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Campus Compact *for New Hampshire*

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Lincoln Financial Foundation Funds VISTA Program to Help Low-Income Students Succeed in College

Support for Campus Compact for New Hampshire's VISTA program is in keeping with Lincoln Financial's commitment to improving educational opportunity and community life.

Bedford, NH, July 14, 2014—Lincoln Financial Foundation has partnered with Campus Compact for New Hampshire (CCNH) to give low-income students a leg up by helping them remain in college through graduation. Lincoln Financial will support a CCNH AmeriCorps VISTA program that offers tutoring, peer-to-peer mentoring, community engagement, and other assistance for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to help them succeed in college.

"We're delighted to be able to support this tremendous work to expand educational opportunity in New Hampshire," said Byron Champlin, Program Officer at Lincoln Financial Foundation. "This partnership is a perfect marriage of CCNH's expertise in working with higher education to advance the public good and Lincoln Financial's focus on promoting sustainable communities by ensuring that children graduate from high school and succeed in college or professional training."

The CCNH program will place full-time VISTAs on 10 college campuses in New Hampshire. These volunteers will provide academic and social support for more than 2,500 low-income students, who often face obstacles to remaining in college through graduation. Helping these students overcome these obstacles and get a degree can make a difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in lifetime earnings, thus moving families out of poverty while improving the local economy.

"The VISTA program not only emphasizes the importance of expanding access to college to those with significant barriers, but also ensures that colleges have the appropriate support structures to ensure that low-income and first-generation students are successful in obtaining their degree," notes CCNH Executive Director Debby Scire.

The program includes a community engagement component, in which participating students will themselves volunteer in the community. “This component helps build rapport among the students and their mentors. In addition, research demonstrates that participation in community work strengthens students’ sense of belonging and improves retention—particularly among low-income and first-generation students,” says Scire.

The partnership with Lincoln Financial will help sustain and expand CCNH’s current VISTA program, which has had a major impact on student and community life in New Hampshire. Over the past year, CCNH VISTAs have:

- Helped 700 underrepresented students enroll in higher education.
- Mentored 1,500 underrepresented students.
- Supported extracurricular/engagement programs for 1,800 students.
- Leveraged 750 volunteers to serve 130,000 hours in their communities.

“Supporting CCNH’s VISTA program was a natural choice for us, given the program’s hugely positive impact on the community,” said Champlin. “Lincoln Financial Foundation invests in education initiatives because we know that education is essential for building strong communities. This partnership lets us extend the reach of our investment by ensuring the most benefit where it’s most needed.”

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About Campus Compact for New Hampshire

Founded in 1997, Campus Compact for New Hampshire (CCNH) is a statewide consortium of college and university presidents and private-sector partners who are united in their commitment to the civic purposes of higher education. As part of a national coalition of college and university leaders, CCNH serves as a catalyst to integrate community service and civic responsibility throughout academic and student life. CCNH is part of the national Campus Compact organization, which encompasses more than 1,100 college and university presidents representing some 6 million students. For more information, see http://www.compactnh.org.

About Lincoln Financial Foundation

The Lincoln Financial Foundation, established in 1962, is a nonprofit organization formed and supported by Lincoln Financial Group. Under the Foundation guidelines, grants are made in the areas of arts, education, human services and economic/workforce development. The Foundation allocated almost $500,000 to support nonprofits in New Hampshire in 2013. Since 2006, Lincoln Foundation has contributed more than $3.35 million to New Hampshire nonprofits.