

Commentary/Op-Ed - September 2018

Op-Ed: Getting New York's Excelsior Scholarship Program Right

Governor Cuomo is right to focus on college affordability, but his Excelsior Scholarship program is only reaching a small number of New Yorkers. With a few tweaks, New York can make Excelsior a powerful engine of educational opportunity.

by Tom Hilliard

Governor Cuomo created the Excelsior Scholarship with the right vision: that a college degree should be affordable for all New Yorkers. But new research from the Center for an Urban Future shows that only 20,100 students received Excelsior Scholarship awards in the program's first year—just 3.2 percent of all CUNY and SUNY students—and over 43,000 students' applications were denied.

In this *Albany Times-Union* op-ed, CUF Senior Fellow for Economic Opportunity Tom Hilliard proposes four key tweaks that can help Excelsior reach its full potential and increase college affordability for more New Yorkers.

Read the op-ed here.

This op-ed is a continuation of the Center for an Urban Future's extensive research on higher education and college affordability in New York, including the recent study *Excelsior Scholarship Serving Very Few New York Students* and the major report *Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City*.

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Center for an Urban Future (CUF) is an independent, nonprofit think tank that generates innovative policies to create jobs,

reduce inequality and help lower income New Yorkers climb into the middle class. For 20 years, CUF has published accessible, data-driven reports on ways to grow and diversify the economy and expand opportunity that are anchored in rigorous research, not preconceived notions about outcome. Our work has been a powerful catalyst for policy change in New York City and serves as an invaluable resource for government officials, community groups, nonprofit practitioners and business leaders as they advocate for and implement policies to address some of New York's biggest challenges and opportunities.

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