



Overview

ASPIRE (Access to Student assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone) is Oregon's official mentoring program to help students access education and training beyond high school. Students receive information about college options, admission, and financial aid from trained and supportive ASPIRE volunteer mentors who work one-on-one with them throughout the year. Beginning with just four pilot schools in 1998, **ASPIRE has expanded to 115 sites across Oregon.** In the 2007-08 academic year, ASPIRE trained **1,404 adult volunteers who mentored 11,934 students** in pursuit of their educational dreams.

Changing Oregon's Future

- ASPIRE educates students and families about the grant and scholarship application process and other options for financing postsecondary education.
- Students who participate in ASPIRE receive one-on-one mentoring from trained ASPIRE advisors. Other students at the site receive up-to-date information on scholarship and financial assistance at workshops that are open to everyone.

ASPIRE has proven to have a positive effect on students: **Coos County high school administrators credit ASPIRE and its partners with creating a strong college-going culture.** In Coos County, where nearly all high schools are ASPIRE sites, an impressive 31 percent of the county high school graduates attend community college, compared to 13 percent for the state average.

Creating Community Investment

- ASPIRE provides the tools to recruit, train, and implement volunteer advisor programs, helping each site build a sustainable community of mentors who are sincerely invested in students' futures.
- Mentors are prepared and qualified to assist each student with postsecondary education planning, career choices, financial aid, college admissions, and scholarship applications.
- The program brings together students, school staff, community volunteers, and parents to help students overcome obstacles in continuing education.

Cultivating Achievement

- ASPIRE is a proactive strategy to encourage all students to further their education, set goals, and achieve career dreams. In 2007, applicants for OSAC scholarships from ASPIRE sites received significantly more assistance compared to applicants from schools without the ASPIRE Program.
- ASPIRE is successful in reaching first-generation college students: of senior students surveyed, 42 percent had mothers and 36 percent had fathers who did not attend college.
- Advisors provide the necessary resources needed for students to have a successful transition after high school graduation.

For more information, contact Lori Ellis 541-687-7471 or lorianne.m.ellis@state.or.us



Reaching Oregon Students

Governor Kulongoski and the 2007 Legislature passed a bill recognizing ASPIRE as a state program and, for the first time, procured state funds for the program. It is also funded through unique public and private partnerships such as AmeriCorps, The Oregon Community Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, Oregon GEAR UP, Department of Human Services, and Oregon College Access Network.

Specialized Trainings Delivered to ASPIRE Sites by ASPIRE Administrative Staff in 2007-08

- Training to 191 principals, counselors, and other related school personnel in 61 Administrative Overview sessions
- Training to 789 adult mentors (volunteers) in 120 Introduction to ASPIRE sessions
- Training to 892 adults and 1,674 students in 138 College 101 sessions regarding the basics of college and postsecondary access
- Training to 1,622 adults and 2,895 students in 79 Finding Funds for Oregon Students sessions regarding financial aid and scholarships

Program Outputs for 2007-08

- 11,943 students received individual mentoring
- 37,702 contacts were made with students, who received educational and financial aid information and/or drop-in assistance
- 1,404 volunteers participated as mentors, team leaders, or resource specialists
- Volunteers leverage state and private funds, providing free services valued at \$821,761

Effects on students

According to the 2007-08 survey of senior ASPIRE students:

- 84% applied to at least one college, university, or technical/vocational program
- 84% plan to continue their education next fall or sometime in the future
- 69% took the SAT
- 72% filed a FAFSA
- 67% applied for at least one other scholarship, not administered by OSAC
- 46% applied for at least one OSAC scholarship

ASPIRE is successful in reaching first-generation college students. Of students surveyed, 42 percent have mothers and 36 percent have fathers who did not attend college; 32 percent self-identify as students of color and 46 percent are from moderate or low-income households.

Effects on school culture

According to a 2007-08 survey of adult ASPIRE Advisors:

- 87% describe their experience as rewarding or highly rewarding
- 71% plan to continue volunteering in future years

ASPIRE also makes an impact on the college-going culture of the school. Applicants for scholarships administered by OSAC from ASPIRE schools had lower incomes, lower parent education levels, and lower grade point averages than those at non-ASPIRE schools, and were more likely to receive a scholarship.