



Authority on the blog doesn't fill out a loan application.

Ascent Funding is a private student lender competing in one of the hardest paid-and-organic verticals there is. The site already ranked – 12,380 organic keywords – but the previous contract had aimed 85% of its editorial links at blog posts. General authority went up. The pages where applications actually start didn't.

Most agencies keep pointing links wherever they're easiest to place. That's not us. This term we changed the target: product and application pages first, with a dedicated add-on campaign concentrated on the graduate loans program.

Then we measured the pages we linked, one by one.

WHAT WE DID

71 editorial placements, 71 unique domains

Handcrafted links built December 2025 through August 2028 – averaging DA 51 with 38 at DA 50 or better.

71	50	36	21
LINKER BUILT	AVERAGE DA	LINKER AT DA 90+	GRAB ADD-ON LINKER
Dec 2025 - Aug 2026	Range 32 to 93	15 at DA 60+, 3 at DA 70+	Aug. DA 52

Highest-authority placements: Digital Journal (3A 88) - Space Coast Daily (73) - Icy Tales (73) - BNC News (84) - BM Magazine (84)
Ed. per Mo.

Contract Type	Percentage of editorial links pointed at conversion pages
PREVIOUS CONTRACT	15%
THIS TERM	63%

Links to blog posts build general authority. Links to [/college-loans/](#) and [/graduate-student-loans/](#) build authority where applications start.

MEDIA BLITZ

224 links from a single research asset

The Future of Student Loans: 2025 Trend Report — original research on student financial insecurity pitched and syndicated through the Stacker network. Every Media Blitz link points to that one name.

The report page itself stays small in search: 9 to 16 clicks, with impressions growing from 1,009 to 3,924. The value is 224 referring links flowing into the domain, supporting rankings statewide -- including the conversion pages above.

NATIONAL-TIER PLACEMENTS	
MSN	08.94
MSN (money vertical)	08.93
AOL	08.91
Santa Fe New Mexican	08.78
The Daily Gazette	08.75
Environment Energy Leader	08.71
224 links	Unlinkable accounts

THE RESULTS

Graduate loans: clicks more than doubled

The page the Grad add-on targeted, lost six months against the previous six in Search Console.

CLICK TO THE PAGE 461 + 958 IMPRESSIONS 201,745 + 340,457 AVERAGE POSITION 14.8 → 9.3	+107% +69% +5.3	The wider graduate section Across all 12 URLs under <i>graduate-student-leads</i>, clicks rose from 1,101 to 2,161 (+96%) and impressions from 450,306 to 617,440 (+37%). Medical school leads – a sub-page we never linked directly – went from 142 to 404 clicks as the parent section gained authority.
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CONNECTING THE TWO

Every conversion page we pointed links at

The page that received the most links grew fastest: +107% against a site-wide average of +28%.

CONVERSION PAGE	LINKS	CLICKS	CNVR%	IMPRESSIONS	Avg. POSITION
Graduate Student Loans	25	482 + 255	+67%	213,795 + 2,942,457	14.6 + 8.5
Homepage	5	41,130 + 3,03,371	+24%	2,399 + 3,399	23.8 + 10.3
College Loans (Hub)	4	818 + 1,153	+42%	48,047 + 1,07,226	17.3 + 9.0
Cosigner	4	521 + 771	+85%	59,830 + 125,518	8.5 + 12.3
Undergraduate Loans	5	201 + 241	+26%	96,137 + 36,762	9.6 + 8.7
Student Loans 101	2	19 + 21	+16%	17,918 + 31,276	13.6 + 18.7

Three pages gained clicks while shedding impressions – click-through rate improved sharply. Cosign went from 0.10% to 0.58%, Undergraduate Loans from 0.21% to 0.66%.

Keyword footprint at the end of the term

12,360
ORGANIC KEYWORDS
RANKING

3,941
POSITIONS IN THE TOP 10

1,267
KEYWORDS Citing ACSENT
IN AN AI OVERVIEW

Brand and no-cosigner terms anchor the top of the funnel: position 1 for "ascend student loans", "student loans without cosigner" and "private student loans no cosigner"; position 2 for "best student loans" – 9,900 searches a month.

Sources: Google Search Console, last six months vs. previous six, export Aug 17, 2020. Semrush organic positions, U.S., snapshot 8/16/2020. Timing and targeting alignment, not a causal test.

The term in summary

296 links built	71 editorial placements from 71 unique domains, plus 224 from Media Blitz.
63% on conversion pages	Up from 15% in the previous contract.
Clicks up 29%	108,458 to 141,036, with U.S. average position improving from 12.5 to 8.2.
Graduate loans up 107%	461 to 956 clicks on the page the add-on targeted – 3.7% the site-wide rate.
12,360 keywords	Including 3,941 top-10 positions and 1,267 All-Overview citations.

Better links. Better content. Better results

[TALK TO A LINK BUILDER](#)