



Higher Education



Students deserve a quality education at a price they can afford, one that opens doors to lifelong personal and professional opportunities for themselves and their families. Arnold Ventures (AV) works toward ensuring that students and families have the right information to choose a program that fits their needs and pays off for them, that students have the support they need to complete their credential, and that federal funding goes to programs that produce a positive return on investment for students and taxpayers.

For years, policymakers, experts, students, and families have sounded alarms about America's [higher education](#) system as increasing costs and growing student loan debt have raised questions about higher education's value to students.

The issues about value are a symptom of fundamental problems in higher education, including rising prices, low completion rates, and too many low-quality, unaccountable institutions. Policymakers can chart a different path so that America's higher education system delivers for students.

AV works to produce positive returns in higher education for both students and the public's investment in the system.

Increasing Transparency

Students and families are making one of the biggest investments of their lives when they pursue higher education, but they do not have full and transparent information about which institutions and programs have the best outcomes for their students. By securely connecting data the federal government already has, students and families will be able to make informed decisions about where to pursue their education.

Improving Student Outcomes

Studies show that about [3 in 5 students don't graduate within six years](#) of starting college, and those with debt but no degree are three times more likely to be in default on their loans. While some student success programs have been proven to boost completion rates, there are few incentives for institutions to adopt them. Evidence-based programs should be scaled to support college completion and institutions should be incentivized to adopt them.

Raising Institutional Accountability

In 2025, the Department of Education projects spending more than [\\$125 billion](#) on federal financial aid for higher education students. However, there is minimal quality control to ensure those dollars help students and provide them a valuable credential. Schools and programs, across all sectors, must be held to standards for the value they produce.

Reforming the Student Loan System

The complex student loan system allows dollars to go to low-value programs, often complicates repayment, and can be a barrier to higher education altogether and for working- and middle-class families. Reforms to college financing can preserve access and prevent families from having to take on unmanageable debt.

How We Work

AV focuses its strategies, grants, collaborations, and resources in four pillars to identify root causes of problems and implement sustainable, scalable solutions.



Research



Policy Development



Advocacy



Implementation

About Us

[Arnold Ventures](#) is a philanthropy that supports research to understand the root causes of America's most persistent and pressing problems, as well as evidence-based solutions to address them. By focusing on systemic change, AV is working to improve the lives of American families, strengthen their communities, and promote their economic opportunity. Since Laura and John Arnold launched their foundation in 2008, the philanthropy has expanded, and Arnold Ventures' focus areas include education, criminal justice, health, infrastructure, and public finance, advocating for bipartisan policy reforms that will lead to lasting, scalable change. The Arnolds became signatories of the Giving Pledge in 2010.