the first of six child abuse treatment and prevention programs in the state (Richstone Family Center, 2014). With this grant Richstone was established as a comprehensive agency providing services to approximately 70 families a year. In 1980, Richstone was recognized as a neighborhood family center by Los Angeles County Inter-agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect. Since 1980, Richstone has expanded its staff from six to more than 135, as well as the area of service from Hawthorne to the southwest of Los Angeles County and the Greater South Bay. The number of sites offering services has increased from one to six school districts, and a transitional living facility and a satellite office have been opened as well. Throughout this period of rapid growth, Richstone invested 83%-90% of all revenue to directly serve the highest need communities (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

Richstone's mission is to prevent and treat child abuse, strengthen families, and prevent violence in families, schools, and communities (Richstone Family Center, 2014). In accordance with its mission, Richstone provides services to children and families who are living in poverty and are impacted by violence, crime, poor housing and low

educational expectations. Richstone programs are facilitated at the center, in the community, and at schools. The services programs include therapy and counseling for individuals, groups, and families; home visitations; transitional living; parenting and anger managements classes; care-a-van services; after school programs for elementary and middle school students; and support groups for elementary and middle school students (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

Richstone offers services for children from birth to 18 years old and their parents and families. In the period of 2010 to 2013, Richstone served 13, 907 children and families, of which 4% were between 0 and 5 years of age, 7% between 18 and 24, 15% between 13 and 17, 17% between 10 and 12, 24% between 25 and 64, and 33% between 6 and 9 years of age (Richstone Family Center, 2014). In addition, 91% of the client population were Latinos, 5% African-Americans, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% White, and 1% other not identified. Approximately 50% had an annual household income below \$17,000, 34% between \$17,000 and \$25,000, 12% between \$25,000 and \$35,000, 1% between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and 1% of the population earned \$50,000 and over (Richstone Family Center, 2014).

#### Program Description

The college readiness program will be called College Access Program (CAP). The program will be held for one year, starting in August and ending in July. The program will be held at Richstone Family Center in Hawthorne, California. The program will serve 40 low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students during the hours of 3:30pm-6:00pm, Monday through Friday. The program is designed to provide

academic resources, support groups, counseling, and college tours. Parents will have the opportunity to participate in the program.

A computer lab will be available for tutoring, homework assistance, and any school assignment. The computer lab will be open Tuesday through Friday from 3:30pm to 6:00pm. Two tutors will be available to assist students with homework, projects, essay writing, research, subject courses, and study skills. In addition, all students in the CAP will participate in eight workshop sessions. The program coordinator will design and facilitate the student workshops. Workshops will be held once a month on Mondays from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. The following topics will be discussed in the workshops: college application; financial aid; scholarships; Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) review & exam; college campuses; career planning; time management and organizational skills; and library research.

All students in the CAP will participate in three support groups and five college tours. The program coordinator will facilitate the support groups. The program coordinator will facilitate three support groups to empower students by strengthening their self-esteem, self-identity, autonomy, and social skills. The support groups will be held on Mondays from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. In addition, all students and their parents will have the opportunity to visit five post-secondary institutions on Saturdays from 8:30am to 1:30pm. The institutions include California State University, Long Beach; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Southern California; and Loyola Marymount University.

Moreover, counseling will be provided to students based on their needs. Students presenting behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, substance use, or other

emotional challenges will be required to receive counseling once a week for one hour. The license marriage and family therapist will provide counseling to students Tuesday through Friday 5:00pm to 6:00pm after receiving tutoring for one hour and half. Students facing severe behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and substance use will be referred to receive specialized services.

Parents will also participate in the program throughout the year. The program manager will facilitate all parent meetings in English and Spanish if needed. Parent meetings will be held on Mondays from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. Parents and students will participate in an orientation a month before the program begins. During the orientation, an overview of the program, program requirements, and program goals will be presented. Student progress will be discussed in the second parent meeting. The third meeting will cover college enrollment and funding. The last parent meeting will be a focus group in which parents will have the opportunity to evaluate the program. To encourage parents to attend meetings, the program manager will raffle a \$25 gift card at each parent meeting. Parents will have the opportunity to travel with their children to five college campuses. Parents will also have the opportunity to volunteer in the program. Volunteering opportunities include participate in committee meetings with the staff to share concerns and ideas that may help improve the program, and help set up for workshops. At the end of the program, parents will be included in a raffle for a \$75 Ralphs gift card as a form of appreciation.

#### Statement of Need

In the United States, low-income minorities continue to average lower levels of educational attainment compared to middle- and high-income students (Pew Research



Center, 2014). In 2012, 50.9% of low-income high school graduates enrolled in a two or four-year college compared to 58.4% in 2007. Middle and high-income students' rate rose from 64.7% in 2007 to 80.7% in 2012 (Pew Research Center, 2014). In 2012, 88.2% of whites compared to only 39.6% of African Americans and 35.6% of Hispanics attained an associate degree. An estimated 27.6% of Hispanics and 25.4% of African Americans attained a bachelor's degree compared to 91.3% of Whites. In addition, 19.3% of Hispanics and 16.4% of African Americans attained a master's degree compared to 81.5% of whites (Pew Research Center, 2014). Researchers claim that Hispanics and African Americans who lack a bachelors or master's degree are more than likely to encounter economic, social, and psychological problems throughout their life (Stearns & Glennie, 2009).

Low-income racial and ethnic minority students encounter barriers which prevent them from graduating from high school and attaining postsecondary education. The barriers include insufficient parental and school support, lack of motivation and self-confidence, socioeconomic status, lack of social capital in high schools and colleges, and inadequate or insufficient resources (Perna, 2009). Findings have shown an urgent need for intervention during the important stages of the high school years to empower low-income racial and ethnic minority youth to complete high school, enroll in and attain higher education (Somers & Piliawsky, 2011). Program development is necessary to improve the numbers of low-income racial and ethnic minority youth engaging in higher education.

Early intervention programs to reduce high school dropout and increase college enrollment have been used with students at risk of failure in high school (Torres et al.,

2010). Early intervention programs such as college readiness programs offer resources and services with a focus on promoting high school completion and college enrollment (O’Neil et al., 2012). The programs are linked with academic performance, leadership skills, career development, social identity formation, and emotion regulation (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2013). College readiness programs are associated with higher grades generally preventing low-income racial and ethnic minority youth from dropping out of school (O’Neil et al., 2012). These types of programs have addressed structural and institutional barriers relating to access and equity in higher education (Jackson, 2014). College readiness programs generally draw the attention of students and their families to college aspirations, college enrollment, and college attainment (Jackson, 2014). Low-income racial and ethnic minority youth who participate in college readiness programs are likely to complete high school and enroll in college (Abele & Iver, 2011).

The staff at Richstone Family Center understand the value and benefits of high school completion and college enrollment particularly for low-income racial and ethnic minority youth. In 2010-2013, Richstone served 13, 907 children and families of which 15% were between 13 and 17 (Richstone Family Center, 2014). Although 15% of youth receive essential services such as individual, group, and family counseling, they will benefit from the addition of a college readiness program. The center is interested in promoting academic success by promising a program that can reduce high school dropouts and increase postsecondary education for low-income racial and ethnic minority students.

## Program Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to expand services at Richstone Family Center for low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students in Hawthorne, California. There are several goals and objectives that will guide the outcomes of this college readiness program.

Goal 1: To prevent high school dropout and increase academic performance among low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students in Hawthorne, California.

Objective 1: Two tutors will use a computer lab to provide assistance with homework, projects, essay writing, research, subject courses, and study skills.

Objective 2: The program coordinator will periodically review student grades and other progress sheets to evaluate student academic progress throughout the program and at the end of the program.

Objective 3: Should students' grades drop, the program manager will schedule a meeting with the student and parent to discuss ways to improve grades.

Goal 2: To enhance students' knowledge about college enrollment and funding.

Objective 1: The program manager and program coordinator will encourage students to participate in workshops.

Objective 2: The program coordinator will facilitate eight workshops including college application, financial aid, scholarships, SAT review & exam, career planning, library research, time management and organizational skills, and differences between college institutions.

Objective 3: The program coordinator will help seniors complete the college application, financial aid application, and scholarship application. Two tutors will help 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade students fill out a practice application.

Goal 3: To promote psychological well-being among students in the program.

Objective 1: The program coordinator will facilitate three support groups to empower students by strengthening their self-esteem, autonomy, and social skills.

Objective 2: Students presenting behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, substance use among other emotional distress challenges will be required to receive counseling once a week for one hour provided by Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

Objective 3: Students facing severe behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and substance use will be referred by LCSW to receive specialized services.

Goal 4: Increase parent involvement in their child's college preparation process.

Objective 1: Parents will participate in workshops covering program orientation, student progress, and college enrollment and funding.

Objective 2: Parents will participate in five college tours with their children.

Objective 3: Parents will be offered the following volunteer experiences, participate in committee meetings with the staff to share concerns and ideas for the program, and help set up for workshops.

## The Components and Activities of the Program and How They Will Meet the Objectives and Help the Organization Achieve Its Mission

The components and activities meet the goals and objectives of the college access program. The first activity of the program includes a parent and student orientation. The orientation will be held a month before the program's start date. The purpose of the orientation will be to provide an overview of the college readiness program, program requirements, and program goals for students and parents.

The tutoring component meets Goal #1: to prevent high school dropout and increase academic performance. In order to achieve this goal the following objectives will be executed two tutors will use the computer lab to provide assistance with homework, projects, essay writing, research, subject courses, and study skills. In addition, the program coordinator will constantly check students' grades on school website, collect progress and final report cards. The records will be kept to evaluate students' academic progress throughout the program and at the end of the program. Lastly, if students' grades drop, the program manager will schedule a meeting with the student and parent to discuss ways to improve grades.

The student workshop component meets Goal #2: to enhance students' knowledge about college enrollment and funding. To accomplish this goal the following objectives will be performed, the program manager and program coordinator will encourage students to participate in all workshops. The program coordinator will facilitate eight workshops including college application, financial aid, scholarships, SAT review & exam, career planning, library research, time management and organizational skills, and differences between college institutions.

All students in the program will participate in eight workshop sessions.

Workshop one will cover college application process. Seniors will fill out and submit the college application and ninth through eleventh grade students will fill out a practice application. In workshop two will address financial aid, students will gain an understanding of how to fill out a financial aid application. Senior students must submit an application before the financial aid deadline. Workshop three will address scholarships, students will learn how to fill out scholarship applications and all students must submit one application before the workshop finishes. Workshop four will address SAT review and exam, students will gain understanding about the SAT process. Before the workshop finishes, seniors will enroll to take the SAT. Workshop five consist of college campuses, wherein students will gain knowledge about postsecondary institutions. Students will write an essay listing at least five institutions they like to attend and the reason for their preference. Students and parents will have the opportunity to visit five universities.

Workshop six will cover career planning, students will gain an understanding about career choices and career planning. Students will use the computer lab to search for 10 careers of their choice. Workshop seven will consist of time management and organizational skills, wherein students will gain time management strategies and practice organizational skills. Students will practice by using a student planner. Students will use the calendar in the planner to create a daily plan, prioritize, document deadlines, target to be early, focus on just one key task at one time, block out distractions, and set aside time for hobbies. Workshop eight will focus on research, the workshop will be divided in two sessions to give all students the opportunity to use a computer. Students will gain an

understanding and practice how to research for scholarly journals. The program coordinator will use a projector to teach students how to search for scholarly journals.

The support group and college tour component meets Goal #3: to promote psychological well-being among students in the program. To attain this goal, the program coordinator will facilitate three support groups to empower students by strengthening their self-esteem, self-identity, autonomy, and social skills. Students presenting behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, substance use among other emotional distress challenges will be required to receive counseling once a week for one hour. Students facing severe behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and substance use will be referred to receive specialized services.

All students in the program will participate in support groups and college tours. The program coordinator will facilitate the support groups. The support group topics include building healthy relationships, increasing self-esteem, and preventing eating disorders and substance use. In addition, all students and their parents will have the opportunity to visit five post-secondary institutions. The institutions include California State University, Long Beach; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Southern California; and Loyola Marymount University.

The parent workshop component meets Goal #4: to increase parent involvement in their child's college preparation process. To accomplish this goal three objectives will be utilized, parents will participate in workshops covering program orientation, student progress, and college enrollment and funding. Parents will participate in five college tours with their children. Lastly, parents will be offered the following volunteer

experiences; participate in committee meetings with the staff to share concerns and ideas for the program and help set up for workshops.

Parents will participate in an orientation a month before the program start date. During the orientation, an overview of the program, program requirements, and program goals will be presented. Parents will be given opportunities to participate in the program throughout the year. The program manager will facilitate all parent workshops in English and Spanish if needed. Student progress will be discussed in the second parent workshop. The third workshop will cover college enrollment and funding. The last parent workshop will be a focus group in which parents will have the opportunity to evaluate the program. Parents will have the opportunity to travel with their children to five college campuses.

The goals, objectives, components, and activities fulfill Richstone's mission building strong families through programs and services. Richstone strives to respond to the needs of low-income minority children and their families, keep children safe and thriving, give children the tools to be healthy physically, socially and mentally, and give children and youth the tools to achieve academic success (Richstone Family Center, 2014). The center offers after school programs for elementary and middle school students covering homework assistance, tutoring, writing strategies, field trips, and time management and organizational skills.

Based on Richstone's mission and services provided, this college access program will strive to respond to the educational needs of low-income minority high school students. It will keep children safe and thriving during the critical hours of 3:30pm to 6:00pm. The college access program will give students the tools to be healthy physically,



socially and mentally by providing support groups and counseling. Students in the college access program will also be given tutoring services and educational workshops which will help them achieve academic success. Richstone offers after school programs for elementary and junior high students. Therefore, this college access program will help expand services at the center.

#### Program Evaluation and Limitations

Thirteen pre- and post-test surveys, sign in sheets, and students' records will be utilized to evaluate the outcomes of this college readiness program. One pre-test survey will be given to students at the orientation. The survey will evaluate students' knowledge about college readiness and academic performance. In addition, one pre-test survey will be given to parents at the orientation. The survey will evaluate parents' knowledge about college readiness and students' academic performance.

At the beginning of each student workshop, a pre-test survey will be given to each student. The pre-test survey will measure students' knowledge about college readiness specifically college application, financial aid, scholarships, Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), college campus, career planning, library research, and time management and organizational skills. A post-test survey will be given at the end of each workshop, the survey will measure students' knowledge gained after participating in the workshop. In addition, parents will grant permission for the program to use student records. The program coordinator will periodically review student grades and other progress sheets to evaluate student academic progress throughout the program and at the end of the program.

A pre-test survey will be given at the beginning of every support group session and a post-test survey will be given at the end of each support group session to ascertain the knowledge gained after participating in the support group. A sign in sheet will be kept at every workshop, support group session, college tour, and computer lab. It will help keep record of who attended each program components.

At the end of the program, students who participated in eight workshops, three support groups, counseling, and received homework and tutoring assistance throughout the year as indicated by the sign in sheets will be asked to participate in a focus group. The focus group will evaluate students' perception of the benefits of this program and program satisfaction. Parents who attended three parent meetings will be asked to participate in a focus group. The focus group will evaluate parents' perception of the benefits of this program and program satisfaction. The focus group will be facilitated by the external evaluator. The information gathered by the surveys will be analyzed by the external evaluator. The results will be compiled into a report to be provided to the external evaluator for review. The report will be utilized to determine methods to improve the program. The external evaluator will also analyze students' final report cards to evaluate students' academic progress from the beginning of the program to the end of the program.

Students who exit the program early will complete the post-test and program evaluation survey. Their parents will also participate in the program evaluation survey. The survey will evaluate parents' and students' perception of the benefits of this program and program satisfaction. These surveys will entail the same information as the surveys given to parents and students who completed the program. The receptionist at Richstone

will hand out the post-test survey, program evaluation survey, and one confidential envelope. Parents and students will complete both surveys at Richstone, place both surveys in the confidential envelope, and seal the envelope. The receptionist will place the envelope in the external evaluators' mailbox at Richstone.

The college access program's limitations and possible factors that may interfere with achieving the desired objectives include students' lack of participation in workshops, tutoring, and homework assistance. Students dropping out from the program may also interfere with achieving the programs' objectives. Lack of parental support to the student and lack of parental involvement in the program may also interfere with achieving the objectives.

#### Timetable

A complete program timetable has been included in Appendix A.

#### Program Staff

*Program Director:* The director will meet weekly with the full-time social worker to discuss program updates. The director will provide guidance and support to the program manager. The director will be responsible for interviewing prospective workers for the program.

*Program Therapist:* The Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) will provide counseling services to students based on their needs. The LCSW will meet with students once a week if necessary. The LCSW will report any concerns with students to the program director and program manager. The LCSW will be responsible for referring students to receive specialized services.

*Program Manager:* The program manager will oversee the college readiness program. The primary responsibilities will include supervising program coordinator and two tutors, recruiting students for the program, program outreach and advertisement, facilitating workshops, connecting students and families to resources, and purchasing supplies and materials for the program.

*Program Coordinator:* The program coordinator will assist the program manager with program implementation. The primary responsibilities include facilitating workshops and support groups, providing counseling to students, connecting students and families to resources, and participating in college tours.

*After school tutor:* The tutors' responsibilities include assisting students with subject courses, homework, school projects, research, essay writing, and study strategies. Tutors will be responsible for participating in the five college tours.

#### Governing Board List

Richstone Family Center board members include president, Maryann Guthrie; vice president, David Peters; and financial officer and secretary Barbara Bowman. Richstone board members meet every second week of the month for meetings. Most of the board members are highly involved with Richstone. They participate in many in-house and community events. They help with fundraising and community events. Guthrie is a board member for Cheer for Children, a non-profit organization ran by volunteers in the greater South Bay. Guthrie is a business member for Waterfront, a group of community stakeholders in Redondo Beach, California. Peters is a board member for Warren Christopher Scholarship Foundation. He was a founder and board member of Leadership Southern California and a director of the South Bay Wellness

Community. Peters is a President of Bel-Air Country Club, Beverly Hills Land Company, Community Foundation Land Trust, Jimmy Miller Memorial Foundation, and Thelma Pearl Howard Foundation. Bowman is a board member of Convent of the Visitation School, which provides education within a Catholic environment with a goal to prepare students for life beyond their reach (Covent of the Visitation School, 2014). Bowman is also a business member of Sleepy Creek Ranch known as Little Red House. Little Red House is a set of red houses utilized for vacation rental in Cottonwood Canyon, West Cuyama Valley, and Santa Barbara County.

### Budgets

#### Program Budget

A complete line itemized budget has been included in Appendix B.

#### Program Budget Narrative

The proposed total budget for this project is \$219,585 including \$56,755 in-kind resources. The amount requested from the funder is \$162,830.

#### Staffing.

Program Director: The program director at Richstone will dedicate 15 hours a month to the college access program. The director will meet weekly with the program manager to discuss updates of the program. The director will provide guidance and support to the program manager. The director will be responsible for interviewing prospective workers for the program. The director will be paid \$3,600 annually for 15 hours a month with the additional cost of benefits at 14.31% (\$515.16). The total cost for this position is \$4,115.16.

Program Therapist: Candidate must satisfy specific criteria to be eligible for employment consideration (Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and bilingual in Spanish). The LCSW will provide counseling services to students based on their needs. The LCSW will meet with students once a week if necessary. The LCSW will report any concerns with students to the program director and program manager. The LCSW will be responsible for referring students to receive specialized services. The program therapist will work 25 hours a month Tuesday through Friday. The salary for this position is \$12,500.

Program manager: This is a full-time position. Candidate must satisfy specific criteria to be eligible for employment consideration (Master of Social Work (MSW) degree and bilingual in Spanish). The program manager will oversee the college readiness program. The primary responsibilities include supervising program coordinator and two tutors, recruiting students for the program, program outreach and advertisement, facilitation of workshops, connecting students and families to resources, and purchasing supplies and materials for the program. This position will pay \$47,333 with the additional cost of benefits at 14.31% (\$6,773.35) totaling \$54,106.35.

Program Coordinator: The program coordinator position is part-time. The position requires a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree and fluency in Spanish and English. The program coordinator will assist the program manager with program implementation. The primary responsibilities include facilitating workshops and support groups, providing counseling to students, connecting students and families to resources, and participating in college tours. The program coordinator will work 25 hours a week Monday through Friday. The salary for this position is \$20,667.

Part-time after school tutors (2): Candidates must satisfy specific criteria to be eligible for employment consideration (bilingual in Spanish, must possess a high school diploma and be enrolled in a four-year university). The responsibilities include assisting students with subject courses, homework, school projects, research, essay writing, and studying strategies. Tutors will work 15 hours a week Monday through Friday. Tutors will also work the days students visit college institutions. This position will pay \$10,080. The total cost for both tutors is \$20,160.

Fringe Benefits: The rate for fringe benefits is 14.31% for full-time positions. The full-time program manager position amounts to \$6,773.35 totaling \$54,106.35. The program director position amounts to \$515.16 totaling \$7,288.51. Unemployment insurance is 3.3% totaling \$1,921 for the program director and program manager positions (State of California Employment Development Department, 2014). The FICA Tax is 6.2% totaling \$3,609 for the program director and program manager positions (State of California Employment Development Department, 2014). Workers compensation is 7% of the fringe benefits totaling \$4,075 for the program director and program manager positions (State of California Employment Development Department, 2014). Retirement tax is 5% totaling \$2,910 for the program director and program manager positions (State of California Employment Development Department, 2014). The state disability insurance amounts to 1% of the fringe benefits totaling \$582 for the program director and program manager positions (State of California Employment Development Department, 2014).

### Direct Program Expenses

Office supplies: The office supplies include pens, pencils, markers, crayons, highlighters, line paper, multipurpose white and color paper, ink cartridges, note pads, staples, staplers, paper clips, scissors, electric sharpeners, post-it notes, rulers, index cards, clip boards, whiteout, and student planners (12 months x \$100/month = \$1,200).

Equipment: The program budget will cover equipment for personnel and students participating in the program. Two laptops will be purchased for the program personnel. The estimated cost for the laptops is \$1,950 (2 laptops x \$975 = \$1,950). Twelve desktop computers will be purchased for the tutoring and homework lab. The estimated cost for the desktop computers is \$5,400 (12 desktop computers x \$450 = \$5,400). In addition, one projector will be purchased for workshops and presentations. The estimated cost for the projector is \$850.00. The total budget for equipment is \$8,200.

Refreshments: Refreshments will be provided at each parent and student workshop, support group, and college tour. It is projected that 50-60 parents will attend the parent workshops. It is anticipated that 60 students will attend each college readiness workshop, support group, and college tour. Light snacks will be provided to students during tutoring (12 months x \$ 400/month = \$4,800).

Program incentives: A \$15 gift card to various stores and restaurants will be raffled at the end of every workshop and support group (12 months x \$15/month = \$165). Parents will have the opportunity to receive several gift cards for participation and volunteering in the program. A \$25 gift card to various stores will be raffled at each parent workshop for participation, totaling \$100 (4 x \$25 = \$100). A \$75 gift card will



be raffled at the end of the program as a form of appreciation to the parents for volunteering in the program, totaling \$75. Program incentives total \$340.

College field trips: One full size school bus will be rented to transport students and parents to college campuses. The estimated cost for field trips is \$ 1,750 (5 field trips x \$350.00 = \$1,750).

#### Indirect Program Expenses

Administration: The administration is budgeted at Richstones' percentage rate 8% of total direct program expense, totaling \$10,947 for accounting, payroll expenses, and receptionist services.

Evaluation: In order to enhance the validity of the program an external evaluator will be contracted Richstones' rate 8% of total direct program expense, totaling \$10,947.

#### In-Kind Resources

The space and utilities for this college readiness program will be donated in-kind by Richstone Family Center. This contribution is estimated to be \$2,300 a month (12 months x \$2,300/12month = \$27,600). A computer technician will be donated in-kind by Richstone for an estimated cost of \$2,230 a month (12 months x \$2,230/12 month = \$26,760). Three printers will be donated in-kind by Richstone (\$2,395). The total in-kind resources are estimated to be \$56,755.

CHAPTER 5  
LESSONS LEARNED

Program Design

Although high school completion and college enrollment has been increasing, low-income minority students average lower levels of educational attainment compared to middle-and high-income students (Pew Research Center, 2014). In 2012, 50% of low-income high school graduates enrolled in a two or four-year college compared to 58% percent in 2007. In addition, middle and high-income students' rate rose from 65% in 2007 to 80%. Approximately, 88% percent of whites compared to 40% of African Americans and 36% of Hispanics attained an associate degree. Twenty-eight percent of Hispanics and 25% of African Americans attained a bachelor's degree compared to 92% of Whites (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Many community-based programs have been successful at helping prevent high school dropout and increase college enrollment among low-income minority youth (Torres et al., 2010). Most of these programs provide academic preparation, tutoring, career planning, leadership development, social and emotional support, and family involvement (Rose, 2013). For example, college readiness programs generally draw the attention of students and their families to college aspirations, college enrollment, and college attainment (Jackson, 2014). College readiness programs have addressed structural and institutional barriers relating to access and equity in higher education. The

literature shows that college readiness programs have positive educational outcomes for low-income minority youth (Jackson, 2014).

Based on these findings, the focus of this thesis project was placed on developing a college readiness program for low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students in Hawthorne, California. The goal of this college readiness program known as College Access Program (CAP) was to prevent high school dropout and increase college enrollment. CAP's design was modeled after Operation Jump Start (OJS) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

OJS is a community based organization in Long Beach, California, dedicated to help low-income minority youth graduate from high school and attain postsecondary education (OJS, 2014). It was found that 100% of the students receiving services from OJS graduate from high school, 98% attend college immediately after high school, and 94% attend a four-year college or university. OJS programs include educational workshops, college tours, individual case management, scholarships, leadership development, social work services, on-going mentor training, and tutoring. (OJS, 2014).

After carefully reviewing and evaluating OJS's high school graduation and college enrollment rates, some of their phenomenal ideas were adopted for this proposed thesis project. Some of the ideas include tutoring, educational workshops, college tours, and social work services. CAP will offer tutoring services assisting students with homework, projects, essay writing, research, subject courses, and study strategies. Additionally, students will participate in eight educational workshop sessions covering college application, financial aid, scholarships, Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) review & exam, college campuses, career planning, time management and organizational skills,

and research. Students will also participate in five college tours. The institutions include California State University, Long Beach; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Southern California; and Loyola Marymount University. Social work services will also be provided to students. For example, students will receive counseling services based on their needs. Students presenting behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, substance use among other emotional distress challenges will be required to receive counseling once a week for one hour. Students facing severe behavior challenges, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and substance use will be referred to receive professional attention.

AVID is another college readiness program that has created positive educational outcomes for low-income minority youth (Miller et al., 2013). The program supports students by enhancing their study and organizational skills. Students in AVID are provided with skilled tutors to help them with their studies, students participate in college tours, and students are given resources to apply for scholarships, grants, and colleges (Miller et al., 2013).

The AVID program's mission is to increase the number of students prepared for college (Miller et al., 2013). CAP places an emphasis on helping students prepare for college which correlates with AVID's mission. The proposed college readiness program design is modeled after some of AVID's ideas such as supporting students by enhancing their study and organizational skills. Students in AVID participate in tutoring and college tours, and students are given resources to apply for scholarships, grants, and colleges (Miller et al., 2013). As stated earlier, students enrolled in CAP will have the opportunity to receive tutoring services, will participate in several college tours, and they will be able

to apply for college, scholarships, and grants. Additionally, students will practice study strategies, time management and organizational skills workshop. Conducting research on successful programs was helpful in designing this proposed college readiness program. Literature showed services that proved to help low-income high school students complete high school and enroll in college.

#### Host-Agency Selection

It was promptly determined that the ideal agency to implement the program would be Richstone Family Center in Hawthorne, California. The center was selected based on the need for services for high school students and the center's interest in the proposed program. Richstone is the ideal host-agency to implement the proposed program because it is a place in which city residents go to receive a variety of services such as counseling, parenting classes, support groups, after school program for elementary and middle school students among other services. The center was supportive throughout the grant writing process and believes in the importance of creating a college readiness program to prevent high dropouts and increase college enrollment. The president and program manager at Richstone are excited and looking forward to submitting the proposed grant.

#### Identifying Funding Sources

Identifying a funding source for CAP was not a difficult task. Given the focus on education in the United States, locating a funding source that targets low-income minority youth was effortless. However, locating the area of focus that matched with the proposed program was laborious. Most of the foundations focused on science, mathematics, technology, leadership, and visual and performing arts. These areas are a priority for many foundations due to the high demand for Science, Technology,

Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). STEM will provide opportunities for students to gain knowledge in these areas and later pursue a career in related field. The Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation was selected as the funding source because the foundation has an area of focus that meets the goals and components of this proposed program. However, Richstone staff requested to use a different funding source. It took three weeks to decide on which funding source to use. This resulted in a delay in the process. Scheduling one meeting a month may have prevented the delay. In the end, all involved in this project agreed that the grant proposal would be submitted to both the Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation and the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. Necessary changes will be made to the grant proposal in order to meet the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation requirements.

### Budgeting

Creating the budget for CAP was not a laborious task. Outlining the narrative on staffing, in-kind resources, and making the right calculations was essential in creating the program budget narrative. Adding the calculations to the narrative was the most uncomplicated task. However, it was difficult to keep the budget under the amount allowed by Richstone and the granting foundation. Richstone staff did not want the total budget to be over \$150,000 and in-kind resources to be over \$55,000. The Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation funding requirement include total budget \$202,000, in-kind resources \$57,000, and the granting foundation \$145,000. In the end, the total budget for the project was \$202,000, including \$57,000 from in-kind resources, and the amount requested of the granting foundation was \$145,000. It was discovered that keeping lines of communication open with the host agency is important for completing this task. It is

important to follow the host agency's budget and not go over their budget. In addition, creating a budget plan and making the right calculations required time and organization. Yet, creating an outline listing the budget narrative and budget calculations made this process less complicated.

### Grant Writing

The application required a specific description of the program components and activities. One of the questions asked to describe the specific components and activities of the program and how they will be executed. The next question asked to describe how the specific components and activities of the program will meet the objectives and help the organization achieve its mission. These two questions required similar descriptions which led to an overlap of information. Therefore, both sections were combined. This process entailed ample time, dedication, and strong organizational skills. It is important to carefully read all questions in the grant application before answering any question. If questions require similar information, combining the questions and answers is an effective way to avoid an overlap of information.

Moreover, describing how the components, activities, and objectives will help the organization achieve its mission was difficult. Richstone's mission is dedicated to preventing and treating child abuse, strengthening families, and preventing violence in families, schools, and communities (Richstone Family Center, 2014). CAP's goals and objectives seem incompatible. However, the center offers after school programs for elementary and middle school students. The after school programs provide homework assistance, tutoring, writing strategies, field trips, and time management and organizational skills such relate to CAP's components and activities. Based on these

findings, CAP will help expand services at the center and prevent violence in schools and communities. It is critical to utilize a host agency whose mission matches with the proposed project's goals and objectives. CAP's goals and objectives did not necessarily match with the host agency's mission. Therefore, it was crucial to locate services the agency offered that matched with the proposed project. After locating a program that matched with the proposed project, the process became less complicated.

### Implications for Social Work and Policy

The college access program will prove valuable to the social work profession and to the development of new policy to prevent high school dropout and increase college enrollment among low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students. Social work is a profession that takes place at different levels. The CAP has implications at both the micro and macro levels.

At the micro level, it is essential that social worker professionals help student's complete high school and enroll in postsecondary education. As research indicated, low-income minority students average lower levels of educational attainment compared to middle- and high-income students (Pew Research Center, 2014). Social work professionals should become familiar with barriers and protective factors affecting low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students. College readiness programs have been identified as a protective factor that increases high school graduation rates and college attainment. Providing college readiness programs will diminish the academic disparity between low-income ethnic and racial minority students and middle- and high income students. Thus, the development of college readiness programs by social workers in non-profit organizations is needed.



On a macro level, social work professionals should bring awareness of the barriers and protective factors to city council leaders and state and federal policy leaders. Policies that promote an equitable education for low-income ethnic and racial minority high school students should be established. Findings show that the Obama administration has invested over 11 billion of dollars of federal funds on educational reforms to increase high school graduation and college enrollment rates (Palardy, 2013).

For instance, Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) provides opportunities for low-income minority youth to attain higher education (Johnson, 2014). HEOA provides financial aid in forms of grants, loans, and work study for low-income minority youth. HEOA funds post-secondary institutions such as trade schools, colleges, and graduate and professional schools (Johnson, 2014). This policy is necessary to encourage low-income racial and ethnic minority students to enroll in college and attain postsecondary education. Social work professionals are in position to advocate for state and federal policies that allow low-income ethnic and racial minority high school students to have equal access to academic resources as middle- and high-income students.

### Conclusion

High school dropout and lack of college enrollment is an issue that affects many low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students in the United States (Palardy, 2013). Some low-income racial and ethnic minority students with learning disabilities drop out or lack college enrollment. For example, research has shown that low-income racial and ethnic minority students with learning disabilities are more likely to struggle with high school courses and may have significantly lower grades compared to students in general education (Ahrens et al., 2010). Race and ethnicity is another individual

predisposing factor associated with high school dropout and college attainment. Society holds low expectations for students based on their ethnic and racial background. As a result, it negatively impacts youth's academic achievement (Blustein et al. 2010).

Parental involvement is a factor related to high school dropout and non-enrollment in college (Quezada et al., 2013). Parent involvement has been measured by parents' relationship with the educational system such as attendance at parent-teacher meetings, school workshops, and their child's activities, and helping with homework and projects, as well as their relationship with the child (Viramontez-Anguiano, 2014). Parent participation makes a significant difference in whether a child graduates from high school and enrolls in higher education (Quezada et al., 2013). Ou and Reynolds (2012) stated that low-income racial and ethnic minority youth attending urban schools are less likely to complete high school, enroll in college, and attain post-secondary education. Most urban school districts tend to have lower levels of funding and are less able to provide college preparatory courses. Thus, those factors may mediate the effect on high school graduation among low-income racial and ethnic minority youth (Palardy, 2013).

Findings showed that college readiness programs have served as a resource to prevent high school dropout and attain postsecondary education (Palardy, 2013). Many low-income racial and ethnic minority youth have limited access to adequate curricula and college readiness resources that may enable them to enroll in higher education (Jackson, 2014). College readiness programs provide numerous opportunities needed such as academic preparation, leadership development, mentoring, financial assistance, social and emotional support, and family involvement (Rose, 2013). College readiness programs generally draw the attention of students and their families to college

aspirations, college enrollment, and college attainment (Jackson, 2014). Additionally, college readiness programs have addressed structural and institutional barriers relating to access and equity in higher education. For decades, college readiness programs have been successful at preventing high school dropouts and helping students enroll in postsecondary education (Palardy, 2013)

The grant writing project was demanding, but, the project taught valuable skills. Knowing and understanding the grant writing process is an important skill to have. Overall, the proposed college readiness project will greatly contribute to the lives of low-income racial and ethnic minority high school students and their parents.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
COLLEGE TOURS, TUTORING, WORKSHOPS, SUPPORT GROUPS,  
COUNSELING, PARENT MEETINGS TIMELINE

## Program Timeline for the Year

August through July

Date/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:30am – 1:30pm						College Tours
3:30pm – 6:00pm		Tutoring	Tutoring	Tutoring	Tutoring	
3:30pm – 5:00pm	Student Workshops					
3:30pm – 5:00pm	Student Support Groups					
5:00pm – 6:00pm		Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	
5:00pm – 6:30pm	Parent Meetings					
5:00pm – 6:30pm	Parent/ Student Orientation					

APPENDIX B  
LINE-ITEM BUDGET

<b>Project Budget</b>	
<b>Richstone Family Center</b>	
	<b>Total Project Budget</b>
	August 2015 - July 2016
	<b>Year 1</b>
<b>PROGRAM STAFFING EXPENSES</b>	
One Program Director	\$ 4,115
Licensed Clinical Social Worker/Program Therapist	\$ 12,500
One Master Level Social Worker/Program Manager @ 100% FTE	\$ 54,106
One Master Level Social Worker/Program Coordinator @ 50% PTE	\$ 20,667
Two Tutors @ 50% PTE	\$ 20,160
<b>FRINGE BENEFITS</b>	
Unemployment Insurance 3.3%	\$ 1,921
FICA Tax 6.2%	\$ 3,609
Workers Compensation 7%	\$ 4,075
Retirement Tax 5%	\$ 2,910
State Disability Insurance 1%	\$582.00
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM STAFFING AND FRINGE BENEFITS EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 124,646</b>
<b><i>DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES</i></b>	
Office Supplies	\$ 1,200
Equipment	\$ 8,200
Refreshments	\$ 4,800
Program Incentives	\$ 340
College Field Trips	\$ 1,750
<b>TOTAL DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 16,290</b>
<b>Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$ 140,936</b>
<b><i>TOTAL INDIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES</i></b>	<b>\$ 21,894</b>
<i>Administration</i>	\$ 10,947
<i>Evaluation</i>	\$ 10,947
<b>Total Direct and Indirect</b>	<b>\$ 162,830</b>
	\$ -
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 162,830</b>
<b>IN-KIND SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT</b>	<b>\$ 56,755</b>
Space and Utilities	\$ 27,600
Computer Technician	\$ 26,760
Three Printers	\$ 2,395
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 219,585</b>



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