



**AVENUE SCHOLARS.**  
Your Foundation for Success



# PICTURE SUCCESS

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# Board of Directors

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**Calvin Sisson**  
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Director



**Ken Bird, Ed.D.**  
President/CEO

## Avenue Scholars Staff 2021-2022

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### LEADERSHIP

**Kenneth M. Bird, Ed.D**  
President/CEO

**Mike Alvano**  
Chief Operating Officer /  
Chief Financial Officer

**Kelly Bernadt**  
Director of Student Support

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Director of Information and  
Quality Assurance

**Terry Fischer**  
Director of Career Programs

**Kris Valentin**  
Sr. Director of Human Resources &  
Administrative Services

### HIGH SCHOOL TEAM

**Taleya Broadway**  
Omaha Northwest Career Coach

**Terrence Gillian**  
Omaha Benson Career Coach

**Allison Goff**  
Millard North Career Coach

**Michael Johnson**  
High School Programming Coordinator

**Ashley Knott**  
Papillion La Vista Career Coach

**Marquita Lambert**  
Millard South High School Career Coach

**Beth Leach**  
Ralston Career Coach

**Kamina Lemons**  
Omaha Bryan Career Coach

**Alejandra Soto-Suarez**  
Omaha South Career Coach

**Fred Starks**  
Omaha North Career Coach

### POSTSECONDARY/ CAREER TEAM

**Dan Corral**  
Postsecondary Career Coach

**Tonya Fairgood**  
Postsecondary Career Coach

**Amanda Lonergan**  
Postsecondary Career Coach

**Marcus Manley**  
Postsecondary Career Coach

**Canei Rodriquez**  
Postsecondary Career Coach

**Anthony Tate**  
Postsecondary Career Coach

### STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

**Janae Donaldson**  
Student Support Coordinator

**Stephanie Kellum**  
Student Support Coordinator

### BUSINESS OUTREACH TEAM

**Lindsay Decker**  
Business Outreach Coordinator

**Audrey Gustin**  
Internship Coordinator - Intern Omaha

**Kathy McGauvran**  
Business Outreach Coordinator

### PROGRAM/ADMIN SUPPORT

**Penny Darnell**  
Accounting Manager

**Beverly Hass**  
Executive Assistant to CEO  
& Events Coordinator

**Laurie Merten**  
Office & Staff Assistant

**Doug Pierson**  
Special Projects Coordinator

## Companion Initiatives Intern Omaha

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Launched by Avenue Scholars in partnership with the Millard Public Schools in early 2019, the Intern Omaha program draws together youth, schools, and employers from across the community in a collective effort to provide year-long, co-curricular, paid internships for high school seniors in high-demand industries, including information technology, trades/manufacturing, auto/diesel technology, and business. The initiative provides opportunities to AS students, as well as seniors in participating metro-area school districts – Blair Community Schools, Douglas County West Community Schools, Millard Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools.

The program has experienced steady growth since its inception. The program served 28 interns in its pilot year in 2019-20, 51 in 2020-21, and 105 in the 2021-22 cohort. The 105 students participating in the 2021-22 cohort are employed by 57 businesses in 76 unique roles.

## Career EdVantage Southwest Iowa

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Through the generous support of the Charles E. Lakin Foundation, Avenue Scholars expanded its program model into southwest Iowa with the launch of Career EdVantage Southwest Iowa in 2019.

Now in its third program year, Career EdVantage is serving 130 students across eight partner school districts:

- AHSTW (Avoca, Hancock, Shelby, Tennant, and Walnut) Community School District;
- Glenwood Community School District;
- Lewis Central Community School District;
- Riverside Community School District;
- Shenandoah Community School District;
- Treynor Community School District;
- Tri-Center Community School District; and
- Underwood Community School District.

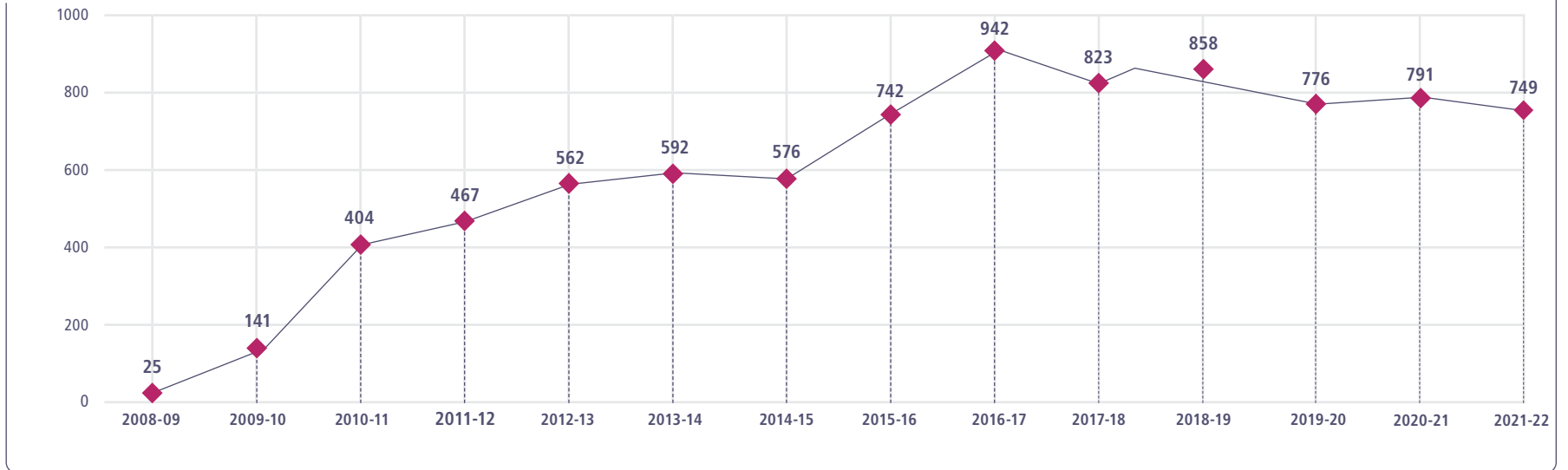
At full scale, Career EdVantage is expected to serve approximately 400 students across its program – 200 each at both the high school and postsecondary levels.

Career EdVantage placed 54 students into internships with 46 businesses during the summer of 2021 in fields such as computer networking, software programming, automotive technology, diesel technology, surgical technology, culinary arts, welding, dental assisting, electrical engineering, construction, and machining. The organization's goal is to place 100 students into internships in the summer of 2022.

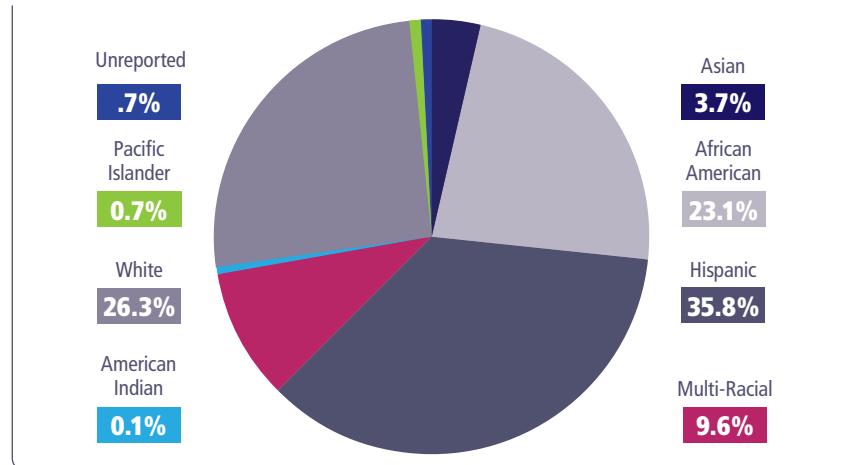


# Our Enrollment

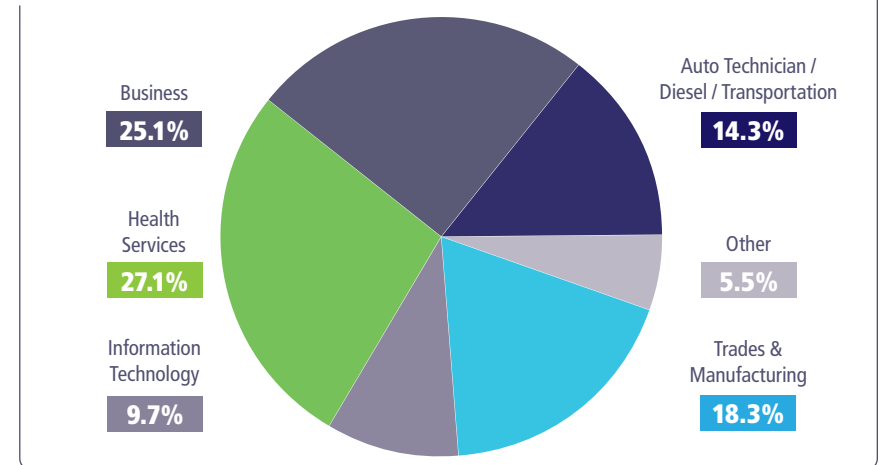
## ENROLLMENT HISTORY



## PARTICIPANTS BY RACE, FALL 2021-22



## PARTICIPANTS BY INDUSTRY SECTOR, FALL 2021-22



# Since 2008, Avenue Scholars (AS) has provided individualized support services to help students

## HIGH SCHOOL

### ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Students are selected for the program during their sophomore year based on financial need (eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunches or a federal Pell Grant), interest in pursuing a career in a high-demand career field requiring an associate degree or less, and attendance at an AS partner high school.

### JUNIOR YEAR

- Complete the AS junior year curriculum in class
- Explore selected career path through Career Awareness programming
- Engage in one-on-one coaching to set and accomplish goals and address barriers identified in student's individualized career plan
- Participate in financial and personal well-being activities
- Apply for an Intern Omaha internship or other internship/part-time job

- Participate in Intern Omaha Internship or other internship/part-time job
- Participate in summer activities
- Maintain course of study leading to on-time graduation

- Complete the AS senior year curriculum in class
- Continue career plan progress through one-on-one coaching
- Participate in Senior Year Experience programming, which includes either:
  - Class at Metropolitan Community College, or
  - An internship or part-time work in student's chosen career pathway;
- Participate in an Intern Omaha internship or other internship/part-time job

### SENIOR YEAR

### HIGH SCHOOL CAREER COACHES

At the high school level, each Avenue Scholar is supported by a High School Career Coach, who guides students' personal and career-related development through intrusive personal support and teaches for-credit courses to Avenue Scholars in partner high schools.

## BUSINESS OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

AS Business Outreach Coordinators engage with area businesses to provide career-building opportunities, such as career exploration events, part-time and full-time employment, to students throughout the Avenue Scholars program.

## STUDENT SUPPORT

In addition to the dedicated support provided by AS Career Coaches, Avenue Scholars also have access to specialized services of AS Student individual support, group programming, and referrals to community resources to help students meet basic life and social/emotional needs.

## POSTSECONDARY

### AVENUE SCHOLARS POSTSECONDARY TRAINING GRANT

Students who successfully complete the Avenue Scholars High School Program have the opportunity to continue their education through a grant of up to \$8,000 per student, funded jointly by The Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation and Metropolitan Community College (MCC). Scholarships support training toward a market-relevant credential in a high-demand career field requiring an associate degree or less. Throughout their postsecondary training, students are jointly supported by AS Postsecondary Career Coaches and MCC College Success Navigators.



**METROPOLITAN**  
Community College



### COLLEGE SUCCESS NAVIGATORS

MCC College Success Navigators provide expertise in designated career fields of study and managing MCC-related processes, such as course registration, financial aid, etc.

### POSTSECONDARY CAREER COACHES

AS Postsecondary Career Coaches provide individualized support to help students develop the a career. Postsecondary Career Coaches continue to support students for six months following

of need identify, persist toward, and ultimately enter financially sustaining careers.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### CAREER ENTRY

Focused on high-demand, financially sustaining careers requiring an associate degree or less

-  **Health Services / Charles E. Lakin Foundation's Healthcare Career Pathway**  
Nursing · Phlebotomy · EMT  
Medical Assisting · Dental Assisting
-  **Information Technology**  
Programming · Website Development & Support · Network Tech · Security Specialist
-  **Auto Technology & Transportation**  
Collision Tech · CDL Trucking · Auto Tech  
Diesel Service · Mechanic
-  **Trades, Manufacturing & Builders**  
Plumbing · Welding · HVAC · Electrical  
Construction
-  **Business & Office Processes**  
Bank Teller · Office Management  
Customer Service · Hospitality · Sales



#### ALUM STATUS

Evaluated based on:

- Full-time employment;
- Earning an hourly wage of \$13.50 or above;
- Access to health insurance benefits;
- Employment in field aligned with student's career area of focus;
- Opportunity for upward mobility

### PROGRAM GUARANTEES

The Avenue Scholars program is designed to help committed students and participants develop the following five essential job-ready attributes:

#### 1) EDUCATION/TRAINING

A committed AS participant graduates from high school, completes relevant career education or training, and is goal oriented toward an AS-approved pathway.

#### 2) WORK EXPERIENCE

A committed AS participant demonstrates a successful work history.

#### 3) WORK-READY SKILLS

A committed AS participant demonstrates work-ready habits and skills, including responsibility, work ethic, communication, positive attitude, professionalism, teamwork, and problem solving.

#### 4) ATTENDANCE

A committed AS participant demonstrates consistent attendance at school, work, and AS engagements.

#### 5) FINANCIAL & PERSONAL WELL-BEING

A committed AS participant demonstrates the ability to: Overcome barriers to employment, financial, physical, and mental well-being, and, Access community resources and services when necessary.

job-ready skills and attributes needed for workplace success and ultimately enter career entry.

mock interviews, job fairs, career consultations, job shadowing, internships, and

Support Team. This team of counselors and social workers provides students with



**AVENUE SCHOLARS**  
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# Our Impact

## GRADUATION & COLLEGE CONTINUATION RATES

High School	2019-20 4-yr Graduation Rate (Free/Reduced Lunch-Eligible Students)	2019-20 4-yr Graduation Rate (Avenue Scholars Students)	2019-20 College Continuation Rate (All Graduates)	2019-20 Postsecondary Continuation Rate# (Avenue Scholars Students)
Omaha Benson	71%	100%	45%	96%
Omaha Bryan	73%	100%	50%	87%
Omaha North	65%	95%	64%	81%
Omaha Northwest	72%	100%	54%	68%
Omaha South	73%	95%	55%	85%
Millard South	79%	100%	66%	84%
Ralston	80%	90%	60%	76%
Papillion-La Vista	83%	100%	70%	85%
<b>Avenue Scholars</b>		<b>98%</b>		<b>83%</b>

Sources: Graduation Rates – Nebraska Department of Education

College Continuation Rates – Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

#Postsecondary Continuation Rate reflects the percentage of AS high school seniors who indicate that it is their intention to pursue postsecondary education following graduation, irrespective of continuation in the AS program.

	2019-20 4-yr Graduation Rate (Free/Reduced Lunch-Eligible Students)	2019-20 College Continuation Rate (All Graduates)
Omaha Public Schools	71%	58%
Millard Public Schools	80%	78%
Ralston Public Schools	80%	60%
Papillion La Vista Community Schools	85%	71%
Learning Community	75%	68%
Statewide	80%	67% (57% for low-income grads, 2018-19)
<b>Avenue Scholars</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>83% (Postsecondary Continuation Rate#)</b>

Sources: Graduation Rates – Nebraska Department of Education

College Continuation Rates – Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

#Postsecondary Continuation Rate reflects the percentage of AS high school seniors who indicated that it was their intention to pursue postsecondary education following graduation, irrespective of continuation in the AS program.



# 2020-21 High School Senior Outcomes

Of the 233 high school seniors enrolled in the Avenue Scholars (AS) program at the beginning of the 2020-21 program year:

- 203 students completed the program year, with 192 of these students (95%) graduating on time.
- 161 students persisted to postsecondary education/training.

Of these students:

- 125 are pursuing training at Metropolitan Community College or Methodist College as continuing AS participants; and
- 36 are continuing their education at a two-year or four-year college outside of Avenue Scholars.
- 27 students entered the workforce (including 5 alums).
- 5 students entered the military.
- 30 students exited the program or moved during the year.



# 2020-21 Alum Outcomes

The primary metric by which AS evaluates its program is the number of students who enter full-time employment in a financially-sustaining career path. AS had 138 program alums during the 2020-21 program year, the highest annual total in its history.

2020-21 AS Alum Counts by Industry Sector

Auto Technology & Transportation

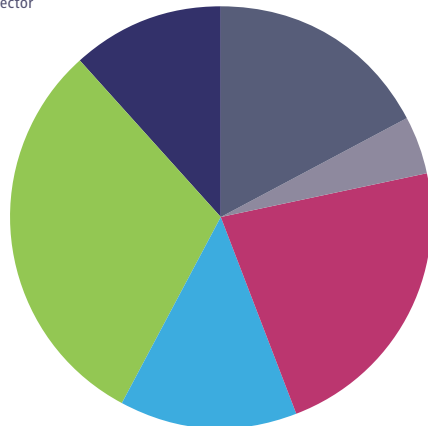
**11.6%**

Health Services

**30.4%**

Trades, Manufacturing, & Builders

**13.8%**



Business & Office Processes

**17.4%**

Information Technology

**4.3%**

Other\*

**22.5%**

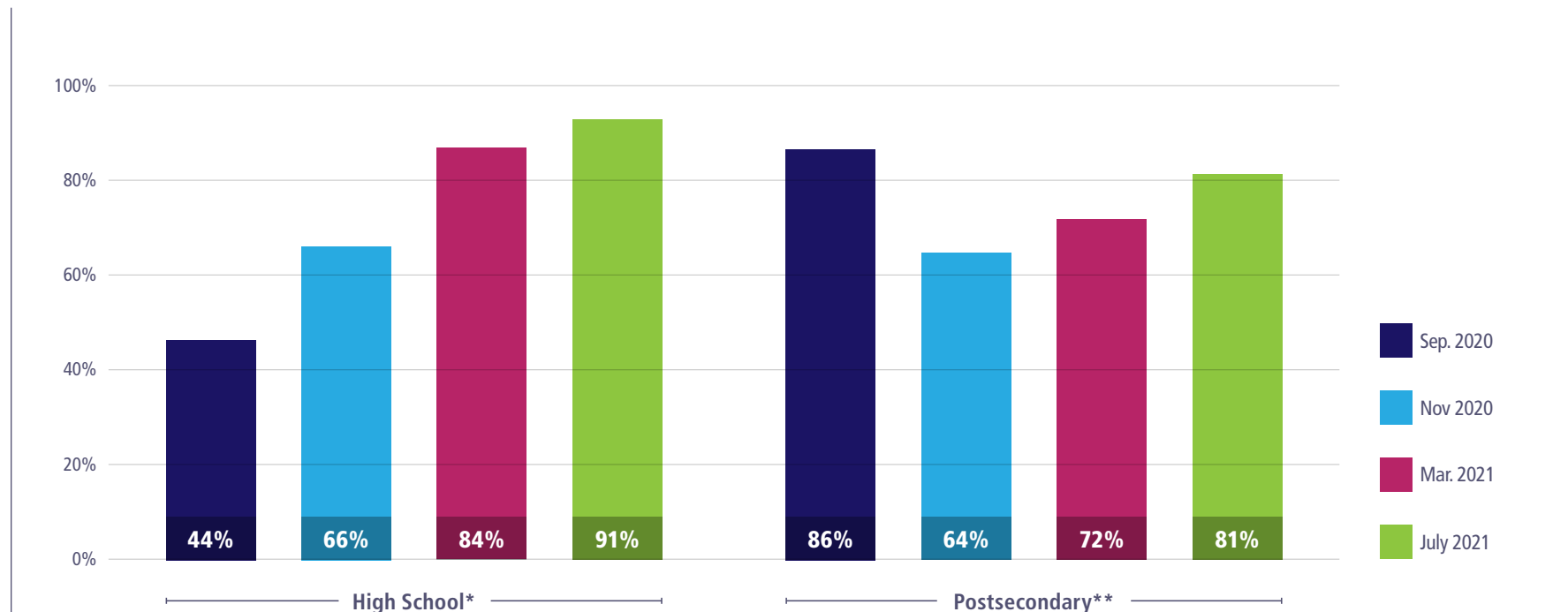
\*includes career fields no longer supported by AS



# Opening Doors to Great Work

Avenue Scholars (AS) emphasizes part-time employment as a critical developmental component of preparing students for career success. AS' part-time employment rates by trimester at the high school and postsecondary levels of the program for the 2020-21 program year are shown in the table below. The organization's student employment rates for July 2021 (91% for high school seniors and 96% for postsecondary students overall, with 81% of postsecondary students in industry-aligned employment) are well ahead of the national employment rate of 54.4% for 16-24 year-olds reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the same month (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Unemployment Among Youth – Summer 2021, 8/18/21).

AS PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT RATES BY TRIMESTER, HIGH SCHOOL AND POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS, 2020-21



AS students were employed in approximately 300 businesses across the metro area in September of 2021.

\*Based on work-eligible high school seniors only

\*\*Based on work-eligible postsecondary students in industry-aligned work

# Business Partners

Avenue Scholars partners with local businesses to provide career awareness, exploration, and employment opportunities for our students. These partnerships provide students with valuable career exposure while helping businesses identify and develop talent to satisfy their workforce needs.

## DEDICATED POSTSECONDARY INTERNSHIP PARTNERS, 2020-21



## CAREER AWARENESS/EXPLORATION PARTNERS, 2020-21



# Alum Profiles

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## MIGUEL ROJAS HAMMOND

graduated from Omaha South in 2018. He completed the very rigorous Electrical Lineman degree at Metropolitan Community College and gained valuable work experience with IES Commercial & Industrial, where he was required to travel for weeks at a time. That preparation landed him a full-time job with OPPD as a Lineman Apprentice. Miguel has a strong drive,

demonstrates perseverance, and always finds a way to make things work for him.



## HOPE GRAY

completed her associate degree in the rigorous Culinary Arts program at Metropolitan Community College this year. She consistently navigated adversity, handling challenging coursework and a demanding work schedule while maintaining work in her field the entire time she was pursuing her degree. She found a way to balance the fast-paced kitchen settings at

Ameristar and do well in her classes. All of that groundwork landed Hope a full-time position as a Kitchen Manager.



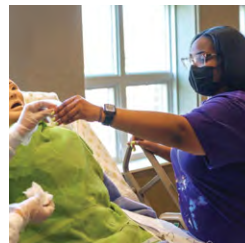
## BRIANNA JACKSON

is a 2017 Millard South graduate who completed her associate degree in Paralegal Studies. While a student, Brianna also completed two internships: one with Lincoln Financial and one with the Fraser Stryker law firm. Through her hard work, Brianna has become a valuable professional. Upon her

graduation, Fraser Stryker moved her to a full-time Legal Assistant. Her supervisor says, "Brianna is a quick learner so we gave her extra responsibilities, and she went above and beyond to do them. Brianna is committed to her goals and follows through."

## JEANINE DALMEIDA

is a 2017 Millard South graduate. Jeanine worked very hard to complete MCC's Medical Assisting program. Early in her college career while working on her program prerequisites, she participated in an internship with Mutual of Omaha. Jeanine then tested in to the Medical Assisting program. She completed an externship at Children's Hospital, where her supervisors noted her energy and work ethic. Jeanine graduated from Metropolitan Community College's Medical Assisting program and landed her dream job as a Medical Assistant at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. In addition, she is now pursuing her nursing degree at College of Saint Mary. She is an inspiration to those who know her.



## DEVONNA WILLIAMS

graduated from Omaha North High School in 2018. Devonna was trained as a Certified Nursing Assistant through a partnership with QLI. Devonna was the top student in her QLI class and is now a valued QLI employee. DeVonna has maintained her employment as a CNA with QLI for two years. Her supervisors recognize her work and commitment, and last

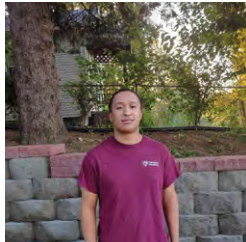
year asked DeVonna to assist with younger Avenue Scholars participants by helping teach the course. She found her niche and is excelling in it. She has been an inspiration to many.



## MIRIAM RODRIGUEZ ISLAS

is a 2018 graduate of Omaha South High School. An English language learner, she worked hard to obtain her CNA with QLI and is now one of their valued employees. Miriam serves as a traveling CNA for QLI due to her dedication to teammates and residents alike. She was promoted due to her positive client relationships, and now travels back and forth with residents

upon their release from QLI, also serving as an interpreter when needed. Miriam consistently receives an array of accolades and recognition for her exemplary work from her teammates and QLI leadership.



## EMMANUEL GORDILLO

is the first Avenue Scholars student to complete the Respiratory program and get hired as a full-time Respiratory Technician by Nebraska Medicine. While in college, he also worked at Encore as a Family Support Worker, working with clients with disabilities, and helped care for his own family, all while maintaining A's and B's at Metropolitan Community College. His managers always

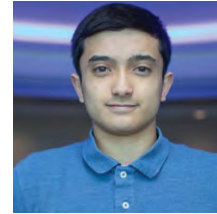
note Emmanuel's dependability, communication skills, and positive attitude. He is remarkable in building trusting relationships with his clients.



## AMOS LACY

is an Omaha Benson graduate and the first Avenue Scholar to complete the rigorous Toyota T-10 program at Metropolitan Community College. Amos graduated from the program in May 2021 and is now working full time at Lexus of Omaha, which sponsored him through the T-10 program. He has one more test

to complete to become a certified Toyota technician. Amos is excelling on the job, and his service managers rave about his ability and quality of work.



## STEVEN POWELL,

is one of the first Avenue Scholars students to complete an associate degree in Cybersecurity at Metropolitan Community College. While a student, Steven was selected to participate in the Blue Cross Blue Shield internship program, where his managers always gave positive feedback on his work. Steven is currently

working full time as an Associate Security Analyst with Medical Solutions.



## MEHKI BANKS

is a 2019 Omaha North graduate who exudes self-advocacy, drive and hard work. Upon graduating from high school, Mehki completed some coursework at Metropolitan Community College, but predominantly focused on building a career at Cobalt Credit Union. Mehki has a passion for work and for promoting financial

literacy. If you talk with Mehki one-on-one, you'll see he brings energy and confidence to the discussion. His supervisor speaks highly about his hard work and leadership.

# WALTER SCOTT JR. REMEMBRANCE



When Walter Scott Jr. died Saturday, Sept. 25, at age 90, the loss was felt throughout the Omaha community — from the Henry Doorly Zoo, to the University of Nebraska at Omaha, to Avenue Scholars, to numerous other charitable organizations, medical institutions, and the business community.

As the Omaha World-Herald noted, Scott “was a giant figure in construction who left an even bigger imprint on Omaha as the city’s biggest and most influential philanthropist.”

Scott, reflecting on his years of supporting Avenue Scholars in the spring of 2020, expressed his pride in what the foundation has accomplished.

“Avenue Scholars Foundation started in 2008 with a simply stated but ambitious goal — to curb poverty by helping young people gain access to quality job opportunities. We’re proud of the program’s growth, the partnerships that have been built, and the positive impact the program has made on Omaha-area students and businesses over the past 12 years,” he said.

Colleagues of Walter Scott have fond memories of the many ways he impacted Avenue Scholars and the Omaha community.



“When I think of Walter, I’m reminded of the saying, ‘Vision without action is dreaming. Action without vision is chaos. But vision and action together can change the world.’ It’s hard for me to think of a better example of those words than Walter Scott. His vision for the future of education and the path to improve the quality of education to ensure a positive outcome is a great example of that saying.”

- Jack Koraleski, Past Chairman,  
CEO & President, Union Pacific

“MCC was involved with the very first class of Avenue Scholars. Through Walter’s spirit and teamwork, we were able to set up a program that helped people get training and education that would lead to meaningful jobs. In the early years, as with many multifaceted challenges in a community, a lot of people could point out the problems and talk about them, but it took Walter to get people working together to find real solutions.”

- Randy Schmailzl, President  
of Metropolitan Community College

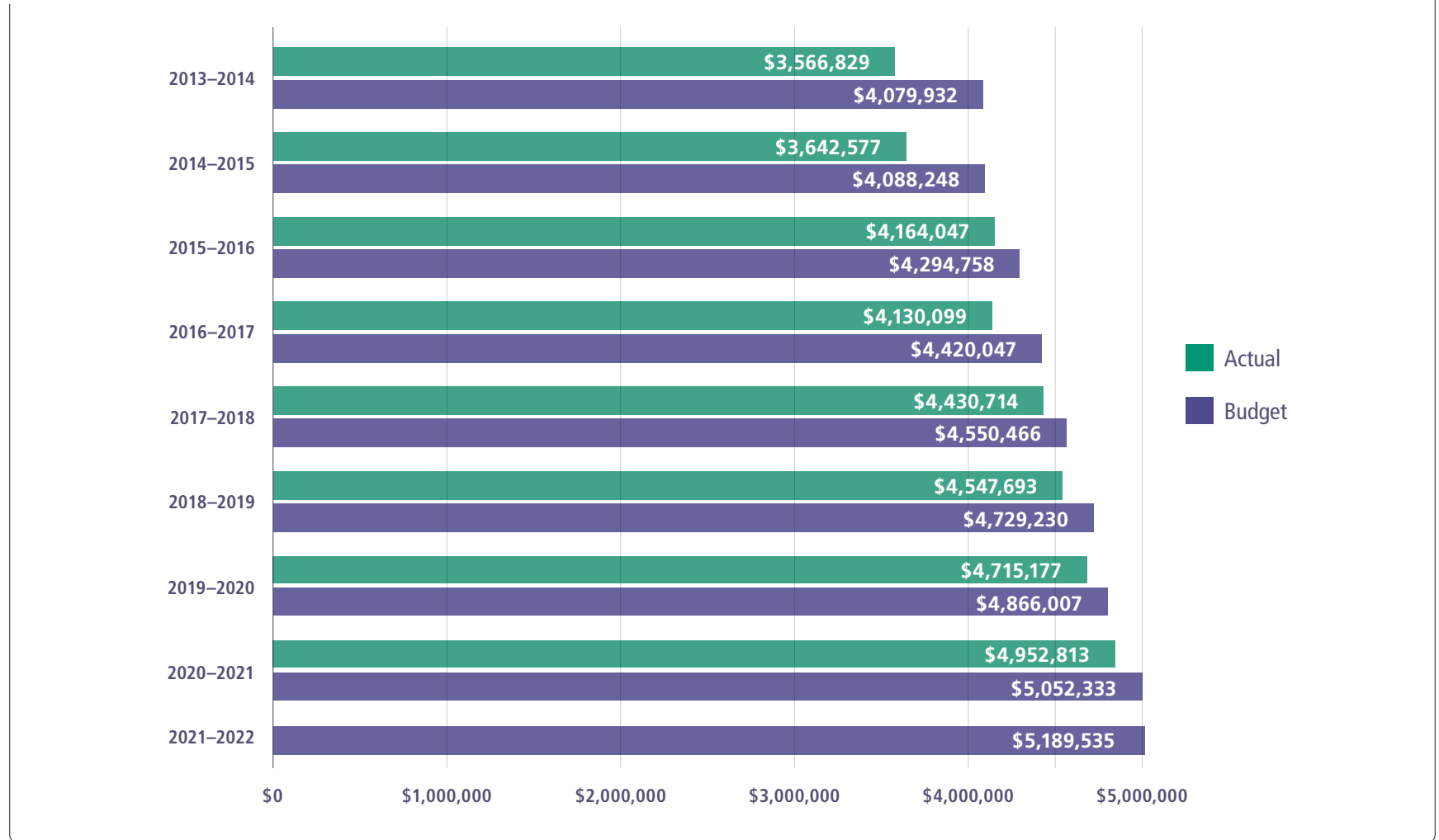
Walter Scott, Jr., or Walter as we all knew him, was a legend in construction, telecommunications, and energy industries. Perhaps even more important, Walter ranks as one of America’s great philanthropists. Virtually no major philanthropic achievement in the state of Nebraska has been completed in the past 50 years without Walter’s involvement.

- David Sokol, Associate Chairman  
Emeritus & Horatio Alger Endowment Fund Vice-President



# Our Budget

ACTUAL & BUDGETED EXPENDITURES, FY 2013-14 TO FY 2021-22





**AVENUE SCHOLARS.**  
Your Foundation for Success



AVENUE SCHOLARS, THE LEADER IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND BUSINESS, GUARANTEES CAREERS FOR OUR YOUTH OF HOPE AND NEED THROUGH SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS, INDIVIDUALIZED COACHING, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING.

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