



Job Title: Director of College Access

Company: Onward Scholars Program

Location: Greater Los Angeles. The office will be housed at one of our high school partner sites.

About the Onward Scholars Program: The Premier High School Student Success Program

An initiative of The John H. and Cynthia Lee Smet Foundation, the Onward Scholars Program (OSP) is a competitive scholarship and enrichment program for selected high school students with strong academic backgrounds. OSP provides a unique four-year pathway to success for exceptional students who demonstrate outstanding promise, motivation, and impactful leadership.

Onward Scholars operates at six Catholic high schools in the greater Los Angeles area: Cathedral High School, Sacred Heart High School, Salesian High School, St. Anthony High School, St. Mary's Academy, and St. Pius X - St. Matthias Academy. The Program currently serves 252 high school students and will serve 288 annually by the 2026-2027 school year. The three main components of the Onward Scholars Program are scholarship, mentorship, and college access. Please refer to our website to learn more:

<https://www.onwardscholars.org>

The Position: The Director of College Access plays a pivotal role in the Onward Scholar Program in empowering promising students to pursue higher education and achieve their academic and career aspirations. The newly created Director of College Access position will support the students of the Onward Scholars Program to and through their college experience.

This position requires a passionate, experienced, innovative, and strategic individual who possesses in-depth knowledge of the college guidance and admissions process. The Director works collaboratively with the six Onward Scholars Program Directors and is committed to fostering a supportive and knowledgeable environment for students as they apply to college.

Key Responsibilities:

1. College Access Program Management:

- Develop and implement strategies to increase college access and enrollment for students from diverse backgrounds.
- Oversee the planning and execution of college preparation workshops (i.e., program-wide summer boot camp), application assistance programs, and financial aid resources.
- Market the Onward Scholars Program to educational institutions to expand access to college resources, opportunities, and financial aid resources.
- Expand the college scholarships database on the Onward Scholars Salesforce platform.
- Stay current and knowledgeable on all college-related news and trends, both nationally and locally.

2. Student Support and Guidance:

- Work in partnership with the six Onward Scholars Directors to provide personalized guidance and support to students throughout the college application process, as needed per site. This includes building and finalizing college lists, application essays, and financial aid applications.
- Conduct parent workshops to coach families in the application process, specifically addressing the FAFSA and CSS Profile.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings and group workshops to address students' academic, social, and emotional needs as they transition to college life.
- In conjunction with the Onward Scholars Directors, write and send college counseling communications, maintaining regular connections with parents/guardians and students throughout the college admission process.
- Develop and maintain relationships with students to ensure ongoing support and mentorship throughout their college experience.

3. Data Analysis and Program Evaluation:

- Using Salesforce, collect and analyze data related to college access, enrollment, and alumni outcomes to assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- Develop and implement strategies to track and measure student progress, retention, and success metrics.
- Use data-driven insights to inform programmatic decisions and enhance the overall impact of the Onward Scholars Program.

4. Collaboration and Partnerships:

- Cultivate relationships with colleges, universities, and other educational stakeholders to create opportunities and resources for program participants.
- Collaborate with the Onward Scholars Program Directors to align college access initiatives with broader organizational goals and objectives.
- Represent the Onward Scholars Program at conferences, meetings, and community events to promote awareness and engagement.
- Serve as a versatile team member to support the team's needs and goals and be flexible if tasked with stepping in as an interim Program Director.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree in education, counseling, or related field preferred.
- 4+ years of experience in college counseling, student advising, or related fields.
- Demonstrated knowledge of college admissions processes, financial aid resources, and best practices in college counseling programming.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build rapport with students, families, alumni, and community partners.
- Excellent communication skills, including public speaking, writing, and presentation abilities.
- Weekly travel is required to visit the six program sites, and university partners.
- Willingness to work some evenings and weekends.
- Sense of optimism and flexibility to respond to the changing needs and duties of the team.
- Experience with data analysis and program evaluation, with a strong commitment to using data to drive decision-making.
- Proficiency with Salesforce preferred.
- Ability to partner with and collaborate with the other Onward Scholars Directors.
- Flexibility, creativity, and a proactive approach to problem-solving in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.
- A strong belief in Catholic education.

Reporting Structure: The Director of College Access reports John H. Smet, the Founder and Executive Director of the John H. and Cynthia Lee Smet Foundation, and importantly, works as a peer with the six Onward Scholars Program Directors.

This is a full-time 12-month position with a competitive salary range and benefits.

How to Apply:

Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest, current resume, a one-page statement assessing the current college counseling landscape, and a list of 5 references including contact information to Marcus Hurlbut at marcusdawsonhurlbut@gmail.com

The John H. and Cynthia Lee Smet Foundation is committed to equal employment opportunity. We do not discriminate based on an individual's race, sex, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, age, gender, genetic characteristics and information, or any other basis prohibited by law.