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PRESS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, March 31, 2022

## **FCAN Announces Winner of 2022 College Ready Florida Innovator Award**

Mobilizing students to plan for their futures takes great effort. That challenge was especially daunting this past year, as students continued to navigate the complexities of the college-going process during a pandemic.

That's why FCAN is excited to recognize a community leader who made impactful contributions and utilized innovative strategies this school year to increase the effectiveness of FCAN's College Ready Florida initiatives: [Apply Yourself Florida](#), [Florida FAFSA Challenge](#), [Florida College Decision Day](#), and [Plan It Florida](#).

FCAN is pleased to announce the honoree of the fourth annual **College Ready Florida Innovator Award**, which recognizes those trying new approaches to help students get into and pay for college while inspiring younger students to plan for their futures.

**The 2022 College Ready Florida Innovator is:**

**Noemi Y. Perez**

President and CEO

The Immokalee Foundation

Over the last three years, Perez has led her team at [The Immokalee Foundation](#) (TIF), redesigning the college-preparatory programs to ensure every student acquires the technical skills, hands-on experience, and credentials that lead to a professional career and financial independence.

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TIF's Career Pathways program builds on the success of the foundation's after-school and summer college-preparatory programs. Through extensive collaboration with local middle and high schools, industry professionals, and higher education institutions, Perez led the development of a new career model that prepares students for professional careers in high-demand jobs in Southwest Florida.

The program closely aligns with FCAN's College Ready strategies. As part of the program, workshops on FAFSA completion and scholarships are offered to all students and scheduled at various different times to increase attendance by parents. The Immokalee Foundation also covers the college application fees for its students.

Additionally, as students continue to grapple with the impact of COVID-19, the foundation collaborated with its education and business partners to implement an afterschool and summer virtual curriculum for all TIF Career Pathway students. Perez also worked with community leaders to help deliver food to students and families experiencing food insecurity.

"Through Noemi's leadership, The Immokalee Foundation is always innovating new ways to support its students in and out of the classroom," said Charleita M. Richardson, FCAN's executive director. "We are proud to honor Noemi's commitment to ensuring students are in the best position to succeed."

Nominations for the College Ready Florida Innovator Award were evaluated through a competitive process. **[This year's honoree will be recognized during the 2022 Talent Strong Florida Summit Awards Luncheon on May 11.](#)**

Please join us in congratulating Noemi Y. Perez, the 2022 College Ready Florida Innovator for supporting students' postsecondary ambitions!

### **About Florida College Access Network**

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida's first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and prosper in Florida's dynamic economy. We envision a Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all. For more information, visit [floridacollegeaccess.org](https://floridacollegeaccess.org).

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