

# Cal State Northridge gets \$1 million grant

Posted by Carmen Ramos Chandler  
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The path to a college education can seem littered with obstacles, particularly if you are the first in your family with such dreams. Add financial limitations, and college can appear out of reach.

Cal State Northridge has received a \$1 million, four-year grant from the federal government to help make college dreams a reality for 50 San Fernando Valley high school students from low-income families.

The Upward Bound project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, will have CSUN students and project staffers working closely with students and counselors at Reseda, Birmingham and Verdugo Hills high schools to make sure that students in grades nine through 12 have the skills and support they need to go to and succeed in college.

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The program will provide participants with academic instruction in such core subjects as mathematics, lab science, composition, literature and foreign languages.

Additionally, participants in the program will receive one-on-one tutoring, academic counseling and mentoring as well as cultural enrichment opportunities and advice on such topics as financing a college education and admission requirements.

The high school students will regularly visit college campuses around the Southland, including a five-week stay at Cal State Northridge.

"It's intended to give them a taste of what going to college is really like, and at the same time demystify the college," Hernandez said.

In the meantime, the program will provide the high school students' parents with information about early college preparation, the college application process — including financial aid — and, most importantly, how to support their child's dream of getting a college education.

"First-generation college students

often have to battle the pressure to give up school to work to support the family," Hernandez said. "We have to help some families realize that a college education doesn't just benefit the one child, but the whole family. A professional career will ultimately increase that student's lifetime earnings, which in turn affects his or her family."

The program is expected to start this fall.

Hernandez, who was the first in his family to get a college education, said the program presents "a good opportunity to have a positive impact on people's lives.

"These students are going to develop an enthusiasm for college that will become contagious," he said. "All it takes is one person to be the first one to go to college, and before you know it, their siblings, friends and other people they come in contact with are going to want to follow in their footsteps."

Carmen Ramos Chandler handles public relations for CSUN. She posted this story June 18 to the Northridge hub on valleynews.com.