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[GA Partnership for Excellence in Education names Fall 2018 College Access Grant Winners](#) [1]

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Eight Chambers of Commerce will use funds to encourage post-secondary education

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September 24, 2018 - The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education has selected eight local chambers of commerce as winners of the *Fall 2018 College Access Grant*. These \$3,000 mini-grants to local chambers of commerce are granted to leverage their visibility, voice, and influence in efforts to recruit more high school graduates - especially low-income - to enroll in college and encourage more adults to return to college.

"We know from research that the majority of job postings today require at least an associate's degree," said Dr. Steve Dolinger, president of the Georgia Partnership. "We've been really pleased by the initiatives developed by previous grant winners and are excited to see how these eight chambers of commerce use these grant funds to encourage high school students and adults to further their education. Successfully completing high school and some form of post-secondary education will not only benefit individuals and their families, but will also enhance the health of the communities in which they live and ultimately accrue benefits across the state."

Spring 2018 College Access Grant Winners

- **Adel-Cook County Chamber of Commerce** is a second-time grant winner and will build on its previous work by hosting *College, Career, and Work Ready* workshops and a *College Education Matters!* event to encourage career goals, raise awareness of post-secondary education options, and improve job skills among local high school students.
- **Douglas County Chamber of Commerce**, along with the Douglas Economic Development Authority, will host an In-Demand Career Expo for all 9th graders to learn what job opportunities exist in the area, along with corresponding salaries and educational requirements.
- **Gordon County Chamber of Commerce** will host events with both local school systems (*Gordon County Schools* and *Calhoun City Schools*) including Future Fest 2018, College and Career Tours, and a rising professionals workshop.
- **McIntosh County Chamber of Commerce** will host an "Educate McIntosh" event informing students, parents, and other adults about educational resources and opportunities in McIntosh County.

- **Sylvester-Worth County Chamber of Commerce** will convene local industry and business leaders alongside high school seniors in a “Senior Life Hacks” seminar, which will provide information on the workforce opportunities and educational requirements and resources in the community.
- **Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce** will be supporting 160 students at the Coastal Plains Charter High School by providing the counseling and tools they need to transition from high school to post-secondary education and the workforce.
- **Walton County Chamber of Commerce** will target adults, supporting their attendance at a local job fair that includes employment opportunities, certification and training programs through Athens Technical College, and social and medical support programs available in their community.
- **Washington County Chamber of Commerce**, in partnership with Oconee Fall Line Technical College, will bring students to tour Trade and Industrial programs of high need in their region.

Examples of how Spring 2018 grant winners used funds include:

Adel-Cook County Chamber of Commerce promoted connection between post-secondary education and a qualified workforce to local business members, connected with school staff to provide targeted messaging to students about the importance of continuing their education, and facilitated a College Education Matters day including college tours.

Bainbridge-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce planned a Career Fair exposing students to the industries and careers available in their own county. Together with the Parent Involvement Coordinator of the local school system and the staff of the local college, they planned events for low-income students and their families on topics such as the college and financial aid application processes and scholarship opportunities.

Greater Hall County Chamber of Commerce organized and hosted a Career Path Day for city and county high school students, with local employer participants emphasizing the educational requirements of their positions. The Chamber also facilitated students’ tours to three local industries with apprenticeship programs offering certification and college tuition.

Metter-Candler County Chamber of Commerce started a pilot “College Access Boot Camp” program targeting first-generation college students and coached them on how to overcome their challenges to college enrollment and completion.

Newton County Chamber of Commerce hosted four resource fairs for adults interested in returning to school, centered around manufacturing career opportunities, resume and application prep, workplace testing prep, and industry and manufacturing lab tours.

Walker County Chamber of Commerce supported a program built between the school system and Georgia Northwestern Technical College, opening up a viable and in-demand career path for students. With their grant, they also invested in technology necessary to make this pathway a reality.

“The Gordon County Chamber of Commerce is excited to partner with our area schools and receive the College Access Grant through the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education,” said Kathy Johnson, Chamber President/CEO. “This mini-grant will allow our schools to expose hundreds of 8th-12th graders to post-secondary and career opportunities. These experiences will help to create relevance, purpose, and hope for students who are the future of Gordon County.”

For more information about the *College Access Grant*, please contact Merrill Wilcox at mwilcox@gpee.org [6] or 404-223-2463.

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