



**Up\$tart** software bundles social benefits generating **\$134 million/year** in increased student income, raising retention and graduation rates, while augmenting revenues to institutions of higher education in New Mexico.

**Problem:** Rising tuition costs, static income and difficulty completing applications for existing federal benefits to separate government agencies with differing application cycles leave low-income students chasing benefit applications instead of focusing on their studies. The increased cost of college contributes to dwindling enrollment at New Mexico universities; UNM's 7% decline representing a \$4 million loss in revenues.

**Approach:** Through the Financial Aid office, low-income students can complete the FAFSA application (necessary for Pell Grants) and with their consent, apply for additional federal benefits – Earned Income Tax Credit for working students, and Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program for poor families. Subsequently, Up\$tart software will incorporate Supplemental Security Income, the Child Tax Credit, and Veterans benefits.

**Economic Impact:** Up\$tart optimizes social benefits, with the typical student receiving up to an additional \$8,144 per year. Students at a university serving 10,000 Pell recipients would receive \$40.7 million/year, assuming a take-up rate of 50%. Students are charged nothing. The university would be charged \$50,000 (\$5 per Pell grant recipient).

**Social Impact:** By targeting low-income students, Up\$tart directly addresses stratification due to class, race, gender and ethnicity. Up\$tart would increase college retention by 15% and graduation by 10%, upgrading the labor force necessary for the information age. Up\$tart accounts are portable, following students from community college, to 4-year institutions, to graduate school.

**Plan:** After perfecting the software at Northern New Mexico College, Up\$tart will expand to other universities and community colleges in New Mexico.

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