

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS COLLABORATIVE



## What is the Postsecondary Success Collaborative?

The Postsecondary Success Collaborative, formerly the Citi Postsecondary Success Program, is a national initiative launched in 2008 by the Citi Foundation to build clear pathways to college success in Miami-Dade County, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

With local education funds leading and tailoring efforts for each site, the Success Collaborative works with target high schools to build partnerships that strengthen existing resources; to use the Postsecondary Success Asset Map to gauge and to strengthen schools' college-prep resources and gaps; to ensure students complete financial aid forms; to expose students to college no later than 9th grade; and to track each school's progress.

## Who is involved?

The Success Collaborative is built on partnerships. Citi Foundation launched the initiative with a \$5.1 million investment. FHI360, a global nonprofit development organization, provides technical assistance. The OMG Center for Collaborative Learning provides program evaluation. Success Collaborative work in each site is led by a local education fund (LEF). The Success Collaborative requires local leadership from long-standing, education-focused nonprofit organizations well positioned to connect high schools, colleges and universities and community groups to support all students on the pathway to college.

Community partners play vital roles in the Success Collaborative. Superintendents and educators work with community-based organizations to bring services and supports to the students who need it most. Higher education partners help in myriad ways, such as inviting students to campus, supporting the financial aid process, and collaborating with high school educators on creating better instructional and curricular alignment for students. The Postsecondary Success Collaborative helps weave these efforts together, getting students and families involved and invested in college readiness and the college application and financial aid processes.

## Why are the Citi Foundation and other funders supporting the Success Collaborative?

The Citi Foundation recognizes that all students deserve the opportunity to pursue an education beyond high school. Students need the right education, tools and skills to make it in today's increasingly competitive job market. By 2020, 65% of jobs will require a postsecondary education or training beyond high school. Viable family incomes and the health of state economies depend on more of our young people succeeding in college. The Citi Foundation is committed to providing resources, expertise and support to help low-income youth enter and succeed in higher education. Local funders have matched Citi's investment in each of the participating districts, a key factor in sustaining the work beyond Citi's initial investment.

## How has the program been successful?

Our first class is completing its initial year of college, with encouraging results. We are documenting our outcomes through the partnership with the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, which has been evaluating our three sites. Here are a few of our many highlights:

- **National:** From 2009-12, Postsecondary Success Collaborative schools saw a 12% overall increase in college enrollment. Five schools with strong implementation of a set of core strategies raised college enrollment 26% for all students and 39% for African American and Latino students.
- **Miami-Dade:** From 2009-12, college enrollment increased 69% for black students; 25% for Latino students and 23% for English language learners.

- **Philadelphia:** The high school graduation rate for students who entered the 12th grade trended upward from 2009-11 to 82%, or five percent above the district average.
- **San Francisco:** From 2009-11, college enrollment rates for three participating non-charter public high schools exceeded district rates, increasing 36% for black students and 14% for Latino students.

*Local analysis conducted by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning. Denominators were of 12th graders only. Philadelphia data are from 2009-11.*

## What is a college-going culture and how do you foster it in schools?

We want all students to understand that the key to a great future is an education beyond high school. But college readiness does not happen in the 12th grade. Beginning by 9th grade at the latest, students need to know how to plan and prepare for their life after high school, and to hear that they are college material and that they can access financial resources that put college within reach. Building a college-going culture requires support and participation from everyone in a community – students, school leaders, teachers, colleges, parents and families, and community and business groups.

## What is our Postsecondary Success Asset Map?

The Postsecondary Success Asset Map provides schools with a research-based method to identify what is available and what's missing in terms of college readiness supports and services. Without adding new programs or spending new money, the tool allows schools to help all students, beginning in 9th grade, by making sure the right services are available and



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extended to students as efficiently as possible.

## How are you helping student complete the FAFSA?

FAFSA completion is critical to college access and success. Research by the National Center for Postsecondary Research shows that completing the FAFSA significantly increases students' likelihood of enrolling in college. Unfortunately, FAFSA forms are complicated and the challenge is even greater for parents who do not speak English, work two or more jobs, or are uncomfortable releasing personal information. In each of our cities, Success Collaborative partners monitor FAFSA completions and provide expert help, materials in several languages, and family-friendly events to fill out the application.

## How is the Success Collaborative unique?

The Success Collaborative is not a direct service initiative. We work with community organizations, such as local education funds, schools, districts, higher education, and direct service organizations to make sure the right services are available to all students – especially those who need the services most – throughout high school. We build on services and supports already in place to make them more effective. Through our Postsecondary Success Asset Map, we provide principals, superintendents and partners the information they need to make the best decisions for their schools. The Success Collaborative is a partnership-driven approach to building sustainable college-going cultures in communities where we work.

## How will the Postsecondary Success Initiative be sustained?

Each local education fund and its partners are working with local funders to ensure that the progress started by the Success Collaborative continues. FHI 360 is committed to continuing this work by spreading it to other communities and beyond the 12,000 students

### Learn More:

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