

Kansas City Scholars Program: Year One Report

Highlights from year one program evaluation

The Upjohn Institute, with support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, evaluated the initial launch year of the Kansas City Scholars program. Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders during two site visits and an analysis of administrative data supplied by the Kansas City Scholars program produced the following highlights.

Scholars were racially diverse and showed high academic achievement, along with meeting the program's income requirements.

Scholarship Design and Goals

Traditional

250 awards for currently enrolled 11th graders. Awardees receive up to \$10,000 per year, paid directly to the college, renewable for up to five years.

Adult Learner

200 awards for adults age 24 and older who have previously earned at least 12 college credits but did not receive a postsecondary degree or credential. Awardees receive up to \$5,000 per year, paid directly to the college, renewable for up to five years.

College Savings Match (CSM)

1,000 one-time awards annually for 9th graders, who receive \$25 in a 529 College Savings Plan. Of these, 50 will be selected to receive a 4-to-1 match, not to exceed \$5,000, with the potential for an additional \$2,000 for students who achieve college-ready milestones during high school.

Overall Highlights

The program largely met its target population goals

Scholars were racially diverse and showed high academic achievement, along with meeting the program's income requirements.

Most award recipients were female

Women made up around three quarters of the recipients of the traditional and adult learner scholarships.

For the traditional scholarship, racial disparities appear between application and award

Hispanic/Latino students were over-represented among traditional awardees relative to traditional applicants. White and African-American students were under-represented among awardees relative to applicants.

For the traditional scholarship, the scholarship affected applicants' college choices

Traditional applicants indicated that an award would bump their first college choice from a two-year to a four-year college.

The adult learner scholarship and college savings match were undersubscribed

The undersubscription of these two components led Kansas City Scholars to increase the number of traditional scholarship awards from 250 to 285 and the amount of the college savings match from \$25 to \$50.

Traditional Scholarship Program

Key finding

Applicants and awardees appear to fit with program goals to serve low- and modest-income students who can succeed in college.

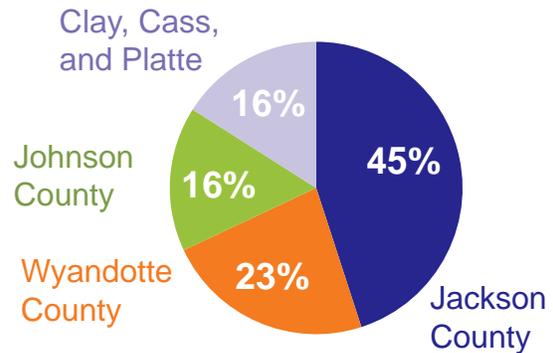
Key question

What led to the lower conversion rates from applicants to awardees for African American participants?

	Applicants	Awardees
Target	1,000	250
Actual	1,083	287

KCS met its goals around applicants and awardees.

Almost half of applicants came from Jackson County.



	Applicants	Awardees
African American	28%	24%
Latino or Hispanic	26%	35%
Parents w/o 4 year degrees	71%	83%
Avg GPA	3.4	3.6
Avg ACT	22	22

KCS was able to select juniors who come from low and modest households with strong academic achievement.

Winning the award shifted preferences away from community colleges.

36% of applicants preferred community colleges when they assumed they would not win the award.

7% of applicants preferred community colleges when they assumed they would win the award.

Adult Learner Scholarship Program

Key finding

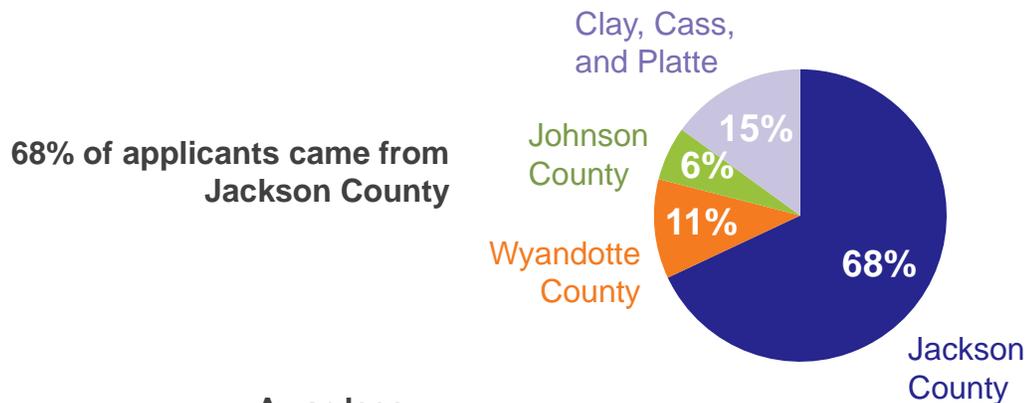
There were fewer applicants than expected, which limited the number of awards that could be made available.

Key question

What are the levers for increasing application numbers, especially outside of Jackson County?

	Applicants	Awardees
Target	800	200
Actual	96	90

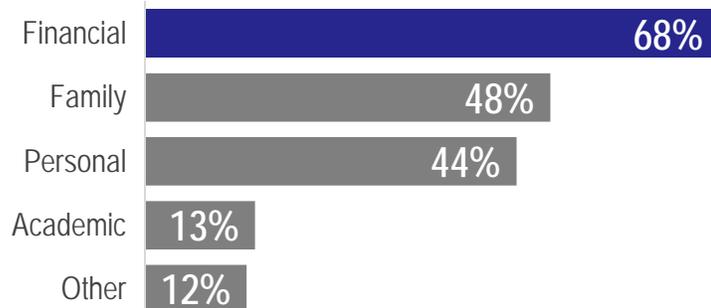
KCS did not meet its goals around applicants or awardees.



	Awardees
Average age	36
Female	77%
Person of color	77%
Parents w/o 4 year degrees	80%
Avg. GPA in postsecondary	2.8

The vast majority of awardees' parents did not complete a four-year degree.

Finances were the most reported reason for not completing their original degree



College Savings Account/Match Program

Key finding

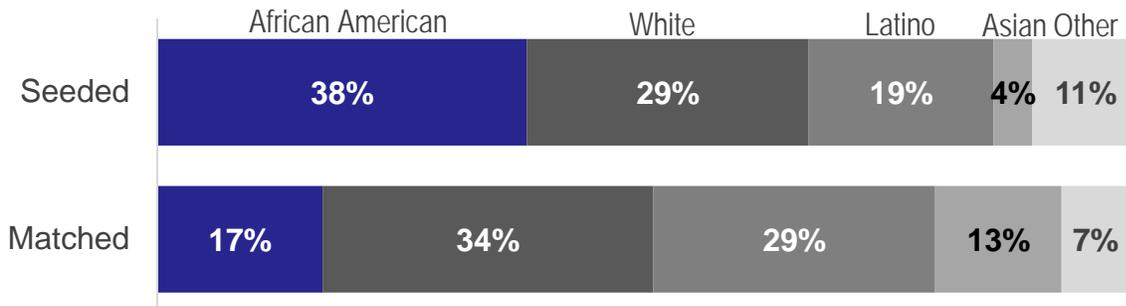
There was some reported confusion among applicants about the difference between the college savings account and college savings match programs.

Key question

How can KCS better communicate the nuances of this program to potential participants?

	Applicants	Match Awardees	KCS did not receive their expected number of applications, but exceeded its goals on the number of matched accounts.
Target	2,000	50	
Actual	254	70	

African Americans were under-represented in the matched pool.



Match awardees were more evenly distributed among counties.

