

As a parent with two kids in college right now, I can tell you that I like scholarships! After completing her associate's degree at NCCC, Abrielle chose Friends University to finish her bachelor's degree. Friends is a private institution which means a pretty hefty cost of attendance – unless the student earns scholarships. Abrielle earned an academic scholarship, as well as theatre, music, and cheer team awards. These nice awards made the cost more affordable.

Alayna is in her first year at NCCC now and she too earned an academic scholarship as well as scholarship from a local business that together took care of all of her expenses! She is looking at Kansas State University as a transfer student and we are hoping for some scholarships there.

Yes, I'm shamelessly bragging on my kids. Please forgive me, but they turned out pretty great.

You probably think this article is about all the wonderful scholarships NCCC offers. And we do offer a lot of scholarships - academic, athletic, activity, and service scholarships just to name a few. Plus there are many awards through our NCCC Foundation who help students in a variety of ways by major, or book scholarships, or by their county, or financial situation.

But the College itself earns a few scholarships from time to time to help it pay for advancements, and recently we got some fantastic awards. I'm talking about grants. We have had some wonderful grants come our way this year!

Grants come from a variety of sources, the federal or state government, private foundations, and individuals. Like scholarships, they often have to be earned and maintained. If one of my daughters fails to fulfill the requirements of the scholarship, she could lose it. Grants often work the same way with timelines, expectations, and audits. So it's not "free money," to use wherever we want, but rather funds towards a specific expectation that can be lost if those expectations are not met.

Whether one agrees with the concept of grants or not, at the College it is important for us to capture as many dollars as we can and spend it right here in our service area. Grants allow us to provide extra services to specific groups who need them the most, expand capacity, buy equipment and supplies, start new programs, hire people, renovate facilities, add enrollment, and stretch our general fund dollars as far as we can. NCCC has been quite prolific over the years capturing grants for Neosho County and beyond.

We host the state Adult Basic Education (ABE) grant for the region that brings in \$467,309 in resources each year and employs 12 people. ABE provides, among other things, free help with high school equivalency, literacy, and other basic skills.

We host Talent Search, a federal program that focuses on middle school and high school students with interventions that helps them see the possibility of a college education and the benefits of that education. Talent Search often targets low income families and first-generation students, those who may think incorrectly that college is out of their reach. This grant brings in \$363,260 annually and employs four people.

Upward Bound helps specific segments of high school students with the prospects of attending college with the goal of getting those students on the path to a career. It employs three people and brings in \$335,956 into the service area each year.

The federal Student Support Services grant focuses on college students who statistically speaking have a more difficult time completing college. On our campus we have named this grant STARS and it was recently renewed for five years! This year it brought in \$307,031 and employs five people.

We also receive the Carl Perkins Grant each year. This federal program helps the College advance technical education. These dollars pay for new equipment, professional development of our instructors, and help us expand programs into new areas. For instance, we were able to use Perkins dollars to add a construction instructor to the LaHarpe Center, and a welding instructor at Ottawa High School. This year we earned \$97,483 from this grant.

We earned the Heartland Works grant (\$162,646) and the Native American Youth Activities grant (\$152,803) to help folks in our northern service area and beyond. We won the Pathways to Healthy Kansas grant (\$10,000), Kansas Technical Education Grant (\$16,824), SEK Library System grant (\$2,287), and the Nursing Initiative Grant (\$31,368). Recently we received an American Eagle Outfitters grant (\$10,000) to support our food pantries.

But beyond these grants, many of which we have hosted for quite a while, it's been a great few months for NCCC in receiving NEW grants, both big and small. And like my daughters I hope you'll indulge me bragging for a bit.

With our partners USD 366 Woodson, USD 257 RRTC- Iola, USD 258 Humboldt, USD 256 Marmaton Valley, NCCC earned the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant. Specifically, NCCC will receive \$128,700 toward two high-tech anatomy simulation tables, one for the Chanute campus and one for the Ottawa campus.

We recently earned a series of grants for two new programs that we intend to launch in fall of 2021. The new programs will be Aerostructures, which get people certified to make airplane parts, and Industrial Maintenance Technician, a much-needed program for our area manufactures to keep their machines running and install new ones. To help start those programs we won a USDA grant (\$89,613), a Carl Perkins Reserve Grant (\$88,635), a JIST Grant (\$13,251), and a different USDA grant written with our partners at USD 413 and USD 257 for hardware and software (\$21,700).

But the big news this month was a successful federal Title III Strengthening Institutions grant through the US Department of Education. This grant will help NCCC start a number of new workforce programs over the next five years, programs that without help we would not be able to afford to start. This grant brings in \$450,000 a year for five years and will ultimately employ up to nine people. We will be announcing the programs in the months and years ahead. In fact, we will be offering one of the programs in fall of 2021, so stay tuned!

NCCC has earned \$2,748,866 this year alone and employs 36 people in the area, all through funds captured from outside the service area and the state. Not a bad haul for the year! While these dollars are all earmarked for specific purposes thanks to the rules and conditions of the respective grants, the investment represents a lot of enrichment in our communities. Enriching our communities and our students' lives is our mission statement.

With other resources stagnate or sometimes falling, while costs and workforce needs are rising, it's important to have the opportunity to earn some help through grants. NCCC is very fortunate to have a

great grant-writing team lead by Brenda Krumm, Dr. Sarah Robb, and a host of others, without which we would not be able to help so many people. Thank you to them!

And to my daughters – I'm so proud of you and keep those grades up!

If you have any questions about this article, or anything else. Please contact me at binbody@neosho.edu.