Closing the College Graduation Gap

National College Access and
Success Benchmarking Report

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collegeaccess.org/benchmarkingreport

For years, or in some cases decades, National College Access Network (NCAN) member organizations have provided college access and success services to students who have been traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education. NCAN students are typically low-income, often of color, and frequently from families without a history of college-going. For the more than two million individuals that NCAN members assist annually, these services are often the key that unlocks the door to postsecondary education, changing lives and communities.

These opportunities are critical not just as a matter of equity (because a student's ZIP code or skin color should not predetermine their educational opportunities) but also of economics (because the United States faces a significant shortage of degrees of all kinds in upcoming decades[i]). To reach President Obama's goal for the United States to reclaim its position as the country with the highest proportion of college-educated adults,[ii] college access and success support for low-income students is more important than ever. So the time is right for NCAN members and similar organizations to consider: How much of a difference are we making for those students?

We must answer that question with data, which have become a crucial part of the college access and success support equation. Thanks to decades of research, program experimentation, and technological advancement, we no longer need to wonder whether these supports "work" for students. Virtually every organization— whether a community-based nonprofit, a public high school, a university-based outreach program, or a state higher education agency—can obtain the data about whether the students they assist enroll in, persist, and complete a postsecondary credential. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) provides these data affordably to public schools and other nonprofit entities that have obtained students' permission to access their records.

Not only do these data reveal whether students reach the ultimate goal of postsecondary completion, they also provide almost real-time information to the organizations supporting students, allowing them to adapt program strategies that aren't sufficiently effective or to reach out to students who have left higher education without having earned a credential. Furthermore, the data allow us to change the national college access and success conversation from debating the perceived merits of various service delivery models to measuring actual student outcomes.

Many NCAN member organizations collect these data regularly. To assist them in learning from their data and to increase awareness about strategies demonstrated to work for students, NCAN is pleased to present the results of our inaugural National College Access and Success Benchmarking study. The study aggregates student data from NCAN members, examines these students' postsecondary access and success milestones, and compares NCAN-served students' progress to national results. This report also includes brief program descriptions of five of the NCAN member organizations that participated in the study.

What did we find in this first year? Students served by NCAN-member programs outperform expectations for college enrollment and completion, demonstrating that current national lower levels of postsecondary attainment for poor and minority students are not destiny. Specifically, the study showed:

1. College enrollment rates for NCAN students were comparable to students who attended higher income high schools.
2. The six-year college completion rate of NCAN students who graduated from

National College Access and Success Benchmarking Study

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The six-year college completion rate of NCAN students who graduated from high school in 2007 was approaching the national rate for all high school graduates in that year and exceeded significantly the completion rate for low-income, first-generation students from the high school class of 2003.[iii]

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These results support the conclusion that NCAN's members are making progress toward closing the college knowledge, opportunity, and completion gaps for the students they serve.

Data Source and Methodology

NCAN worked with the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC) to conduct the benchmarking study. The NSCRC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to using data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to inform educators and policymakers. The NSC is a 501(c)(6) organization that collects information on enrollment and degree completion from 3,600 higher education institutions covering 98 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the United States.

Using student-level data provided by 24 NCAN member programs, the NSCRC examined both enrollment and completion rates for students served by NCAN members. The participating programs gathered data on the students they served who graduated from high school in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2013 (for number of students per annual cohort, see figure 1). The data included the standard student identifying information required by the NSCRC to determine a student's enrollment or completion status. 23 of the programs also submitted additional data on whether each student:

- received a Pell Grant,
- had an expected family contribution (EFC) greater or less than $5,000 per year,
- was provided with scholarship funds by the program, and
- if the program provided any support services while at a postsecondary institution

Figure 1. Number of NCAN-Served Students Submitted per Cohort	
2007	34,190
2008	36,876
2009	39,158
2013	45,396

All data were submitted to the NSCRC through their StudentTracker service to determine the postsecondary enrollment and four-, five- and six-year completion rates of those students. The enrollment and completion rates comprised an "NCAN Benchmark" against which programs can measure their own outcomes. These benchmarks are important because there is not currently a reliable annual source for data on the outcomes of low-income, first-generation students. Federal data collections and surveys are either too incomplete or too infrequent when it comes to providing a clear picture of the performance of underserved students. Consequently, in the results section that follows, we use the best postsecondary enrollment and graduation rate comparisons available, acknowledging that they are not perfect.

For enrollment rates, the NSCRC calculated the percentage of students who enrolled in college at any point in the first year after high school graduation for the four cohorts (2007, 2008, 2009, and 2013).[1] For benchmarking purposes, NCAN compared the results to first-year postsecondary enrollment rates published in the NSCRC's High School Benchmarks Report. This report, published in the fall of 2014, includes first-year postsecondary enrollment rates for 12 different

[1] A notable limitation of this analysis is that the number of students submitted by each of the 24 programs varied from less than 100 to tens of thousands, so a larger program's results can skew the aggregate numbers.

categories of public non-charter high schools that participate in the NSCRC's StudentTracker Service. The NSCRC Report does not include the same cohort years as the NCAN benchmarks, however, so comparisons are made to the NSCRC high school graduation cohort of 2012.

For completion rates, the NSCRC calculated the percentage of students from the same four high school graduation year cohorts (2007, 2008, 2009, and 2013) who completed a postsecondary credential within six years of enrollment. For benchmarking purposes, the NSCRC compared the results to the national six-year degree completion rate published in the NSCRC's Degree Completion Report. This report, published in the fall of 2013, analyzes degree completion rates for the cohort of students that entered college in fall 2007.

Results

Postsecondary Enrollment

The first-year postsecondary enrollment rates for the 2007, 2008 and 2009 NCAN cohorts were 71%, 70%, and 70%, respectively. The rate for the 2013 cohort was 65%, but only six months of postsecondary enrollment data were available at the time of analysis. Given enrollment data for the full 2013-14 academic year, the rate for the 2013 cohort could easily reach the 70% mark as well.

Figure 2. Postsecondary Enrollment Following First Year of High School Graduation	
All non-NCAN cohorts from Class of 2012	
High-Income, Low-Minority, Suburban High Schools	77%
High-Income, Low-Minority, Urban High Schools	76%
NCAN Class of 2007	71%
NCAN Class of 2009	70%
NCAN Class of 2008	70%
High-Income, Low-Minority, Rural High Schools	69%
High-Income, High-Minority, Suburban High Schools	69%
High-Income, High-Minority, Urban High Schools	68%
High-Income, High-Minority, Rural High Schools	66%
NCAN Class of 2013*	65%
Low-Income, Low-Minority, Urban High Schools	62%
Low-Income, High-Minority, Suburban High Schools	60%
Low-Income, High-Minority, Rural High Schools	59%
Low-Income, High-Minority, Urban High Schools	58%
Low-Income, Low-Minority, Suburban High Schools	54%
Low-Income, Low-Minority, Rural High Schools	52%

*NCAN 2013 Cohort is a partial year of enrollment.

In general, the first-year enrollment rates for the NCAN cohorts exceed the enrollment rates for many of the categories of high school graduates from the High School Benchmarks Report. The 2007, 2008, and 2009 NCAN cohorts' enrollment rates are much higher than the six categories of low-income high

schools for the NSCRC Class of 2012. The NCAN cohorts' enrollment rates are also higher or equal to four of six categories of higher-income schools (see figure 2). Even the incomplete 2013 NCAN cohort compares favorably to these higher income high schools. This is an important finding. Given the profile of students that are most typically served by NCAN members, evidence that our students' outcomes are comparing favorably to or exceeding those of students from better resourced communities who are typically more likely to go to college emphasizes that students can succeed when provided with access and success service support.

Postsecondary Graduation

Overall, the six-year completion rate for the 2007 NCAN cohort was approaching the national six-year completion rate of 59.7% published in the NSCRC report for degree-seeking students less than 20 years of age who started college in 2007. For the 2007 NCAN cohort, 54.8% of the students who began postsecondary education in 2007-08 completed either a bachelor's degree, associate degree, or certificate within six years.[2] This similarity in college completion rates is notable, considering that traditionally underrepresented students have much lower completion rates than average.[3] These NCAN members have made great strides toward closing the significant higher education graduation gap typical for low-income individuals.

Of all high school graduates in the 2007 NCAN cohort (not just the students who went to college in the first year) 44.4% completed a postsecondary credential within six years of high school graduation. For bachelor's degree completions in particular, the results underscore the importance of the fifth and sixth year of postsecondary study (see figure 3). The percentage of all students in the 2007 NCAN cohort who completed bachelor's degrees doubled from the fourth year to the sixth year of postsecondary study; the 2008 and 2009 cohorts were on track for similar results.

| Figure 3. NCAN Class of 2007 Cohort - Degree and Certificate Completion From 4th to 6th Years		
	% BA Recipients	% AA or Certificate Recipients
2010-11 (4th Year of Enrollment)	17.2%	3.5%
2011-12 (5th Year of Enrollment)	32.1%	4.8%
2012-13 (6th Year of Enrollment)	38.5%	5.8%

Beyond overall enrollment and completion rates, the NSCRC also analyzed subgroups of NCAN students by the additional information some programs provided in their submission: Pell Grant recipients, those with expected family contributions above $5,000, scholarship recipients, and students in programs that reported providing "additional support services." Unfortunately, the sample sizes were not large enough for these variables to draw reliable conclusions about whether they were correlated with higher postsecondary enrollment and completion rates. In future years, collection of more NCAN member data will allow us to identify relationships between those variables and student outcomes. NCAN

[2] At the time of analysis, the 2008 NCAN cohort had not finished its sixth academic year, but the completion rate through 5.5 years was already 49.0%.
[3] Just 10% of students in the lowest income quartile nationally complete a bachelor's degree by age 25. Martha J. Bailey and Susan M. Dynarski, "Inequality in Postsecondary Attainment," 2011. In Greg Duncan and Richard Murnane, eds., Whither Opportunity:

Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances, pp. 117-132. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Additionally, see six-year graduation rates for Pell-receiving students who enrolled in a postsecondary program in 2003; these data come from the National Center for Education Statistics' Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study.

also plans to add data to the study about the types of support services students receive, student gender, race, and ethnicity, and program selectivity.

Figure 4.
Six-Year Completion Rate Comparison
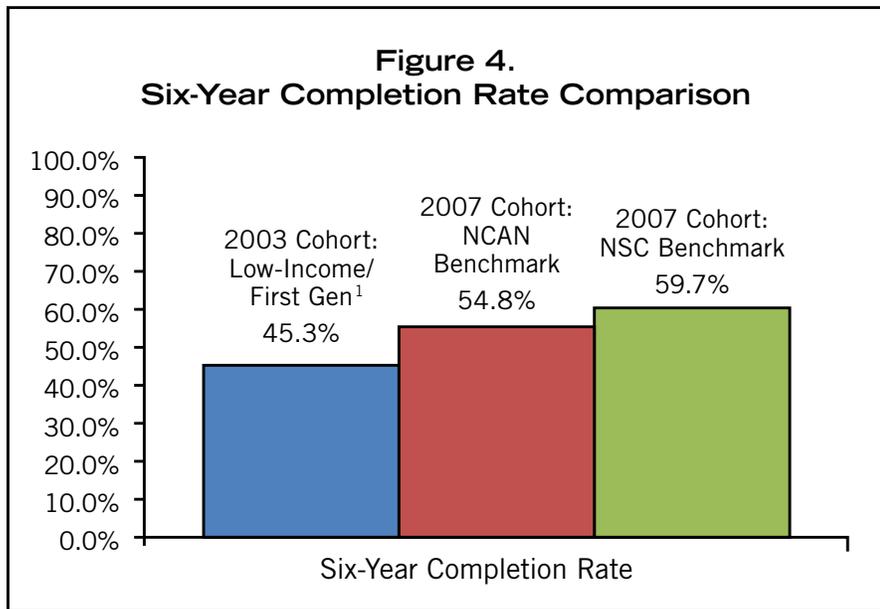
1. National Center for Education Statistics Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Students 19 or younger who started college in 2003 whose parents did not attain a bachelor's degree and whose family incomes were $25,000 or less.

To move beyond the quantitative to the qualitative, the next section profiles five NCAN members, all Benchmarking Study participants, in an effort to better understand programs that successfully serve students.

After receiving the results of the first round of benchmarking, NCAN staff conducted semi-structured interviews with study participants to get a fuller sense of the scope of their organizations' services, partnerships, data management and usage, organizational culture, reflections on past successes, and aspirations about the future. Although this report will not disclose these organizations' specific benchmarking results, each has found success in some ways in fulfilling NCAN's mission of getting traditionally underserved students to and through college. These programs either had generally positive outcomes for students or were able to serve a large number of students or both.

Although these programs differ in many ways, as do other NCAN members across the country, they share some similarities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these organizations emphasized their strong commitments to and passion for their missions and the students that they serve. Beyond that, however, many of these organizations have strong ties with partner organizations in their communities. These partner organizations may serve as a pipeline for student recruitment, for providing additional services, or for working on policy- and advocacy-related endeavors. Most of the programs acknowledged a strong commitment to being data-informed, if not completely data-driven, and to maintaining systems that allow them to track students' progress in the college-going pipeline and the services that these students receive. Although these were the broad similarities, there were also many differences among these programs, including how students are recruited, requirements for program participation, and the breadth and depth of services provided. The profiles serve as snapshots of how college access and success programs approach their important work.

NCAN Member Profiles

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Founded: 1966 Location: Cleveland, Ohio
Annual Program Budget: ~$7.7 million
Number of Students Served per Year: 20,000-25,000

Application Process/Participation Requirements: CNGC has a mostly open-door policy that does not restrict when, where, or how students are served. The key exceptions to this rule are federal grant programs that might have requirements and the "Top 50" program. The "Top 50" does outreach to high-performing low-income students and puts them in a cohort program with intrusive advising. This advising is intended to ensure that students in the Top 50 do not undermatch and consider highly selective institutions about which they may not have previously been aware.

How and Where Services are Delivered: Services fit into six core categories: academic advising, career exploration, postsecondary admissions, postsecondary entrance exams, financial aid, and last-dollar scholarships. CNGC advisors are located in middle and high schools and provide in-school advising. Additionally, there are two community resource centers run by CNGC that largely serve adult populations looking to get into the workforce, change their careers, find a postsecondary pathway, or pursue a higher level degree.

What Makes the Organization Successful:

– Program leadership provides both a clear direction of where the organization should go and allows the leeway for program staff to go in that direction.
– Sharing information and ensuring transparency in the conduct of the work. "There are no secrets about what we do or why."

Challenges:

– Managing program growth and serving more students
– Understanding that there are academic challenges in the schools and providing more robust career orientation services
– Making data as efficient as possible and streamlining processes to eliminate excess time for data collection and management for staff.

What's Next? Moving forward, CNGC would like to differentiate services to meet certain categories of need. For example, homeless students may need different kinds of support than teenage mothers who might need different support than black and Latino males. Additionally, CNGC would like to continue to develop its career education services as well as consider an ACT/SAT preparation program. Lastly, developing a "city-wide or county-wide scholarship" is on a list of potential future agenda items.

Founded: 1994 Location: Glen Allen, Virginia
Approx. Annual Budget: ~$900,000
Number of Students Served Per Year: 210

Application Process/Participation Requirements: Students apply in 9th grade and must have a 3.0 GPA. The program looks at challenging circumstances (e.g., first-generation status, family income), but there are no formal income cut-offs. PFF is also looking for students with college-preparatory schedules, including rigorous coursework and AP classes.

How and Where Services are Delivered: Mentoring is delivered primarily once a month for about 15-30 minutes per student at partner high schools. Other communications may occur via phone, text, and email. SAT preparation meets at least once a week for nine weeks. ACT preparation meets twice a week for three to four weeks. SAT/ACT preparation meets in a neutral location accessible to students from partner high schools. PFF also delivers a curriculum during the summer. During students' firs summer they attend the PFF Institute. In their second summer, they are placed at various internship opportunities in the community where they are paid to work four days a week. On Fridays, students return to PFF for paid training days related to life and professional skills. Students return to their internship for the remaining two summers where they have the potential to earn a raise. Students open a 529 college savings account, and PFF matches their savings up to $2,000.

What Makes the Organization Successful:

- Staff can empathize with the students they serve because 95% of PFF staff are first-generation college students who had their own challenging circumstances. "We graduated from the same high schools as our students. We like to share our stories and show students how hard work impacts their success," says President and CEO Charleita Richardson.
- The small staff builds camaraderie and allows staff to call on and depend on each other.
- Although the organization's data capacity is developing, PFF sticks to its critical metrics (e.g., postsecondary enrollment, receipt of scholarships, number of internships available) while keeping an eye out on new trends in the fields to continue adapting and learning.

Challenges: A key challenge is continuing to find community partners with which to place students for internships. It takes a lot of continuous effort to continue to find new connections and partners who see the impact an internship can have on students' lives.

What's Next? "We actually have one idea for a PFF Boot Camp. As an organization, we focus on quality over quantity, but in the Boot Camp idea, we want to be able to serve more students in the community with Saturday sessions

on preparing for college. They will not be full PFF students, but they will learn some of the key college preparation steps that we teach our students. Other school districts and schools would like to have PFF serve their areas, so we want to extend our reach into the community. This is a big change for us but we are excited about it." – Charleita Richardson, President and CEO

The Scholarship Foundation OF ST. LOUIS

Founded: 1920 Location: St. Louis, Missouri
Annual Program Budget: ~$5 million
Percentage of Pell Students: 77%

Number of Students Served per Year: Between 550-600 students receive scholarships per year, of which 100-150 receive intensive advising. An additional 5,000 students and families receive financial guidance and assistance through the Student Advocate and Advising Program.

Application Process/Participation Requirements: Applicants for interest-free loans are selected based on "academic potential, personal character, and significant financial need." There are no age restrictions. To continue receiving loans, students must demonstrate continuing financial need and satisfactory academic progress toward receiving their degrees. Applicants must have earned a high school diploma with a minimum 2.0 GPA or have a GED. Individuals with a history of educational loan default or bankruptcy are not eligible for the programs, although SFSTL may take an applicant's exceptional circumstances into consideration.

How and Where Services are Delivered: Services fall into three main areas:

1. Direct financial support to students. In 2013, SFSTL gave $3.2 million dollars in interest-free loans and $600,000 in grants to 562 St. Louis students. Additionally, a college savings program for 8th graders recently started.
2. Information and guidance so that students can make sound financial decisions for themselves. These include public information campaigns (workshops ranging from 5-500 people in attendance) as well as small-group and individual advising on the path to postsecondary education. 100-150 scholarship recipients also receive intensive advising services.
3. Collective impact work in the community to align partners on the college access/success continuum. "It's sort of like being the regional brain trust for an objective viewpoint on, in particular, financial aid and the dangers of excessive debt and how to navigate this with a minimum of risk." – Faith Sandler, Executive Director

Services are delivered at the SFSTL offices and high schools, through campus visits, and via telephone, text, and email.

What Makes the Organization Successful:

− Financial stability. The organization has a distinct advantage in that it is neither grant- nor contribution-dependent. Its sources of income are stable which assists in maintaining focus on the organization's mission and core activities.
− Brand loyalty/recognition/integrity in St. Louis. SFSTL has served its community since 1920 and is recognized as the regional leader in college access and success. The foundation is often called on to share what it knows about financial aid and other college knowledge with the community.

Because of the organization's reputation, collaboration with other community partners is made easier because partnerships are "less risky" for SFSTL than for other organizations.

– Passion. "All of those things also don't do us much good if we don't have the passion…From volunteers to scholarship recipients to program staff and board members, everyone is so passionate about the mission. I think that's why collaborations work because we make students a priority and put them first." – Faith Sandler, Executive Director

Challenges: SFSTL continues to evaluate what its measures. They continue to align their metrics to NCAN's Common Measures, but they are also working on defining post-success metrics. Although the program staff has not started precisely defining or collecting any of these, a post-success metric might ask whether the Foundation's graduates are involved in their communities and in what ways? What are graduates' current economic or health statuses? The organization is looking at moving from focusing solely on repayment rates on loans to broader outcomes about the organization's place in the community. In order to get to these, there may be more intermediate metrics that could bridge the gap between what is collected now and the broader, longer-term goals.

What's Next? Through St. Louis Graduates, a collective impact effort, SFSTL will continue to expand its advocacy and policy work. The strengths mentioned above make the foundation an influential voice to potentially engage in policy work at a higher level. SFSTL recently launched a new 8th grade college savings program that starts 529 accounts for middle school students. As mentioned above, SFSTL will continue to look closely at its metrics in order to assess its strengths and weaknesses.

Bottom Line

Founded: 1997 Location: Boston, Worcester (MA), New York City, Chicago
Annual Program Budget: ~$7.4 million
Percentage of Pell Students: 84%
Number of Students Served per Year: 3,900

Application Process/Participation Requirements: Students need to apply to Bottom Line, and they are selected on the basis of their likelihood to return to their communities and build them after college. Although there is no specific academic requirement, students "must be academically eligible to attend a four-year college." Andrew MacKenzie, Director of Evaluation, notes, "We're not as actively and expressly interested in recruiting super-academic students. Usually it's first-come first-serve."

How and Where Services are Delivered: Services begin at the end of a student's junior year or the start of their senior year. Students meet five to six times on average for about an hour to create and package their applications, create a list of colleges, search for scholarships, and write their application essays. Three to four more meetings in the spring of senior year center on financial aid and enrollment decisions. Students who attend one of Bottom Line's 20 "target colleges" receive one-on-one counseling with a Bottom Line advisor for up to six years of undergraduate schooling. Target colleges are those that "match quality with affordability." An additional provided service is a "clearinghouse of sorts" for local scholarships for students in the communities where Bottom Line operates.

What Makes the Organization Successful: "The game changers for us are conversations around finances and which colleges to apply to. There are a lot of students out there from families with an EFC of zero, and [schools] will gladly charge that family $20,000 per year. There are other schools that will give as good or better an education, and from which that student can graduate with zero debt. We're able to help that student identify which schools are likely to fall into the latter category, and to see the merits of attending such a school."." – Andrew MacKenzie

Challenges: "We serve a large percentage of the program-eligible students in the City of Boston, but there are several towns just outside of the city borders that are full of eligible students who we don't serve. We're looking at ways to get out to those students who are further from the city center and serve them in a way that fits our model." – Andrew MacKenzie

What's Next? "We're deepening our work on career services and looking to expand to one or more additional cities. In general, we're always looking to optimize the quality of our programs and to do so with an eye toward our cost per student." – Andrew MacKenzie

Founded: 1988 Location: Columbus, Ohio
Annual Program Budget: $4.1 million
Number of Students Served per Year: 25,000

Application Process/Participation Requirements: Services are open to all students 6th grade and above in the Columbus City School District. To receive a $1,200 IKIC grant for college, students must have a 2.25 GPA, be Pell-eligible, and be enrolled in a postsecondary institution full-time. To maintain the grant, they must keep a 2.0 college GPA and re-apply each year. A smaller cohort of students receives the Founders' Scholarship; students with unmet need can get up to $10,000 a year for four years through a competitive process that includes a lengthy application with a personal statement and letters of recommendation. Requirements for the Founder Scholarship include a 3.0 GPA and continuous enrollment in the district from 9-12th grade.

How and Where Services are Delivered: IKIC provides a wide variety of services to the entire Columbus City School District, with which the organization has had a relationship for 25 years. Services start in 6th grade and progress through college success initiatives. Key middle school interventions include the provision of college and career introductions through the Naviance curriculum and parent outreach, which includes Blueprint College, a three-part series of workshops. In high school, the focus is on using the Naviance platform in the 9th and 10th grades. In the 11th and 12th grades, students work on ACT and SAT preparation and the mechanics of admissions and financial aid. Once accepted, students go through a pre-orientation to their college orientation so that they know what to expect when they set foot on-campus. Other IKIC access services include SAT, ACT, and application fee waivers; college application and essay writing workshops; college fairs; and an Individual Development Account (IDA) program. On the success side, there is a structured retention model of advising. Pre-enrollment kick-off events are held at campuses with large numbers of IKIC students. There is also peer mentoring where 2nd or 3rd year IKIC grant recipients call students to check in. Additionally, students on every campus are encouraged to develop an education plan.

What Makes the Organization Successful:

- Timing. Aligning programs and information so that students and parents get what they need at the right time. Starting in 6th grade and moving through the college-going continuum, IKIC times messages to students and parents so that they receive important message multiple times and receive others "just in time" to be actionable.
- Being mission-focused. "We have done a really great job of staying very focused on our mission. Although we are trying to expand the programs that we offer, we are expanding to serve more students with the same programs and not trying to expand by creating more programs. We have this to-do list or menu of services that we offer, and our goals are always around how to expose more students to this menu of services and not stray from that. Our to-do list is important, but our 'stop doing list' or 'don't do' list is just as important to the work. We are not chasing dollars and making every decision

around a grant…We try to make sure that we're truly achieving our mission, and not just because we could use $50,000 or $100,000." – Katina Fullen, Executive Director

- Staff experience. Having professional staff with experience working at colleges is very valuable. These IKIC staff members understand the procedures students need in the 11th and 12th grades, and they are a constant support around admissions and financial aid questions. The depth of knowledge they have from their backgrounds on college campuses make them a great resource for IKIC students.

Challenges and What's Next: Building capacity for advising is a key next step. In a recent strategic plan, stakeholders said that the advising provided by IKIC was welcome and effective but that there were not enough advisors or opportunities to receive that advising. The challenge moving ahead is to get a number of stakeholders on-board with the expansion of IKIC. A continuing challenge that the expansion will hope to better meet is the "access for all" model in Columbus City Schools. "We don't get to pick the kids we get to serve; we serve them all, and they're at different places," says Katina Fullen. Having more advisors would help to meet that need.

Conclusion and Next Steps

These five programs are just a few of the nearly 400 NCAN members all across the country that touch the lives of more than two million students each year. These programs take different approaches and operate on different scales, but their mission is clear: providing postsecondary opportunities to students who traditionally have not received them. With the results from the first National College Access and Success Benchmarking study, we now have broader evidence than ever before that college access and success programs help the low-income, first-generation students that they serve to close the postsecondary enrollment and completion gaps.

As encouraging as this new evidence is, it is also incomplete and raises questions requiring further research. The 24 member programs that participated this year represent a great start upon which to build, but they are not statistically representative of the entire NCAN membership. NCAN is recruiting additional members to participate in the 2015 report so we can get an even better understanding of student outcomes across the entire college access and success field. The 2014 National Benchmarking Report has opened a window through which to view the significant success our students are experiencing in college. We thank our member organizations for supporting this initiative and look forward to learning more together in years to come.

Endnotes

[i] Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013, June). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Accessed via http://cew.georgetown.edu/recovery2020 on 10 November 2014.

[ii] The White House (2014). "Higher Education." Accessed via http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education on 10 November 2014.

[iii] Enrollment rate benchmark via: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2014). *High School Benchmarks: National College Progression Rates*. 13 October 2014. Accessed via http://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/HighSchoolBenchmarks2014.pdf on 10 November 2014. Completion rate benchmark via: Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Ziskin, M., Yuan, X., & Harrell, A. (2013, December). *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates-Fall 2007 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 6). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Accessed via http://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport6/ on 10 November 2014. Class of 2003 benchmark via U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Accessed via http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps/.

National College Access Network

Building Connections. Advancing Equity. Promoting Success.