



The Pell Institute

For the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education

2026

Strategic Partnerships Prospectus



Dedicated to supporting college access and success for low-income and first-generation students through unimpeachable research and statistics.

pellinstitute.org



2026 Strategic Partnerships Prospectus

The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (“Pell Institute”) seeks strategic partnerships to advance its work for the upcoming year. Founded in 1993 as the research arm of the Council for Opportunity in Education, the Pell Institute’s mission is *to support college access and success for low-income and first-generation students through unimpeachable research and statistics.*

Through its mission, the Pell Institute conducts research projects, develops reports, and sponsors multiple meetings annually. The Institute is known for its *Higher Education Indicators* reports, hosts the annual *Student Financial Aid Research Network* conference, maintains the *Opportunity Matters Journal*, and holds 50 years of historical data on higher education opportunity downloadable from the Pell website (pellinstitute.org).

With your help, we intend to grow our work and our footprint.

Why it Matters

Expectations for a college degree are at a 50-year low—only one-third of first-generation high school students plan to earn a bachelor’s degree, despite its significant lifetime wage premium (Simone & Christopher, 2005). Your partnership will help us expand our research, gain a deeper understanding, and address this trend.

Priority Initiatives:

- Refresh the Pell website with dashboards to make our data accessible to researchers and policymakers.
- Release the next edition of the *Higher Education Indicators*, highlighting where progress has been achieved and the continuing barriers to higher education access for first-generation and low-income students.
- Generate original research focusing on social and economic mobility, the motivation of students to continue into college, and workforce outcomes.

Research and Dissemination – Telling Opportunity Stories with Data

Your sponsorship will allow us to produce timely research and statistics focused on higher education opportunity at a time when the federal government cuts back on data and statistics. The Research Agenda for the Pell Institute focuses on four priorities over the next three years. They include the following:

1. Monitoring National Progress in Providing Higher Education Opportunity,
2. Examining the Impact of TRIO Programs,
3. Advancing Research on Student Financial Aid for Low-Income and First-Generation Students, and
4. Innovation in Methods to Better Advance Research on Higher Education Opportunity.



2026 Strategic Partnerships Prospectus (cont.)

By sponsoring a product, you will be recognized in the produced publication and highlighted on the partnerships area of the Pell website for a year. If multiple products are being made, sponsors will also have the opportunity to select from a slate of topics.

PRODUCT	SPONSORSHIP AMOUNT
Pell Research Brief	\$5,000
Pell Full Report* co-sponsor/partner	\$20,000
Pell Full Report* sole sponsor/partner	\$50,000
Higher Education Opportunity Dashboard on Pell Website	\$50,000
National Poll focusing on College Costs or Higher Education Opinions	\$75,000
* This next year, the Pell Institute plans on releasing the 2026 Indicators of Higher Education Equity, First Generation Student Indicators, and a Return on Investment report for TRIO programs, depending on sponsor interest.	

Student Financial Aid Research Network Conference

We are also seeking support for the upcoming Student Financial Aid Research Network (SFARN) conference scheduled for July 14-16, 2026, at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. Each year, financial aid researchers gather to discuss topics such as how students can afford college, barriers to college access, financial insecurity, housing insecurity, welfare and higher education, the coordination of federal/state/institution aid programs, and other related issues. The following conference events are available for sponsorship.

EVENT	SPONSORSHIP AMOUNT
Panel on Topic of Interest	\$5,000
Coffee or Snack Break	\$7,500
Breakfast	\$10,000
Lunch	\$15,000
Reception	\$25,000



2026 Strategic Partnerships Prospectus (cont.)

Regardless of whether you wanted to sponsor a specific event at the conference, these are the benefits partners would receive at the following funding levels:

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES AND BENEFITS	BRONZE (Less than \$10,000)	SILVER (\$10,000)	GOLD (\$15,000)	PLATINUM (\$25,000)
Option to speak at hosted session/event (if applicable)	X	X	X	X
Logo featured on 2026 SFARN webpage		X	X	X
Complimentary Registrations	1	3	4	5
Select on-site signage	Associated with the sponsored session/event only	X	X	X
Logo in digital conference program	Associated with the sponsored session/event only	X	X	X
Logo featured on 2026 SFARN promotional materials			X	X
5 Minutes Talk to Open and Close the Conference*				X

* Or 5 minutes to open and close the day, if there are multiple Platinum sponsors.

Opportunity Champion Package Sponsorship

For partners that identify with the mission of the Pell Institute and wish to be involved in our work, we would like to offer special recognition to those willing to provide financial sponsorship of \$100,000 or above. In recognition of this support, the sponsor can select any report or product (except a Poll) that Pell produces as a sole sponsor, receive platinum recognition at the SFARN conference (with the choice of event to sponsor), and will be recognized on the Pell website as an Opportunity Champion Sponsor for 3 years.

References:

Simone, S., & Christopher, E. (2005). *Future education expectations of high school students decline to the lowest level in 20 years for both first-generation and continuing generation students.* <https://www.pellinstitute.org/resources/future-ed-expectations-2022>



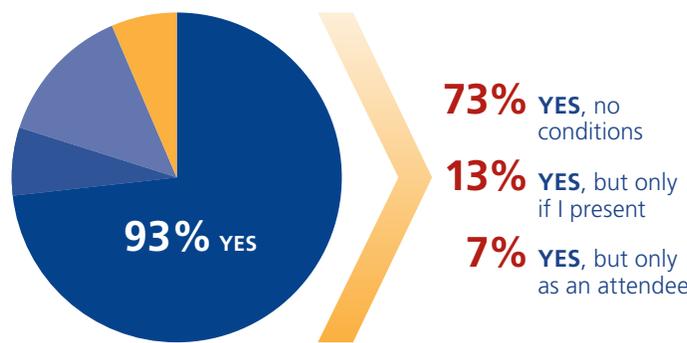
2026 Strategic Partnerships Prospectus (cont.)

SFARN Conference Evaluation Highlights

Would you recommend SFARN to your peers and colleagues?



Are you interested in coming to next year's SFARN?



Initiatives/Requests for Next Conference:

- More networking opportunities.
- Roundtable discussions.
- Engagement with the local state and college financial aid offices.
- More scenarios and real/life examples.

Number of Attendees:

73

Participant Satisfaction Scores (5-Point Scale)

