



The Great **ADMISSIONS REDESIGN**

Q&A Webinar: Eligibility and Requirements

Presented by:

Melanie Heath

Strategy Director for Access

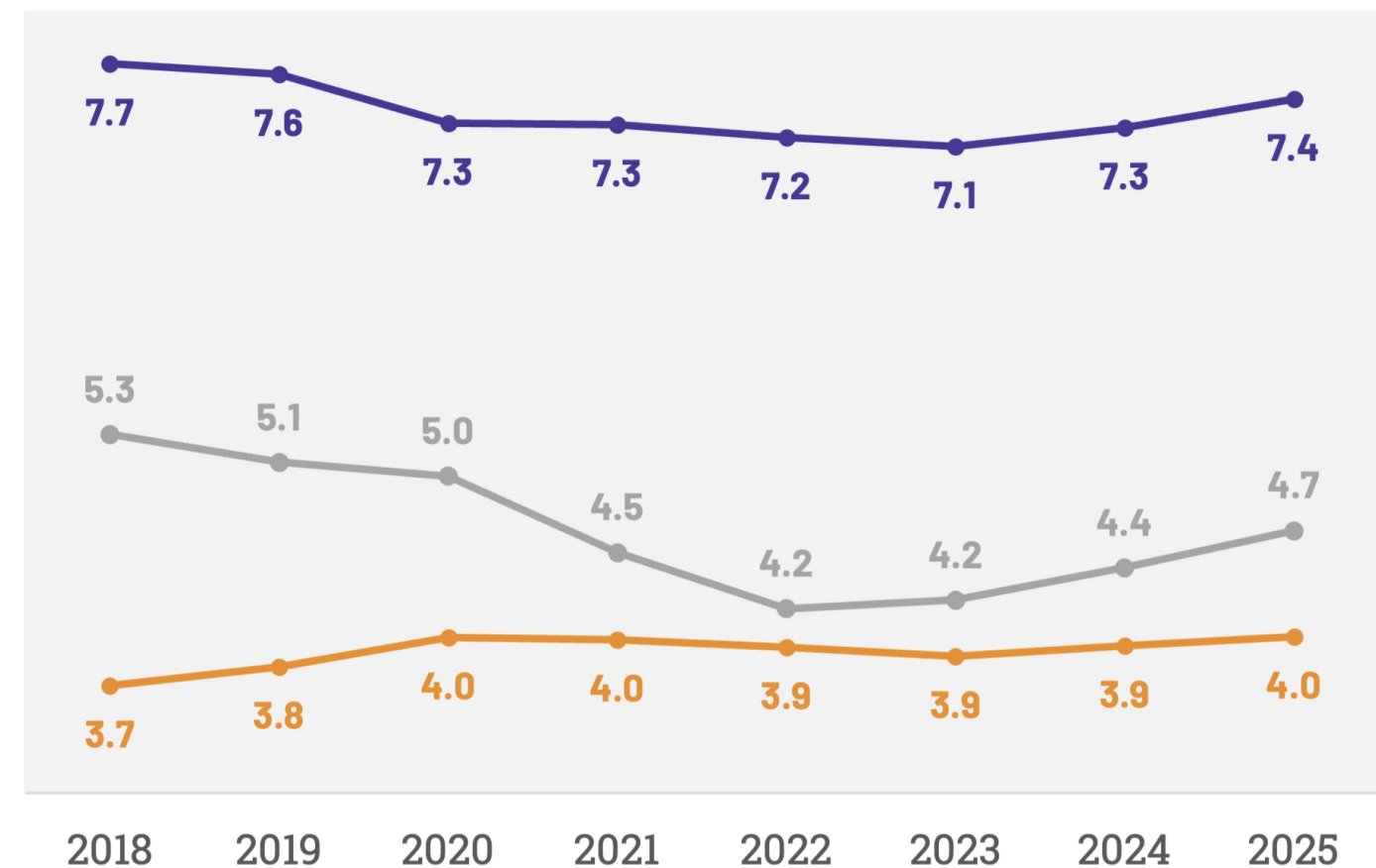


When it comes to enrollment, higher education is at a crossroads.

- **Demographic cliff**
- Year-over-year **declines in freshman enrollment** following the COVID-19 pandemic
- Shifting **test policies** for admissions
- **Supreme Court ruling** on affirmative action
- Volatility in **federal funding**
- Waning public trust around the **value** of higher education and concerns around affordability

Total Spring Enrollment by Sector
(Millions)

Public 4-year Private, Nonprofit 4-year Public 2-year

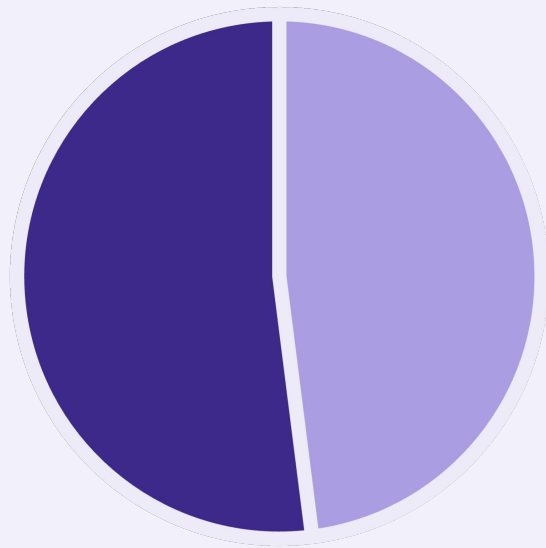


Source: [National Student Clearinghouse](#)

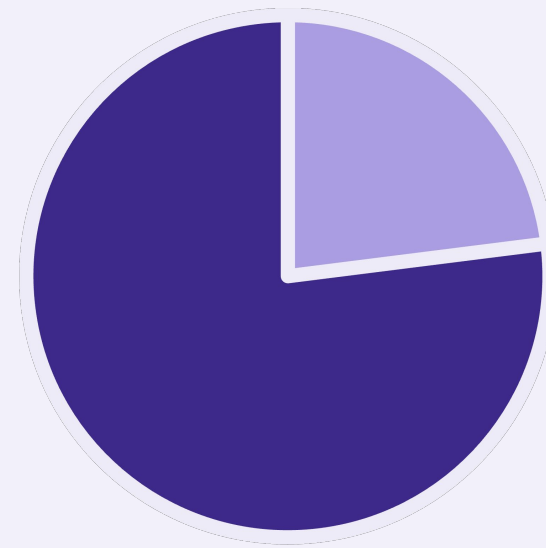


Students face steep barriers to navigate the enrollment process because of unnecessary bureaucracy and misaligned systems.

A recent survey of students aged 16-22 found that:



52% of students say that applying to college has been more stressful than anything else they have done academically.



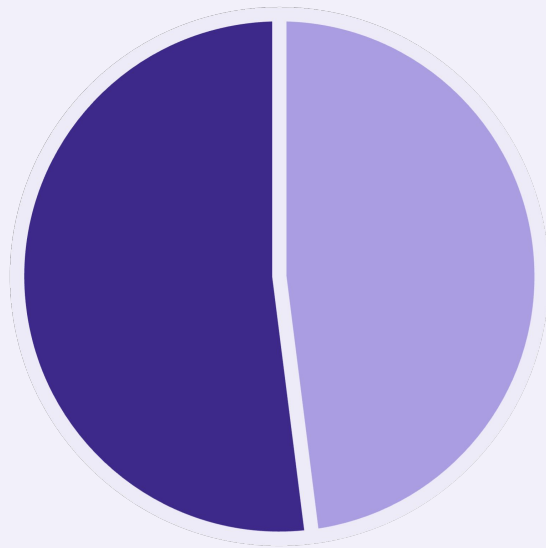
More than **three-quarters** of students feel the college admission process is complex.

Source: [National Association for College Admission Counseling](#)

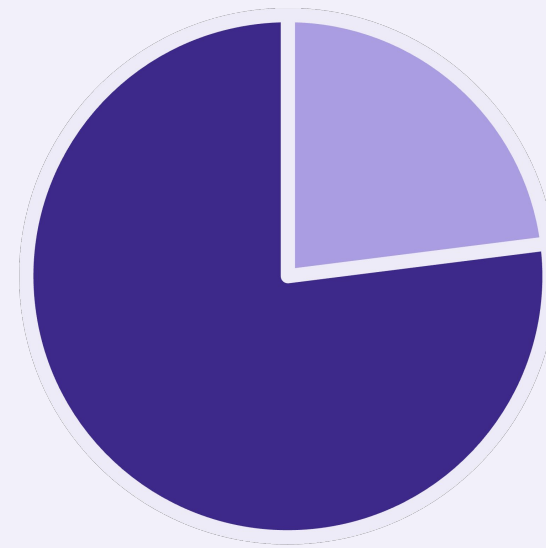


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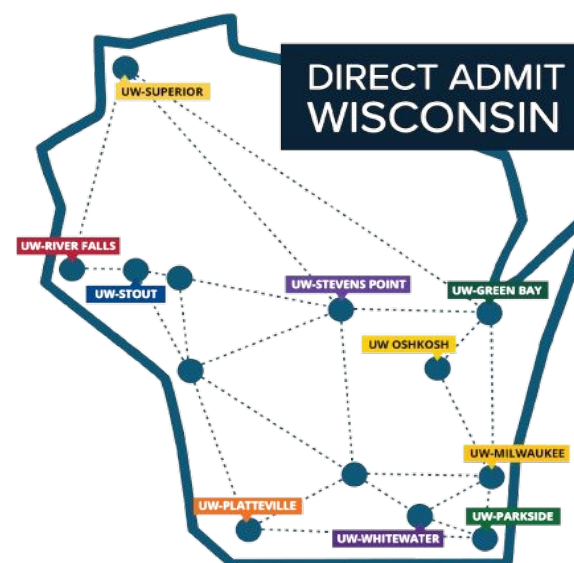


More than **three-quarters** of students feel the college admission process is complex.

How can the admissions process evolve from *gatekeeper* to *gateway*?

Source: [National Association for College Admission Counseling](#)

➤ Admissions redesign is emerging as a promising solution, quickly gaining momentum across the country.





Lumina's Great Admissions Redesign is igniting a national movement.

In 2023, Lumina Foundation launched [The Great Admissions Redesign](#) (GAR), challenging states, systems, and institutions to propose bold approaches to simplifying and automating admissions. More than **70 applicants across 32 states** and U.S. territories responded to Lumina's challenge.

Implementation grants sought to propel the progress of mature redesign projects.

Northern Arizona University

California State University

Illinois Board of Higher Education

Planning grants sought to support discovery and vision-setting within nascent redesign projects.

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Louisiana Board of Regents*

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Washington Student Achievement Council

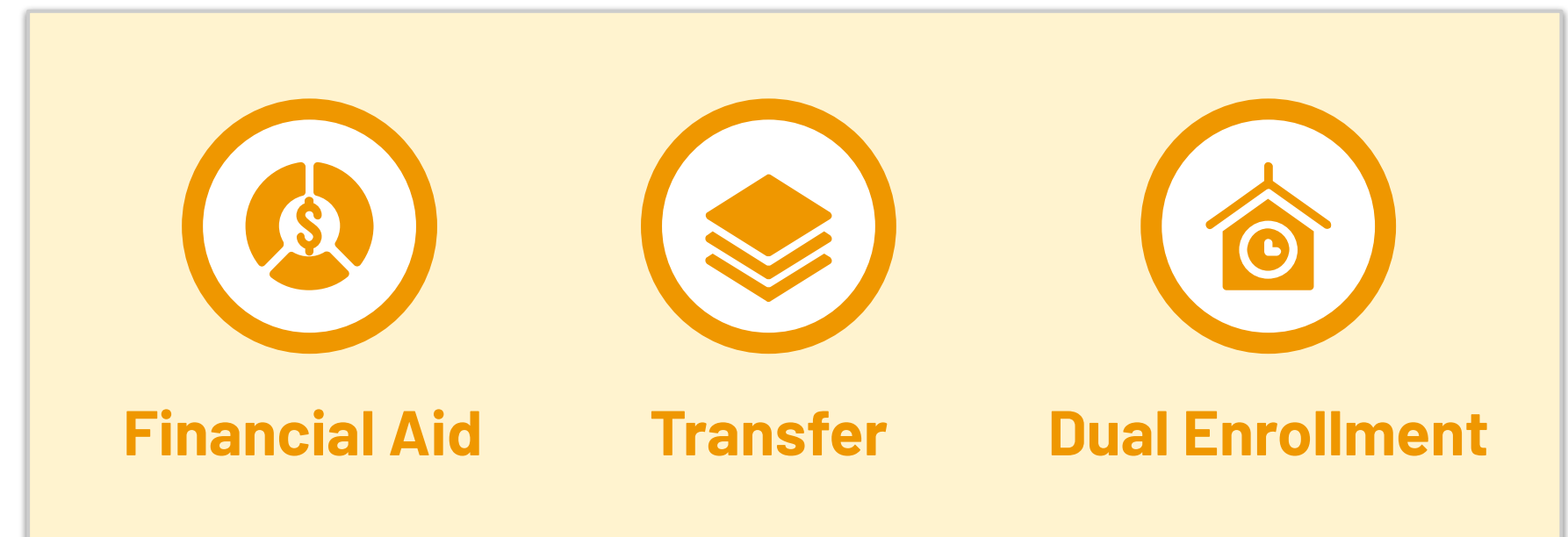
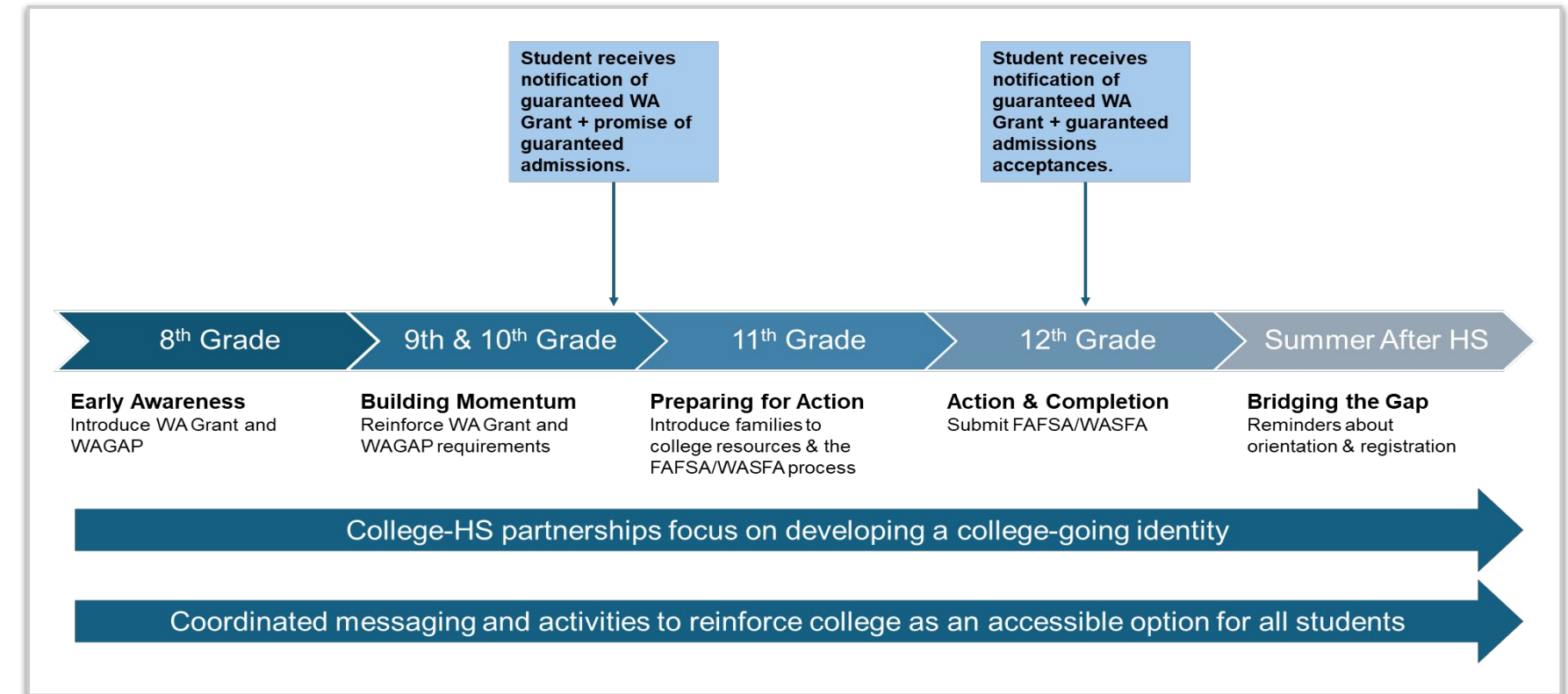
*Note that the Louisiana Board of Regents received funding for two separate projects.



Admissions redesign aims to support students across the student journey.

In designing and implementing their admissions innovations, grantees looked to **address the needs of students across the education continuum.**

Many grantees theorized that intentionally and thoughtfully **integrating admissions innovations with other elements of the college-going experience** for students could lead to increased long-term impact.





Admissions redesigns are iterative, with endless possibilities.

Innovation means doing what you can, with what you have, to get what you need.

– President David Wilson, Morgan State University

Redesign projects look different based on context.

Many grantees theorized that intentionally and thoughtfully **integrating admissions innovations with other elements of the college-going experience** for students could lead to increased long-term impact.



Financial Aid




Transfer



Dual Enrollment

Learn more about the Great Admissions Redesign

Check out Lumina’s website to review ESG’s *Lessons Learned* report, read briefs from Data Quality Campaign, review the typology of admissions innovations from Research for Action, listen in to Lumina’s recorded live podcast, watch the Lessons Learned webinar, and more!



USING DATA TO STREAMLINE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND ACCESS

Many states and institutions are using data to simplify various aspects of the traditional college application process, such as eligibility, the cost and time required to apply, financial aid, and more. These state- and institution-level efforts to help people go to college (e.g., automatic admissions, guaranteed transfer, and admissions pathways) use data to reduce the administrative burden for postsecondary institutions while simultaneously helping students understand and pursue their postsecondary goals. These programs can also increase postsecondary attainment, serving state and community interests.

All efforts like these to streamline the admissions process will require strong, secure data connections between high schools and postsecondary institutions, ideally supported by a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) that includes data across early education, K-12, postsecondary education, and the workforce over time. Seamless transfer of verified high school data (e.g., transcripts and test scores) to postsecondary institutions or between postsecondary institutions relieves students of the burden of manual data entry and document submission. This process not only reduces application and enrollment barriers for students, especially for students with limited resources or support, but also reduces the burden for institutions, which can instead focus their resources on evaluating applicants rather than collecting redundant information. Comprehensive data sharing can also facilitate targeted outreach and support to students who may not otherwise apply, ultimately promoting greater equity in college access.

DIFFERENT PROGRAMS, ONE GOAL: EASING POSTSECONDARY TRANSITIONS

There are several different models for streamlining postsecondary admissions. Some programs guarantee admission to eligible students whose high school records indicate that they meet specific academic criteria, such as grade point average (GPA) or standardized test scores, often eliminating the need for extensive applications. In some cases, the institution proactively informs students of their acceptance based on the student's high school data, simplifying the process even further. Other universities are offering students a path to admission by directing them to local community colleges and guaranteeing admission to the university if criteria are met there. These initiatives seek to democratize access to higher education by simplifying and demystifying the path to college.

MAY 2025



The Great ADMISSIONS REDESIGN

ONE YEAR LATER: LESSONS LEARNED



Admissions Innovations at the State and System Levels		
In conducting a literature and landscape scan of postsecondary admissions innovations at the state and postsecondary system levels, we have identified seven types of policies as outlined in Figure 1.		
Figure 1. An Admissions Innovation Typology		
Innovation Type	Definition	Key Components
 Direct Admissions	High school students are proactively notified by a state postsecondary agency or system of their acceptance to at least one two- or four-year institution based on academic criteria (e.g., GPA) and can select the institution(s) of their choice by completing a simplified application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission assured early• Application process simplified• Proactive notification• Application fee waived
 Informed Admissions	High school students are proactively notified by a state postsecondary agency or system that they will be admitted to at least one two- or four-year institution based on academic criteria (e.g., GPA), but are required to complete a traditional application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission assured early• Proactive notification• Application fee waived (in some cases)
 Cascading Admissions	High school students applying to a four-year institution in a state postsecondary system who are not accepted are alternatively offered admission and encouraged to attend another institution(s) in the system based on academic criteria and areas of interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission assured early• Application fee waived
 Invitational Admissions	High school students are proactively notified by a state postsecondary agency or system of their eligibility for admission to a four-year institution based on academic criteria and encouraged to apply without a guarantee of admission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive notification
 Self-Reported Admissions	High school students enter limited academic information (e.g., GPA) into an online questionnaire/portal to determine acceptance, after which they complete an application to institutions where they are accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission assured early
 Guaranteed Admissions	High school students are assured admission to one or more four-year institution(s) if they apply and meet established academic criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission assured early
 System Admissions	High school students may apply to multiple institutions in the same postsecondary system with a single application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application simplified or eliminated

3 | Postsecondary Admissions Innovations at the State and System Level: A Landscape Typology Brief






LUMINAFOUNDATION.ORG/ADMISSIONS-REDESIGN



AGENDA

- 
- ONE What Lumina is Looking For
 - TWO ● Eligibility
 - THREE ● Funding Types
 - FOUR ● Grantee Experience & Expectations
 - FIVE ● Use of Funds
 - SIX ● Timeline
 - SEVEN ● How to Apply
 - EIGHT ● *Audience Questions*

“ Complexity is the friend
of the privileged. ”

-DR. RICHARD REEVES



Pillars of Admissions Redesign

Lumina is most interested in redesign concepts that promote the following principles:

INTEGRATED

Proposal establishes linkages among long-standing siloes in the college admissions process, **integrating elements across the student journey**, such as financial aid, transfer, and/or dual enrollment.

UNIVERSAL

Proposal promotes **access for as many students as possible** through expansive eligibility criteria and transparent communications.

AUTOMATED

Proposal creatively leverages data and emerging technology to **reduce the burden** of the college application process on both students and practitioners.

PROACTIVE

Proposal nurtures college-going identities by **informing learners of their college options** before they apply.

TRUSTED

Proposal engages and empowers counselors, advisors, educators, and college access professionals as **trusted messengers and champions**.



Pillars of Admissions Redesign

Lumina is most interested in redesign concepts that promote the following principles:

INTEGRATED

UNIVERSAL

AUTOMATED

PROACTIVE

TRUSTED

In our refreshed application, you will be asked to identify your proposal's integration with processes in addition to admissions, which might include:

Financial Aid

Advising

Employer-Sponsored Programs

Dual Enrollment / Early Postsecondary Opportunities

Credit Mobility

Transcript Movement

Something Else!



Pillars of Admissions Redesign

Lumina is most interested in redesign concepts that promote the following principles:

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UNIVERSAL

AUTOMATED

PROACTIVE

TRUSTED

In our refreshed application, you will be asked to identify one or more target populations that your project seeks to address. Target populations may include:

Transfer Students

High School Students

First-Time Adult Learners

Returning Adult Learners

Students Earning Short-Term Credentials

Something Else!



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Lumina will accept applications from...



state
agencies



state systems
of higher education that
include public, nonprofit
institutions



a group of three or
more public or private,
nonprofit institutions

**Only one proposal submission per state, higher education system, or institutional cluster will be accepted.
Lumina encourages collaboration among agencies, organizations, and colleges and universities when developing responses.
If multiple responses are received, Lumina will alert the parties and invite them to make a joint submission.*



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Funding will be awarded across three tiers

EXPLORATION GRANTS

Awarded to entities seeking to better **understand the potential** of redesigned admissions systems through **information gathering and/or coalition building**. Recipients will receive between **\$50,000-\$100,000** each.

Apply for this grant if...

- You're eager to **diagnose your preparedness** for admissions redesign
- You've successfully implemented one phase of admissions redesign, and you're interested in **exploring potential enhancements**
- You're seeking to **elevate student and family perspectives** on admissions systems in your state
- You're preparing to **facilitate introductory conversations** about admissions redesign among critical stakeholders



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PLANNING GRANTS

Awarded to entities in the **early stages of strategic planning** to create a new admissions redesign program or add a new dimension to an existing admissions redesign effort. Recipients will receive between **\$50,000-\$100,000** each.

Apply for this grant if...

- You're ready to transform a vision for admissions redesign into a **plan for action**
- You're seeking to **build consensus** and momentum among critical stakeholders to bring an admissions redesign to life
- You're seeking a better understanding of the **data, technology, policy, and/or communications implications** of your vision for redesign
- You've successfully implemented one phase of admissions redesign, and you're planning to **add more advanced features**



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IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Targeted resources for entities in the process of **augmenting and scaling** redesigned admissions systems. Recipients will receive **up to \$500,000** each.

Apply for this grant if...

- You've "set the table" for a new program, and you're seeking opportunities to **improve and accelerate implementation**
- You're preparing to **expand upon a pilot effort**
- You're seeking to make **specific changes to policy and/or practice** to enhance the impact of your redesign project



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Grantee Experience & Expectations



NETWORK EXPERIENCE

- Attend two (2) **convenings**: one in-person in spring 2026, and one in March 2027
- Attend bimonthly **virtual learning sessions**
- Actively participate in a **network** with other admissions redesign grantees
- Contribute to **storytelling** about admissions redesign efforts



PROJECT WORK

- Engage in **quarterly progress check-ins** with Lumina Foundation and relevant technical assistance partners
- Complete a **needs assessment** to determine tailored support
- Develop **project deliverables**; final deliverables will be determined based on your funding tier and project scope.
- Finalize a **grant report**



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Exploration: May include summative project briefs, public presentations, conference proposals

Planning: A detailed implementation plan including a student journey map, redesigned process description, and key milestones and tactics across data integration, partnership development, and communications strategies

Implementation: May include a logic model, advocacy plan, or impact analysis



Grantee Experience & Expectations



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SUPPORT PROVIDED

- **Technical assistance** will be tailored to grantee needs, informed by a needs assessment
- Ad hoc opportunities to engage with experts via semi-regular office hours
- Implementation **planning templates** and examples
- **Peer consultancies** and collaborative problem solving
- Deliverable draft review and **feedback**
- **Mentoring** opportunities provided by practitioners that have successfully implemented admissions redesigns



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Use of Funds

Funds should be spent on strategic investments that fundamentally alter admissions, enrollment, and/or financial aid processes.



CAN INCLUDE,
but not limited to

- Data infrastructure
- Staffing to build new systems/processes
- Convening project teams/other stakeholders
- Hiring consultants
- Developing new marketing/collateral materials



**CANNOT
INCLUDE**

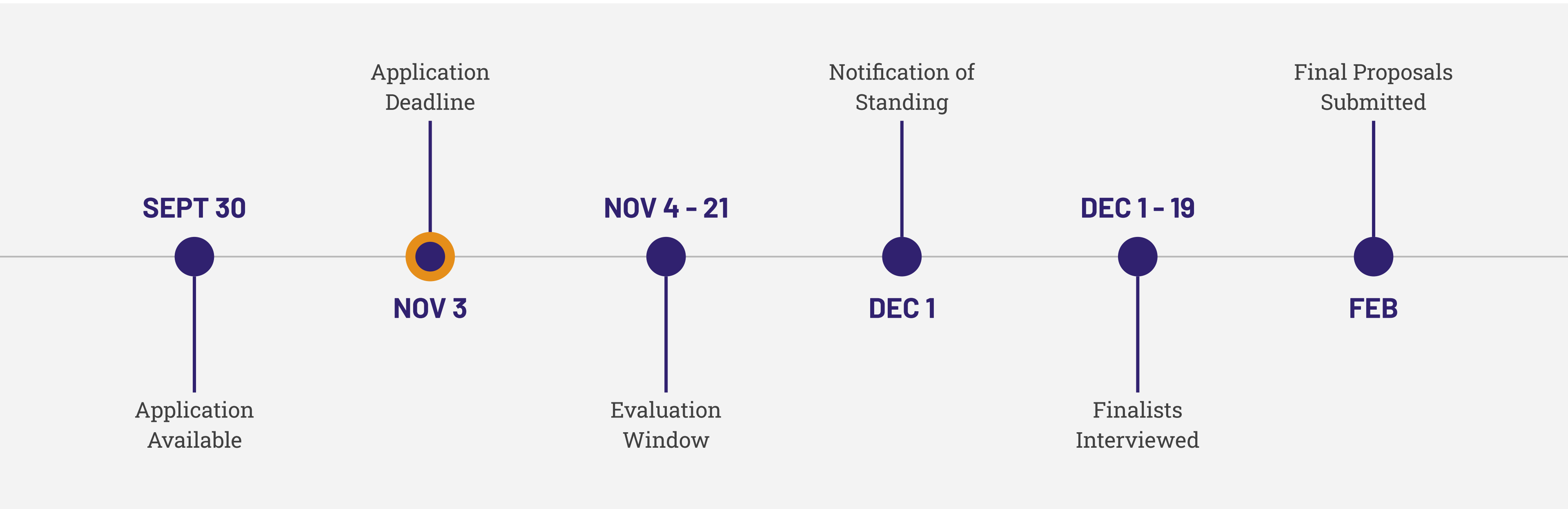
- Scholarships or stipends
- Lobbying or election-related activities



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Timeline





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Access the Application



LUMINAFOUNDATION.ORG/ADMISSIONS-REDESIGN

- Applicants must **make an account** in Submittable, our external application host.
- Application questions will generate when you **select the funding tier** you wish to apply for.
- **Multiple users can collaborate** on a shared application.
- Your **progress will auto-save**.
- If you run into any challenges with the platform, reach out to technical support with Submittable.

Submittable 

The Great Admissions Redesign | 2026-2027 Grant Cycle

Describe the problem, barrier, and/or place of friction in current admissions, enrollment, and/or financial aid processes this exploration proposal would address. *(required)*

Limit: 500 words

Describe the redesigned admissions process you seek to explore, and the primary questions you seek to answer. *(required)*

Limit: 750 words

Optional: Consider the breadth of modern approaches to admissions redesign. Which of the [seven types](#) of admissions designs will your project specifically address, if any?



Application Themes

Though they vary slightly depending on the funding tier you are applying for, application questions seek information across nine major categories:

- 1 Define the problem.
- 2 Describe the potential solution. +
- 3 Connect to GAR principles. +
- 4 Identify any target populations or integrated processes.
- 5 Identify intended project outcomes.
- 6 Describe admissions redesign efforts to-date.
- 7 Describe enabling and limiting conditions.
- 8 Outline strategic use of grant funds.
- 9 Identify your core team of 3-5 individuals.

**Questions marked with a “plus” sign are weighted twice on the scoring rubric.*



Application Review Panel



MELANIE HEATH

Strategy Director for Access,
Lumina Foundation



PATRICK CRANE

Strategy Director for State Policy,
Lumina Foundation



OIYAN POON

Co-Director, College Admissions
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Practices, Data Quality Campaign



JONATHAN GAGLIARDI

VP of Economic Mobility & Social Impact,
Northern Arizona University



LAUREN NORTON

Associate Director, Education
Strategy Group



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Questions?

For questions specific to your own institution,
system, or project, please email:

admissionsredesign@luminafoundation.org



Application Questions: Exploration Proposal

1. Describe the **problem, barrier, and/or place of friction** in current admissions, enrollment, and/or financial aid processes this exploration proposal would address.
2. Describe the **redesigned admissions process** you seek to explore, and the primary questions you seek to answer.
Optional: Consider the breadth of modern approaches to admissions redesign. Which of the seven types of admissions designs will your project specifically address, if any?
3. Explain how your project would promote **integrated, universal, automated, proactive, and/or trusted** admissions processes.
4. Will your project specifically address any of the following **target populations**? Check all that apply. (*transfer students; first-time adult learners; returning adult learners; high school students; students earning short-term credentials; other*)

Will your project specifically address any of the following **processes** in addition to admissions? Check all that apply. (*financial aid; dual enrollment/early postsecondary opportunities; advising; transcript movement; credit mobility; employer sponsored programs; other*)

5. What does success look like at the end of the grant period? Please share at least three **project outcomes** you hope to accomplish.
6. Describe your entity's **participation in the admissions redesign movement to date**.
7. Describe any **enabling and limiting conditions** impacting your potential for engaging stakeholders, accessing data, and communicating findings.
8. How would you strategically **use the grant funds** to explore a redesigned admissions process?
9. Effective redesign efforts break down siloes between the various sectors and institutional functions involved in the admissions process. Please identify a **core team of 3-5 individuals** (names, titles, and organizations) you anticipate leading this project. Additionally, briefly explain **how you might engage a cross-cutting network of partners** to support your core team.



Application Questions: Planning Proposal

1. Describe the **problem, barrier, and/or place of friction** in current admissions, enrollment, and/or financial aid processes this planning proposal would address.
2. Describe the **redesigned admissions process** you seek to bring to life. How will this project address the problem or barrier you identified in your previous response?
Optional: Consider the breadth of modern approaches to admissions redesign. Which of the seven types of admissions designs will your project specifically address, if any?
3. Explain how your project would promote **integrated, universal, automated, proactive, and/or trusted** admissions processes.
4. Will your project specifically address any of the following **target populations**? Check all that apply. (*transfer students; first-time adult learners; returning adult learners; high school students; students earning short-term credentials; other*)

Will your project specifically address any of the following **processes** in addition to admissions? Check all that apply. (*financial aid; dual enrollment/early postsecondary opportunities; advising; transcript movement; credit mobility; employer sponsored programs; other*)
5. What does success look like at the end of the grant period? Please share at least three **project outcomes** you hope to accomplish.
6. Describe your entity's **participation in the admissions redesign movement to date**.
7. Describe any **enabling and limiting conditions** impacting your potential for partnership development, data integration, and strategic communications. If known, what kind of technical assistance will you need to develop an implementation plan?
8. How would you strategically **use the grant funds** to plan for a redesigned admissions process?
9. Effective redesign efforts break down siloes between the various sectors and institutional functions involved in the admissions process. Please identify a **core team of 3-5 individuals** (names, titles, and organizations) you anticipate leading this project. Additionally, briefly explain **how you might engage a cross-cutting network of partners** to support your core team.



Application Questions: Implementation Proposal

1. Describe the **problem, barrier, and/or place of friction** in current admissions, enrollment, and/or financial aid processes this implementation proposal primarily addresses.
2. Describe your **redesigned admissions process**. How are you addressing the problem or barrier you identified in your previous response?
Optional: Consider the breadth of modern approaches to admissions redesign. Which of the seven types of admissions designs will your project specifically address, if any?
3. Explain how your project would promote **integrated, universal, automated, proactive, and/or trusted** admissions processes.
4. Will your project specifically address any of the following **target populations**? Check all that apply. (*transfer students; first-time adult learners; returning adult learners; high school students; students earning short-term credentials; other*)

Will your project specifically address any of the following **processes** in addition to admissions? Check all that apply. (*financial aid; dual enrollment/early postsecondary opportunities; advising; transcript movement; credit mobility; employer sponsored programs; other*)

5. What does success look like at the end of the grant period? Please share at least three **project outcomes** you hope to accomplish. How will you measure your progress towards these outcomes?
6. Describe your entity's current admissions redesign **strategy and efforts to date**. What successes in admissions redesign have you already achieved?
7. Describe any **enabling and limiting conditions** impacting your potential for partnership development, data integration, and strategic communications. If known, what kind of technical assistance will you need to augment and scale your admissions redesign efforts?
8. How would you strategically **use the grant funds** to implement/expand your redesigned admissions process?
9. Effective redesign efforts break down siloes between the various sectors and institutional functions involved in the admissions process. Please identify a **core team of 3-5 individuals** (names, titles, and organizations) you anticipate leading this project. Additionally, briefly explain **how you might engage a cross-cutting network of partners** to support your core team.