



# Blurring Boundaries: Transforming Place, Policies, and Partnerships for Postsecondary Education Attainment in Metropolitan Areas

BY ABBY MILLER, EDWARD SMITH, EUNKYOUNG PARK, AND JENNIFER ENGLE

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# Executive Summary

By 2020, more than six out of 10 U.S. jobs will require postsecondary training.<sup>1</sup> Despite a slight increase in college attainment nationally in recent years, the fastest-growing minority groups are being left behind.<sup>2</sup> Only 25 and 18 percent of Blacks and Hispanics, respectively, hold at least an associate's degree, compared with 39 percent of Whites.<sup>3</sup> Without substantial increases in educational attainment, particularly for our nation's already underserved groups, the United States will have a difficult time developing a robust economy.

Home to 65 percent of Americans, and a majority of all African Americans and Hispanics (74 and 79 percent, respectively), the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) can play a strong role in developing this nation's workforce. In fact, to reach a national attainment target that meets our workforce

needs, more than half of college degrees could be generated from these cities. The majority of degrees needed among African-American and Hispanic adults could also be produced in MSAs.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, investing in and organizing around the potential of metropolitan areas is critical, and the stakes have never been higher. Yet the current funding climate requires strategic public and private partnerships to invest in education innovation and human capital development in order to have the most robust impact on sustainable national growth. For this study, the Institute for Higher Education (IHEP) sought to follow up on its previous work examining MSA educational attainment rates by further exploring policies that either inhibit or facilitate degree production, and identifying metropolitan-level, cross-section collaborations that help local leaders contribute to national completion goals.

IHEP conducted five case studies using a collective impact lens, which sets forth the following conditions for coalitions seeking social change: A common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone support organization. Cincinnati's

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<sup>1</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P., Smith, Nicole, and Jeff Strohl. 2013. *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce. Retrieved from <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/FullReport.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Simms, Margaret C., Fortuny, Karina, and Everett Henderson. 2009. *Racial and Ethnic Disparities among Low-Income Families: Low-Income Working Families Fact Sheet*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936\\_racialandethnic.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936_racialandethnic.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> IHEP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates. *Note:* Whereas other analyses such as by OECD calculated degree attainment based on adults ages 25–64, the analyses in this report are based on adults age 25 and over. Thus, the number of degrees attained is higher and the degree attainment rate is lower in this report compared with data reported by OECD.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

StrivePartnership initiative (or StriveTogether, as it is known nationally) serves as an effective collective impact model in the context of college access and attainment—it has received national recognition for its documented improvements in indicators across the education pipeline, and is attractive to funders given its centralized approach.

Through case study data collected at facilitated meetings with city stakeholders, we found that each of the cities profiled is in a different stage in their college attainment campaign efforts, with different strategies, stakeholders, and goals in place. The following are summaries of each of the cities profiled:<sup>5</sup>

- **Memphis, Tenn.**, has a number of key conditions in place including private and philanthropic investment, but perhaps most importantly has the commitment and buy-in of leaders across sectors who see the value and benefits of the college completion agenda. Specifically, Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, Jr., has demonstrated a passion for college attainment, and a willingness to cross sectors to encourage a collective agenda. Recently joining Lumina Foundation’s Community Partnership for Attainment, Memphis is working in tandem with other efforts in the field to define and reach a postsecondary goal by 2025.
- **Baltimore, Md.**, has just begun to focus its dialogue among city leaders around college completion; previous discussions centered around getting students to, rather than through, postsecondary education. Stakeholders expressed a desire for city leadership to become more involved in college completion efforts. Some K–12/postsecondary collaboration is occurring at particular institutions; however, there is a need to systematize these practices on a larger scale.
- **Washington, D.C.**, has been increasing its focus on coordinated efforts to improve the postsecondary educational at-

tainment of its youth, but is still working to alleviate barriers to educational and economic opportunities by improving city services, particularly public education. Data and resources were previously limited, but new cradle-to-career initiatives such as Raise DC show promise for moving the city forward.

- **Omaha, Neb.**, educational attainment and workforce preparation initiatives exemplify collective impact to some degree. Stakeholders see themselves as part of a coalition that is making strides through a shared vision and mobilization of community partners. Yet while higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and philanthropic groups have been actively involved in college completion efforts, the commitment and involvement of city-level leadership has not yet emerged.

Across case studies, we identified the following elements as essential to community success: Centralizing leadership; using data to set and track benchmarks and goals; cross-sectoring partnerships involving representatives of local government, education, business, and philanthropy; identifying and eliminating policy barriers to seamless transfer and portable financial aid; and leveraging local and national resources. These five themes align with the elements that have been found to make collective impact strategies like StriveTogether a promising framework for the field.

If the United States is to remain competitive in a knowledge-based and innovative economy, a dynamic workforce trained with the up-to-date skills required for today’s jobs and those of the future is critical. Developing these skills depends on strengthening the infrastructure and support systems all along the “cradle-to-career” pipeline. Yet while raising educational attainment is clearly a national imperative, much of the progress—and the effort—must be made by localities if our nation is to reach its goals.

<sup>5</sup> Note: Cincinnati was featured in the report for its collective impact lens but was not one of the sites at which IHEP’s meetings with stakeholders took place.

# Raising Postsecondary Education Attainment by Elevating America's Cities

## The Economic—and Moral—Imperative for Increasing Attainment

The educational attainment of a nation's population is directly linked to the country's economic well-being.<sup>6</sup> Across developed nations, young adults without college degrees are nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates.<sup>7</sup> The global recession further exacerbated this gap, as unemployment rates increased for adults without college degrees at more than twice the rate of those with degrees.<sup>8</sup> Internationally, the position of the United States with regard to educational attainment has slipped. Despite a slight increase in the proportion of young adults with college degrees in recent years, the United States ranked 12<sup>th</sup> on this indicator among developed nations in 2011.<sup>9</sup> Without significant changes in educational attainment, the U.S. labor market will face a shortage of adequately educated workers, a condition that will curtail economic development and constrain productivity gains.

Educational attainment rates in the United States are of even more concern in light of the vast discrepancies that exist between demographic groups, particularly among the fastest-growing minority populations.<sup>10</sup> Only 25 percent of Blacks and 18 percent of Hispanics hold at least an associate's degree, compared with 39 percent of Whites.<sup>11</sup> This may explain why Black individuals are twice as likely to be unemployed as White individuals (14 percent versus 7 percent).<sup>12</sup> These gaps demonstrate a clear and compelling economic imperative, if not a moral one, to invest in postsecondary access and success, particularly for our nation's most underserved populations.

Furthermore, increased public support toward education attainment can help accelerate the country's slow crawl out of the recent recession and supply the fuel needed to drive America's return to economic prosperity. With the majority (65 percent) of

<sup>6</sup> The Lumina Foundation. 2013. *A Stronger Nation through Higher Education: Visualizing Data to Help Us Achieve a Big Goal for College Attainment*. Indianapolis, IN: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger\\_nation\\_2013/downloads/pdfs/a-stronger-nation-2013.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger_nation_2013/downloads/pdfs/a-stronger-nation-2013.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2013. *Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eat-2013-en>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Simms, Margaret C., Fortuny, Karina, and Everett Henderson. 2009. *Racial and Ethnic Disparities among Low-Income Families: Low-Income Working Families Fact Sheet*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936\\_racialandethnic.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936_racialandethnic.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> IHEP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates. Note: Whereas other analyses such as by OECD calculated degree attainment based on adults ages 25–64, the analyses in this report are based on adults age 25 and over. Thus, the number of degrees attained is higher and the degree attainment rate is lower in this report compared with data reported by OECD.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Unemployment rate is based on unemployed over population age 16 and over in civilian labor force.



U.S. jobs requiring postsecondary training by 2020,<sup>13</sup> a postsecondary degree, credential, or certificate has become much more than a personal investment or luxury item for a privileged few. In addition, an increasingly “polarized” labor market, where “wages for highly educated workers have risen considerably over the past 30 years, while those for less educated workers have stagnated or fallen,”<sup>14</sup> purports a bleak economic outlook for those without a college degree. It will be difficult to put our nation on the pathway to economic and social vitality without a highly educated citizenry.

### Investing in Metropolitan Areas to Increase Attainment Nationally

As home to 65 percent of Americans, and generating 75 percent of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), the 100 largest metropolitan areas have considerable population size and diversity as well as economic muscle.<sup>15</sup> In addition to being a “significant driver of positive economic outcomes,”<sup>16</sup> educational attainment is linked to a region’s level of job growth and overall quality of life. Places with more educated people are considered better places to live, attracting other educated people, along with businesses.<sup>17</sup>

Further, the top 100 metropolitan statistical areas, or MSAs, are home to most of the diverse racial/ethnic populations, including 74 percent of African Americans and 79 percent of Hispanics. While attainment rates for all adults ages 25 and older are higher in MSAs than at the national level (39 percent versus 35 percent, respectively), racial attainment gaps are also larger in

these areas. In fact, if we were to reach a national attainment target of 60 percent of Americans with college degrees today, more than half of those could be generated from the top 100 MSAs, as could the majority of degrees needed among African American and Hispanic adults.<sup>18</sup>

Simply put, our metropolitan areas are opportune targets for reaching populations with the greatest educational need: Racial and ethnic minorities, low-income youth, and adults needing worker retraining and basic skills acquisition. And these are the populations for which we have yet to meaningfully correct our national legacy of underserving with respect to higher education. Clearly, investing in and organizing around the potential of metropolitan areas is critical, and the stakes have never been higher. Yet the current funding climate requires strategic public and private partnerships to invest in education innovation and human capital development in order to have the most robust impact on sustainable national growth.

This type of investment requires those in higher education to seek partnerships, leadership, and resources from previously untapped sources. Gone are the days when institutional leaders can act and make decisions isolated from the broader community in which they reside. Likewise, city leaders from multiple sectors must now have much richer interaction with higher education systems, personnel, and their most important stakeholder and asset—students. As articulated by the “collective impact” approach to social change: “The complex nature of any large-scale social issue or problem belies the idea that any single organization, policy initiative, or program, however well managed and/or funded, can singlehandedly create sustainable change.”<sup>19</sup> We must, therefore, *blur* stakeholder lines, as well as jurisdictional and spatial lines, in our nation’s largest metropolitan areas in order to advance the large-scale mobilization needed to improve postsecondary attainment.

<sup>13</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P., Smith, Nicole, and Jeff Strohl. 2013. *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce. Retrieved from <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/FullReport.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Brookings Institution. 2007. *MetroNation: How U.S. Metropolitan Areas Fuel American Prosperity*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2007/11/06%20metronation%20berube/metronationbp.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> IHEP analysis of GDP data from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2011. Retrieved from [http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/regional/gdp\\_metro/gdp\\_metro\\_newsrelease.htm](http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/regional/gdp_metro/gdp_metro_newsrelease.htm).

<sup>16</sup> Blumenthal, Pamela, Wolman, Harold L., and Edward Hill. 2009. “Understanding the Economic Performance of Metropolitan Areas in the United States.” *Urban Studies*, 463(3), 605–627.

<sup>17</sup> Shapiro, J. M. (2005). *Smart Cities: Quality of Life, Productivity, and the Growth Effects of Human Capital*. Working Paper No. 11615. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>18</sup> IHEP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

<sup>19</sup> Hanleybrown, Kay, Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2012. *Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from <http://www.oregon.gov/gov/docs/OEIB/keynoteChange.pdf>.

# Translating a National Imperative into Localized Action

Answering our nation's call to increase educational attainment rates, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) assembled the National Coalition for College Completion (NCCC) in 2010, a group of organizations representing business, civil rights, social services, students, and youth advocacy. The goal of the NCCC was to mobilize a diverse, non-partisan voice in support of college completion.

Leveraging the work of the NCCC, IHEP has been exploring the role of key sectors outside of higher education in their support of national education attainment goals at the city and regional levels. As metropolitan areas begin articulating their own college completion priorities, mayors, business leaders, civil rights advocates, faith-based leaders, and youth and family advocates will play a more effective role in postsecondary education training and credentialing systems. To this end, IHEP, with support from the Ford Foundation, engaged in this project to better understand and elevate practices for engaging cross-sector participants in localized education attainment

efforts. We brought together key individuals working on college completion campaigns in four major U.S. cities, all in multi-state regions. Through case studies of their work in progress, we identified the most promising aspects of cross-sector participation for other regions to consider and follow.

This report distills and highlights the experiences of these select cities and argues that our nation's ability to meet the great education, economic, and social imperatives of our time rests largely on the ability to strategically organize—across sectors—for higher education attainment in metropolitan areas. Moreover, the report presents a set of recommendations for policymakers and community leaders as they consider the resources, programs, and policies they need to undertake this crucial agenda. These recommendations are grounded in the experiences of our city leaders and support the emerging notion that major metropolitan areas not only drive the U.S. economy, but also possess the resources for increasing national education attainment.

### **National Coalition for College Completion**

Beginning in 2010, IHEP's National Coalition for College Completion (NCCC) united leading organizations from key national sectors around common college completion policy priorities. NCCC helped to build public support, best practice adoption, and policy advocacy in support of the national college completion agenda by engaging key stakeholder groups not previously integrated into the higher education success dialogue.

#### **Featured Partners:**

- Center for Law and Social Policy
- Illinois Education Foundation
- National Urban League

#### **All Partners:**

- Boys and Girls Club of America
- Business Innovation Factory
- Business Roundtable
- Campus Progress
- Center for American Progress
- CEOs for Cities
- Center for Law and Social Policy
- Center for Student Opportunity
- Committee for Economic Development
- Corporate Voices for Working Families

- Education Finance Council
- Foster Care to Success
- The Forum for Youth Investment
- Illinois Education Foundation
- International Association of Jewish Vocational Services
- Jobs for the Future
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- The Manufacturing Institute
- Mobilize.org
- National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund
- National College Access Network
- National League of Cities
- National Skills Coalition
- National Urban League
- Single Stop USA
- Skills for America's Future
- Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
- Student African American Brotherhood
- Student Veterans of America
- Young Invincibles
- Youth Build USA

# Recognizing the Educational and Economic Potential of Multi-State Metropolitan Areas

As noted, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are critical to closing the national attainment gap, given their concentration of historically underserved low-income and racial minority populations. In a previous publication, *Easy Come, EZ GO: A Federal Role in Removing Jurisdictional Impediments to College Education*,<sup>20</sup> IHEP examined demographic trends, education markets, and economic production, focusing on the 100 largest MSAs. We found that these areas, while producing and supporting the majority of U.S. knowledge economy jobs, were home to a considerable population of residents who have not yet accessed postsecondary education. Recent data show that roughly one-fifth (23 percent) of the nation's population lives in the top 20 *multi-state* metropolitan statistical areas (MMSAs), including 32 percent of African Americans and 19 percent of Hispanics.<sup>21</sup> Given the concentration of population and industry in MMSAs, we argued in *EZ GO* that city- or state-based strategies for raising attainment may not on their own yield the necessary results, given the particular issues confronting metro areas in multi-state regions.

## Metropolitan Statistical Areas as a Data-Collection Concept

“Metropolitan areas as a statistical concept join cities and their suburbs together to represent local and regional markets. In the United States, Metropolitan Statistical Areas are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) based on data gathered by the Census Bureau. OMB locates these areas around a densely populated core, typically a city, of at least 50,000 people. Counties that have strong commuting ties to the core are then included in the definition of the metropolitan area.”<sup>22</sup> As of 2013, there are 374 metropolitan areas nationwide. See (<http://www.census.gov/population/metro/>) for more information on metropolitan areas.

Specifically, state lines in these MMSAs can cause jurisdictional impediments for students. State-based aid and tuition policies, for instance, can be restrictive for individuals living in MMSAs who need to cross state lines to attend the nearest or

<sup>20</sup> Sponsler, Brian A., Kienzl, Gregory S., and Alex J. Wesaw. 2010. *Easy Come, EZ-GO: A Federal Role in Removing Jurisdictional Impediments to College Education*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy and Center for American Progress. Retrieved from [http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/a-f/\(Report\)\\_Easy\\_Come\\_\\_EZ-GO.pdf](http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/a-f/(Report)_Easy_Come__EZ-GO.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> IHEP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

<sup>22</sup> Brookings Institution. 2010. *State of Metropolitan America: On the Front Lines of Demographic Transformation*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2010/5/09%20metro%20america/metro\\_america\\_report1.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2010/5/09%20metro%20america/metro_america_report1.pdf).

the best-fit postsecondary institution in their area. Further, approximately one-third of all college students transfer to another institution at least once during their academic careers, often crossing state lines.<sup>23</sup> Navigating two discrete postsecondary systems, with separate academic requirements, can result in the loss of academic credit and increase time to degree for students in MMSAs. As a possible solution, IHEP has previously

one of four quadrants based on current educational attainment levels and the growth in those levels over the past decade, after taking into account demographic and labor market characteristics. Each of the four MMSAs selected for case studies in this report demonstrated one of the patterns of need/performance illustrated in *Smart Money*.

**Smart Money classified cities according to educational attainment levels and growth in those levels compared with similar cities.**

City	Postsecondary Attainment 2009	Change in Attainment since 2000
Baltimore/Washington, D.C.	Greater than expected	Greater than expected
Cincinnati	Greater than expected	Lower than expected
Omaha	Lower than expected	Greater than expected
Memphis	Lower than expected	Lower than expected

Source: Kienzl, Gregory S., Sponsler, Brian A., Wesaw, Alexis J., Kumar, Amal, and Jones, Jill. 2011. *Smart Money: Informing Higher Education Philanthropy*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/Publications/publications-detail.cfm?id=146>.

Note: In IHEP’s *Smart Money* report, Baltimore/Washington, D.C., Metro was classified as a single MMSA. Since then, OMB split the region into two separate MSAs (Baltimore/Columbia/Towson, and Washington/MD/VA) based on the most recent U.S. Census data.

suggested the creation of Educational Zone Governance Organizations (EZ-GO) zones to distinguish areas where the federal government should coordinate and incentivize policymaking around financial aid, tuition, and transfer articulation using a regional approach to increase college attainment in these vital areas.

Building on our previous work, this report features case studies of four MMSAs, documenting both the barriers these areas face in raising postsecondary attainment as well as their current efforts to overcome those challenges. We selected the sites using the framework in IHEP’s *Smart Money: Informing Higher Education Philanthropy*,<sup>24</sup> which placed metropolitan areas into

The case study sites were also selected to provide a mix of social and political histories, economic climate, organizational structures, and institutional arrangements, as well as diversity with respect to size and geographic location. Each case study profile draws on data from the *U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2006–10* five-year estimates, the U.S. Department of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Fall 2011 Enrollment and Completion components, and the Bureau for Economic Analysis.<sup>25</sup> The case study summaries presented here incorporate qualitative data drawing on facilitated discussions with stakeholders in each location,<sup>26</sup> and quantitative data for each city.

<sup>23</sup> Hossler, Don, Shapiro, Doug, Dundar, Afet, Ziskin, Mary, Chen, Jin, Zerquera, Desiree, and Vasti Torres. 2012. *Transfer & Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions*. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Retrieved from <http://pas.indiana.edu/pdf/Transfer%20&%20Mobility.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> Kienzl, Gregory S., Sponsler, Brian A., Wesaw, Alexis J., Kumar, Amal, and Jill Jones. 2011. *Smart Money: Informing Higher Education Philanthropy*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/Publications/publications-detail.cfm?id=146>.

<sup>25</sup> The ACS annually releases five-year estimates for areas with populations under 20,000, which we have used in order to include county-level data for each of the MMSAs. To be consistent throughout the report, we have used the most recent five-year estimates (2006–10) at the national and state levels as well. ACS tables are drawn from American Fact Finder and include demographic, social, and economic characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, median household income, unemployment rates, and educational attainment levels.

<sup>26</sup> A team of IHEP researchers conducted meetings with stakeholders in each location and led a facilitated discussion around postsecondary education barriers and citywide strategies for improvement. Meeting sessions were recorded for accuracy and analyzed for common themes. IHEP conducted follow-up interviews with stakeholders to ensure the accuracy of details found in each case study.

# Understanding Emerging Place-Based Efforts to Raise Postsecondary Attainment

The aim of this study was to conduct research on the state of educational attainment in MMSAs, exploring evidence that the aforementioned policy barriers exist and discussing the extent to which leaders in MMSAs are addressing them. Our specific goals were to—

- **Understand how leaders are translating national education attainment goals to a localized context** with a focus on state, regional, and city-level messaging and leadership.
- **Consider which partners are involved in attainment efforts**, such as community leaders, cross-sector organizations, city government, state agencies, and public constituents.
- **Identify strategies that are helping engage partners in completion campaigns**, including goal-setting, organizing, and mobilizing around critical issues.
- **Provide policy guidance for stakeholders increasing postsecondary access and success**, particularly in a multi-state metropolitan context.

Given the recent emergence of the collective impact model for social change, developed by the Foundation Strategy Group (FSG) and popularized by the Stanford Innovation Laboratory, we considered the efforts of the case study cities to improve local college completion within this framework. FSG first introduced the concept of collective impact through the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* in 2011, which examined Cincinnati's StrivePartnership as an exemplary model of collective impact as applied to the issue of college attainment in cities.<sup>27</sup> The efforts of Cincinnati and StrivePartnership are highlighted in a case study in this paper as a result.

At its core, collective impact requires stakeholders—partners, funders, beneficiaries, and others—to support a long-term

process of social change.<sup>28</sup> Whereas education, philanthropy, and nonprofit sectors abound with networks, alliances, collaboratives, coalitions, and the like, collective impact aims to add structure and sound guidance to solving a particular problem by articulating a set of conditions for aligning and optimizing these myriad efforts across partners and sectors. These conditions include the following:

- **Common agenda:** All partners agree to shared goals and how to reach them.
- **Shared measurement systems:** Common data metrics are used to track progress toward the goals.
- **Mutually reinforcing activities:** Each partner does its own part to complement the work of other partners without overlapping efforts or resources.
- **Continuous communication:** Results and lessons learned are regularly shared across partners.
- **Backbone support organizations:** A support team is in place to help mobilize, coordinate, and facilitate across partners.

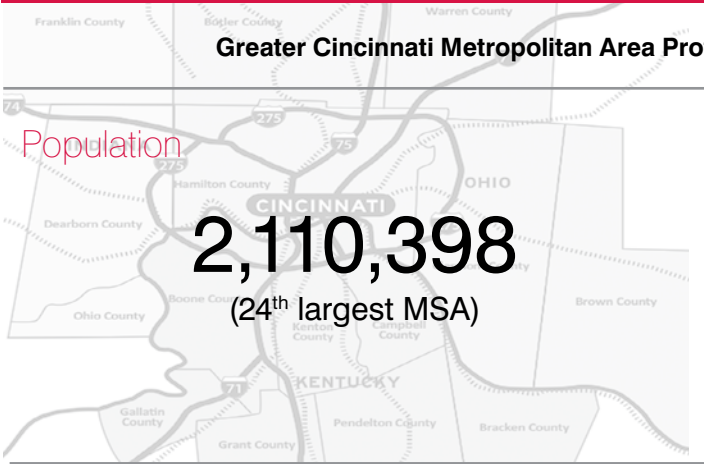
Sound collective impact modeling is built on the premise that large-scale social change comes from effective cross-sector coordination rather than individual or organization-specific interventions done in isolation from the community and environment in which the problem occurs.<sup>29</sup> Applying collective impact to the attainment imperative in cities, higher education institutions must work in cross-sector partnerships to share and build on the most effective practices, and engage leadership on multiple fronts to create and support more scaled and integrated solutions to increasing college access and success, particularly for underserved populations.

<sup>27</sup> Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011. *Collective Impact*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact).

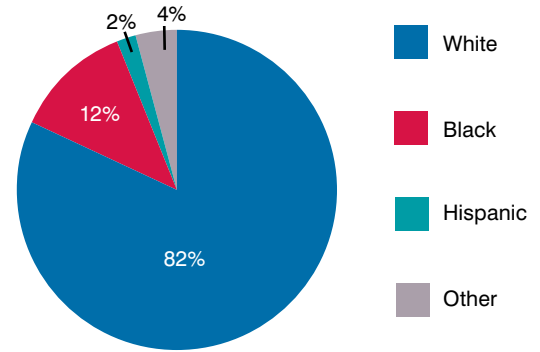
<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid [Page 12].

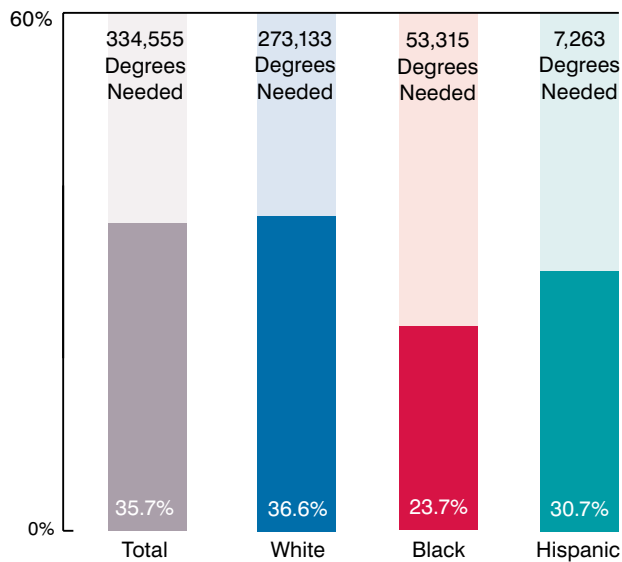
**CINCINNATI, OHIO: COLLECTIVELY STRIVING FROM CRADLE TO CAREER IN GREATER CINCINNATI**



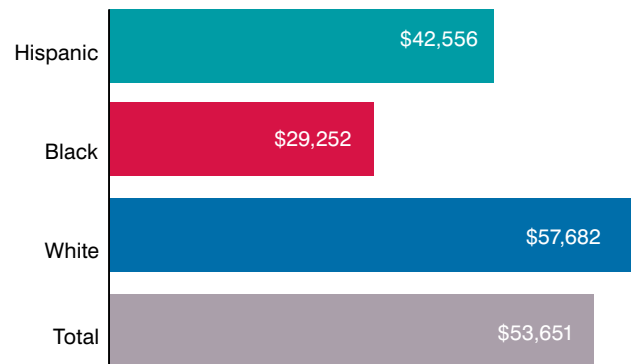
Population by Race/Ethnicity



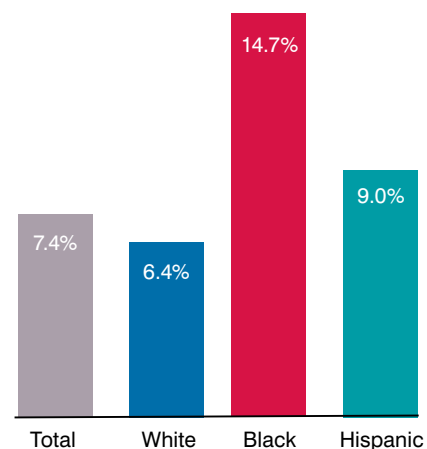
Adults (25+) with College Degrees and Number Needed to Reach 60% Attainment Today



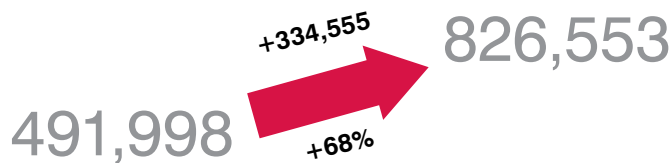
Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



Unemployment by Race/Ethnicity



Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.  
Note: Degree attainment rates are for residents ages 25+ and unemployment rates are for residents ages 16+. The racial/ethnic groups in this report are mutually exclusive (i.e., White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic)."



## Attainment Needs and Opportunities in Greater Cincinnati's Counties

		Adults (25+) with College Degrees	Degrees Needed to Reach 60%*	Number of Institutions	2011–12 Headcount Enrollment
<b>Greater Cincinnati</b>		<b>35.7%</b>	<b>334,555</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>139,636</b>
<b>IN</b>	Dearborn County	24.4% (↓)	11,836		
	Ohio County	20.3% (↓)	1,706		
	Franklin County	25.2% (↓)	11,544		
<b>KY</b>	Boone County	37.0% (↑)	16,880	4	9,798
	Bracken County	17.6% (↓)	2,376		
	Campbell County	32.6% (↓)	16,047	4	15,544
	Gallatin County	12.8% (↓)	2,569		
	Grant County	14.8% (↓)	7,037		
	Kenton County	34.8% (↔)	26,281	2	3,279
	Pendleton County	18.0% (↓)	4,102		
<b>OH</b>	Brown County	16.6% (↓)	12,993	1	554
	Butler County	32.6% (↓)	63,212	7	24,649
	Clermont County	32.0% (↓)	35,964	3	5,396
	Hamilton County	39.9% (↑)	105,935	36	77,002
	Warren County	43.6% (↑)	22,246	4	3,414

\*The calculation used to estimate the number of degrees needed to reach the attainment goal did not take into account natural growth (the number of degrees to be produced in the coming years at the current rate of degree production) or additional degrees from new immigrants with college degrees coming to the United States. It signals only the number of degrees that would be needed if the MMSA were to have a 60 percent attainment rate today.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 Enrollment Component; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

Note: The analyses include all Title IV two- and four-year institutions.

### Why is Raising Attainment Important to Greater Cincinnati and its Citizens?<sup>30</sup>

A recent report projecting job growth in the Cincinnati region by 2020 found that almost all (95 percent) jobs paying \$33,130 or more will require some combination of postsecondary education, on-the-job training, and/or work experience beyond one year. Approximately one-third of these jobs will require a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>31</sup> To reach a 60 percent postsecondary attainment rate today, the Greater Cincinnati metropolitan area would need to add 334,555 degrees.<sup>32</sup> For this region's citizens, increases in educational attainment are clearly needed to promote a more prosperous regional economy.

<sup>30</sup> IHEP did not visit Cincinnati to conduct a meeting with stakeholders as it did in the other four cities profiled in this report; however, Cincinnati StrivePartnership is featured here to serve as a model for collective impact.

<sup>31</sup> StrivePartnership, Partners for a Competitive Workforce, Vision 2015, and Agenda 360. 2012. *Jobs 2020 Outlook: A Regional Indicators Report*. Retrieved from <http://d2fy1sc0f5svw4.cloudfront.net/joboutnew.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates. The calculation used to estimate the number of degrees needed to reach the attainment goal did not take into account natural growth (the number of degrees to be produced in the coming years at the current rate of degree production) or additional degrees from new immigrants with college degrees coming to the United States.

### What Actions are Under Way to Improve Attainment in the Cincinnati Area?

To increase economic growth and competitiveness, the StrivePartnership was established in 2006 as a cross-sector education partnership to ensure academic and life success, from cradle to career, for every student in the region's urban core. A key tenet of the effort is that postsecondary education, either college or technical training, is imperative for youth to succeed in the current workforce.<sup>33</sup> Through the partnership, colleges, universities, businesses, nonprofits, school districts, funders, and others have been working together to increase postsecondary attainment rates and build the talent pipeline in Greater Cincinnati. The StrivePartnership has also reached broad community involvement through its work with the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and the Northern Kentucky Education Council.

<sup>33</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.strivepartnership.org/education-results-resource/striving-together-report-card/every-student-will-enroll-in-college>.



The organizations below represent the members of the StrivePartnership Executive Committee—a cross-sector governing board for the partnership:<sup>34</sup>

- Archdiocese of Cincinnati
- The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation
- Cincinnati/Hamilton County Community Action Agency
- Cincinnati Business Committee
- Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
- Cincinnati Federation of Teachers
- Cincinnati Public Schools
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
- Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
- Covington Independent Public Schools
- Gateway Community & Technical College
- The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- JP Morgan Chase & Co.
- KnowledgeWorks
- Michelman
- Newport Independent Public Schools
- Northern Kentucky Education Council
- Northern Kentucky University
- Parents for Public Schools of Greater Cincinnati
- The Procter & Gamble Company
- PNC Bank
- School Outfitters
- Success By 6
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati
- University of Cincinnati
- Urban League of Greater Cincinnati
- Vision 2015
- Xavier University
- YMCA

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.strivepartnership.org/about-the-partnership/executive-committee>.

The StrivePartnership has five overarching goals, to ensure that every child (1) is prepared for school, (2) is supported inside and outside of school, (3) succeeds academically, (4) enrolls in some form of postsecondary education, and (5) graduates and enters a meaningful career.<sup>35</sup> The StrivePartnership tracks eight indicators within these five goals, discussed in more detail below. Several of these indicators align to the community’s Bold Goals for Education, Income and Health. The Bold Goals are an effort led by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and have been endorsed by more than 240 regional organizations. Whereas the StrivePartnership focuses on youth and the young adult population, typically up to age 24, the Bold Goals for postsecondary attainment focus on the adult population, ages 25–64. Thus the two sets of goals align, but do not overlap.

The StrivePartnership has received significant attention for implementing collective impact on a large scale without duplicating existing educational programs and services. Their model is characterized by “a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads activities among all participants.”<sup>36</sup> The central philosophy is to “put concerned people in one room, agree upon statistically definable goals, and then coordinate action to hit the targets.”<sup>37</sup> The StrivePartnership aims to increase postsecondary attainment by encouraging effective retention practices among its institutional partners, including mandatory orientation, intrusive advising, and transfer agreements, as well as career development strategies and support. The Partnership also focuses on high school/postsecondary alignment to reduce the need for college remediation.

The StrivePartnership data-driven, evidence-based approach further helps partners effectively identify problems, implement solutions, and contribute to shared goals.<sup>38</sup> StrivePartnership staff currently collect data from five school districts and four postsecondary institutions for an annual report card on the indicators. While StrivePartnership staff coordinate data collection and conduct data analysis, they also coach partners to continue their own data-related and continuous improvement efforts. Since its inception in 2006, the StrivePartnership has seen dramatic improvements at several critical junctures along this educational continuum, including kindergarten readiness, fourth grade reading scores, eighth grade math scores, and

<sup>35</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.strivepartnership.org/our-goals>.

<sup>36</sup> Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011. *Collective Impact*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact).

<sup>37</sup> Goodman, Peter. 2012. “On Education, Strive Partnership Offers Useful Template.” *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-s-goodman/strive-partnership\\_b\\_1582573.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-s-goodman/strive-partnership_b_1582573.html).

<sup>38</sup> Anrig, Greg. 2013. “How to Turn an Urban School District Around—Without Cheating.” *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/05/how-to-turn-an-urban-school-district-around-without-cheating/275681/>.

college enrollment and completion rates.<sup>39</sup> The partnership will soon track students through career placement following college graduation, and disaggregate outcomes by student characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, and income.

Since the StrivePartnership has established a network of public-private partnerships that work toward shared goals, many funders have found it more efficient to contribute to the partnership “rather than fueling hundreds of strategies and nonprofits.”<sup>40</sup> The StrivePartnership has been successful in aligning significant philanthropic resources to support strategies that are proven to move the needle on student achievement. The next challenge is to develop strategies to attract public funding to sustain what is working.

### What are the Opportunities—and Obstacles—Affecting Cincinnati’s Efforts to Improve Attainment?

As noted, the StrivePartnership has made progress on key indicators, but it has also shown that progress takes time and coordinated, persistent effort. The StrivePartnership will continue its efforts with additional partners. Cincinnati was recently selected to participate in Lumina Foundation’s first cohort

of communities focused on postsecondary attainment. This three-year grant will accelerate the partnership’s current collaborative work on postsecondary attainment, likely through a specific focus on reducing the need for math remediation in college—a major obstacle for postsecondary retention.

The success of the StrivePartnership in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky has also led to the 2011 formation of StriveTogether, a national Cradle to Career network in which sites collaborate on finding creative ways to support the success of every child. Communities in 35 states (including Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Memphis, profiled below) now participate as members in StriveTogether’s national Cradle to Career initiative.<sup>41</sup> The cities associated with this network adhere to four guiding principles that make up the StriveTogether framework: (1) A shared community vision consisting of cross-sector engagement, (2) evidence-based decision making involving data collection and sharing at the community level, (3) collaborative action applying outcomes data to a continuous improvement process, and (4) stakeholder commitment and investment toward partnership sustainability.<sup>42</sup> As community-based college attainment efforts continue to mature, StriveTogether is poised to play a key role in moving the work forward nationally.

## StrivePartnership Report Card

The following are the eight indicators currently being collected by the StrivePartnership. Baseline and target data are currently unavailable for each indicator, because the StrivePartnership is revisiting its targets. The StrivePartnership collects data by individual school district or institution rather than providing a single aggregate number for each indicator.

Goals	Indicators
<b>Goal 1:</b> Every child is <b>PREPARED</b> for school	<b>Indicator 1:</b> Percent of children ready for kindergarten
<b>Goal 2:</b> Every child is <b>SUPPORTED</b> in and out of school	<b>Indicator 2:</b> Percent of students at or above proficiency in fourth grade reading <b>Indicator 3:</b> Percent of students at or above proficiency in eighth grade math
<b>Goal 3:</b> Every student <b>SUCCEEDS</b> academically	<b>Indicator 4:</b> Percent of students that graduate from high school
<b>Goal 4:</b> Every student <b>ENROLLS</b> in college or career training	<b>Indicator 5:</b> Average ACT score <b>Indicator 6:</b> Percent of graduates that enroll in college
<b>Goal 5:</b> Every child <b>GRADUATES</b> and <b>ENTERS A CAREER</b>	<b>Indicator 7:</b> Percent of students retained in college <b>Indicator 8:</b> Percent of students graduating from college and number of college degrees conferred

<sup>39</sup> Strive Partnership. 2013. *2012-2013 Strive Partnership Report Card*. Retrieved from <http://www.strivepartnership.org/sites/default/files/wp-content/2012-13%20Partnership%20Report.pdf>.

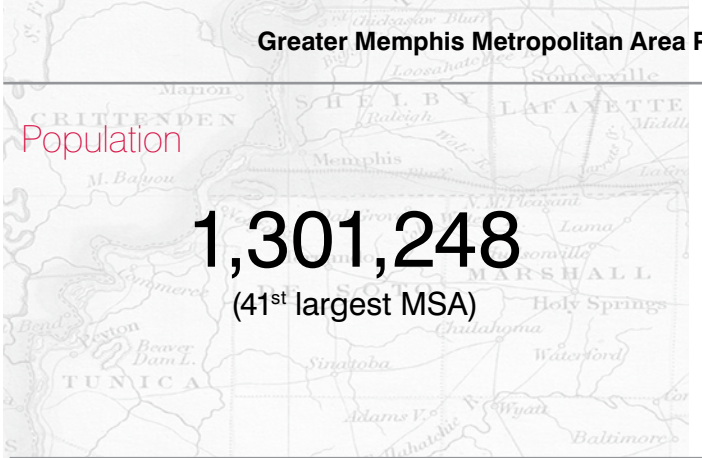
<sup>40</sup> Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011. *Collective Impact*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact).

<sup>41</sup> Retrieved from <http://strivenetwork.org/strive-network>.

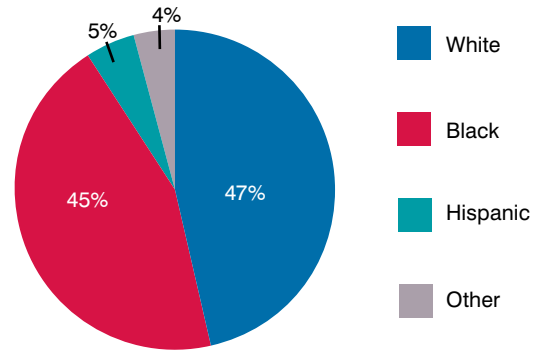
<sup>42</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.strivenetwork.org/strive-approach/strive-framework>.

## MEMPHIS, TENN.: COALESCING AROUND COLLEGE COMPLETION IN THE 'CITY OF CHOICE'

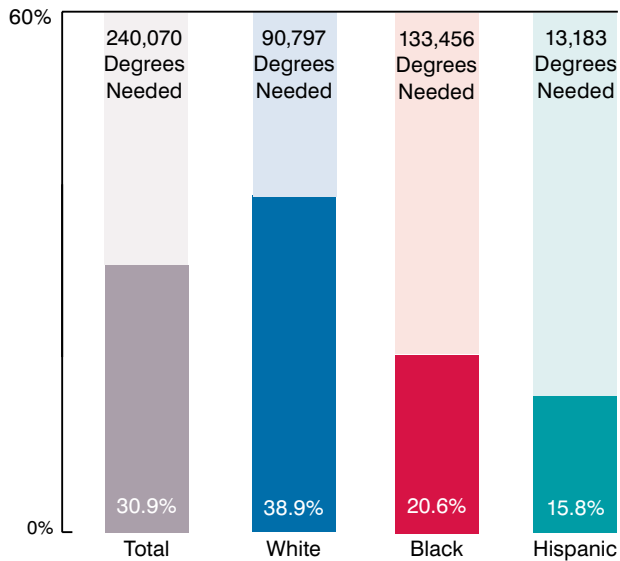
### Greater Memphis Metropolitan Area Profile (Memphis, TN-MS-AR Metro Area)



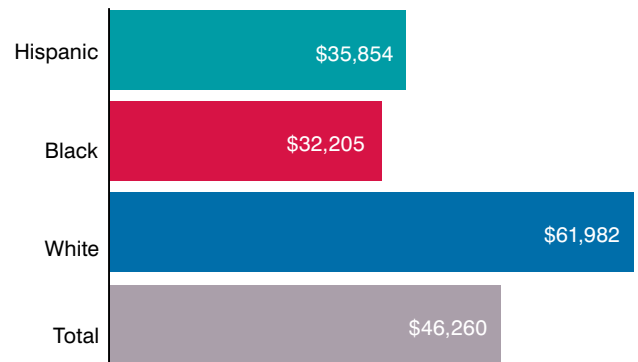
### Population by Race/Ethnicity



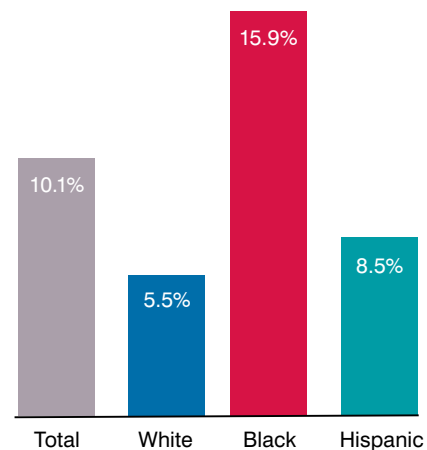
### Adults (25+) with College Degrees and Number Needed to Reach 60% Attainment Today



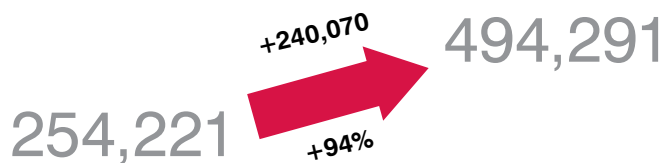
### Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



### Unemployment by Race/Ethnicity



### Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.  
Note: Degree attainment rates are for residents ages 25+ and unemployment rates are for residents ages 16+. The racial/ethnic groups in this report are mutually exclusive (i.e., White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic).

## Attainment Needs and Opportunities in Greater Memphis' Counties

		Adults (25+) with College Degrees	Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today*	Number of Institutions	2011–12 Headcount Enrollment
<b>Greater Memphis</b>		<b>30.9%</b>	<b>240,070</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>82,058</b>
<b>AR</b>	Crittenden County	18.8% (↓)	12,676	1	3,169
	DeSoto County	29.9% (↔)	29,673	1	1,005
<b>MS</b>	Marshall County	15.0% (↓)	10,949	1	1,043
	Tate County	23.7% (↓)	6,381	1	11,433
	Tunica County	26.1% (↓)	2,226		
<b>TN</b>	Fayette County	25.1% (↓)	9,010		
	Shelby County	33.5% (↑)	154,282	30	65,077
	Tipton County	21.0% (↓)	14,873	1	331

\*The calculation used to estimate the number of degrees needed to reach the attainment goal did not take into account natural growth (the number of degrees to be produced in the coming years at the current rate of degree production) or additional degrees from new immigrants with college degrees coming to the United States. It signals only the number of degrees that would be needed if the MMSA were to have a 60 percent attainment rate today.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 Enrollment Component; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

Note: The analyses include all Title IV two- and four-year institutions.

*In 2013, IHEP convened stakeholders in Memphis invested in raising citywide college attainment rates. Representing the city's leadership, education, business, and philanthropy sectors, attendees gathered to discuss barriers to college completion as well as localized efforts in place aimed at increasing attainment, which is summarized below.*

The following organizations represent the participants who convened in Memphis:

- The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc.
- Baptist College of Health Sciences
- Buckman Laboratories
- CEOs for Cities
- City of Memphis, Tenn.
- College Resource Center
- Forum for Youth Investment
- Greater Memphis Chamber
- Hyde Foundation
- Latino Memphis
- Leadership Memphis
- National Civil Rights Museum
- National League of Cities
- PeopleFirst!
- Plough Foundation

- Shelby County Mayor's Office
- Shelby County, Tenn.
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- tnAchieves
- University of Memphis
- University of Virginia
- Victory University
- Young Invincibles

### Why is Raising Attainment Important to the City of Memphis and its Citizens?

Memphis is the largest city in Tennessee and the third-largest city in the southeastern United States. A long history of poverty and racial tension has contributed to low levels of educational attainment among a large number of poor, under-resourced city residents—the majority of whom are Black and Latino. The poverty rate in Memphis has risen steadily since 2005, and Memphis had the highest poverty rate among U.S. cities with more than 1 million residents in 2012.<sup>43</sup>

Like much of the state and the nation, Memphis and Shelby County must increase the number of degree and certificate holders, particularly in career fields that boost the local econ-

<sup>43</sup> Delavega, Elena. 2013. *2013 Memphis Poverty Fact Sheet: Data from 2012*. Memphis, TN: The University of Memphis. Retrieved from <http://www.memphis.edu/socialwork/pdfs/UM%20Social%20Work%20Poverty%20Fact%20Sheet%202013%20Update%20LAST.pdf>.

omy, which is home to three Fortune 500 companies including FedEx. Memphis Mayor A. C. Wharton reflected a sense of urgency around this need, stating that “employers need folks now; they cannot wait.” Filling local jobs with qualified workers, however, must begin with strengthening the educational pipeline. To reach a 60 percent postsecondary degree attainment rate today, the Greater Memphis metropolitan area would need to add 240,070 degrees, well over half of which would need to come from underrepresented minorities.<sup>44</sup>

### **What Actions are Under Way to Increase Attainment in Memphis?**

Mayor Wharton, elected in 2009, has a deep understanding of and close relationship with the higher education community, as the longest-serving member of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Since taking office, Mayor Wharton identified as a top priority the goal of creating a strong cradle-to-career system that will yield a ready workforce and increase the skill level of the potential talent pool in Memphis. The mayor tied this education attainment campaign to his broader goals for the city, including becoming a “city of choice,” a place where middle-income families *choose* to live.

Along with Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell, Mayor Wharton has engaged various sectors in the city’s college completion campaign as part of a wider economic imperative for the region. Mayor Wharton’s office, led by Dr. Douglas Scarborough who heads the city’s Office of Talent and Human Capital, coordinates efforts between local workforce boards, K–12 schools, and higher education institutions (especially local community colleges and the Tennessee Technological Centers), to respond to employer needs and help produce a qualified, trained workforce ready to fill local jobs. The Mayor’s Office was also involved in the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, legislation that ties state funding for public colleges and universities to degree completion rather than enrollment.

The state’s aggressive goal, known as Drive to 55, is to ramp up statewide college degree and certificate attainment to 55 percent by 2025. Memphis recently joined Lumina Foundation’s Community Partnership for Attainment initiative and is currently setting a citywide postsecondary attainment goal tied to Tennessee’s Drive to 55 strategies, Lumina Foundation’s Goal 2025, and the Obama Administration’s 2020 postsecondary achievement goal. The approach for improving postsecondary

attainment in Memphis consists of creating a Collaborative Action Network within the StriveTogether framework. This effort is critical for aligning college attainment efforts across the community around a set of common metrics, a shared understanding of challenges, and an opportunity to develop collective solutions. Memphis is one of 20 cities that will take part in the first round of this partnership supported by Lumina Foundation.

Alongside the mayor’s efforts, and with mayoral support, the following five major initiatives in Memphis, led by key regional business, community, and educational stakeholders, each focus on improving postsecondary readiness and attainment.

#### *Leadership Memphis/Memphis Talent Dividend*

[www.leadershipmemphis.org](http://www.leadershipmemphis.org)  
[www.collegeattainment.com](http://www.collegeattainment.com)

Leadership Memphis, a network of community leaders, has been a key partner in Memphis’s college attainment efforts since 2010 through its participation in the CEOs for Cities Talent Dividend competition. Talent Dividend involves 57 cities vying for a \$1 million prize based on improving college attainment rates over three years, with the goal of increasing those rates by at least 1 percent. Memphis Talent Dividend, a coalition of local businesses, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, and higher education institutions, supports several programs, including Graduate Memphis, a resource center for adults enrolling in postsecondary education, and the SUCCESS college advising program for high school students in partnership with the University of Memphis. Graduate Memphis is funded by the local Plough Foundation. Memphis has already surpassed the initial goal of the initiative, increasing attainment rates by 1.4 percent from 2010 to 2012.

#### *Memphis/Shelby Achieves*

[www.tnachieves.org/](http://www.tnachieves.org/)

Memphis/Shelby Achieves, part of the Tennessee Achieves (tn-Achieves) network, was established in 2011 to provide last-dollar scholarships (up to \$3,000) for public high school graduates attending Southwest Tennessee Community College or Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Memphis. In addition to financial support, Memphis/Shelby Achieves provides students with mentors trained to guide first-generation attendees through the college application and decision-making process, and communicate with students through their first semester.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> IHEP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

<sup>45</sup> Retrieved from <http://shelbycountyttn.gov/index.aspx?NID=2159>.



Memphis/Shelby Achieves collaborates across sectors by securing donations for the scholarships, as well as the mentors, from local employers and private donors.

### *PeopleFirst Partnership*

[memphisfastforward.com/peoplefirst](http://memphisfastforward.com/peoplefirst)

The PeopleFirst Partnership, established in 2010, is a cradle-to-career initiative that is part of Memphis Fast Forward, a group of leaders in early childhood development, K–12 public education, public postsecondary education, career development, business, and government. PeopleFirst has set four broad objectives with intermediate benchmarks across the education pipeline into careers, with the ultimate goal of keeping qualified workforce candidates in the Memphis/Shelby area. Specific strategies around college access include postsecondary preparation beginning in middle school, and parental involvement. The initiative works with the local StriveTogether effort to convene various partners in the community and produce an annual scorecard that tracks benchmarks in each segment of the postsecondary pipeline.

### *Latino Student Success Initiative*

[www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news\\_releases/2011-11-07.html](http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news_releases/2011-11-07.html)

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission, along with the Mayor's Office, Latino Memphis, Memphis Talent Dividend, Southwest Tennessee Community College, Kingsbury High School, and the Greater Memphis Chamber, received 1 of 12 four-year Latino Student Success Initiative grants awarded to 10 states by Lumina Foundation in 2011. The purpose of this grant is to increase the high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment, transfer, and completion rates of Latino students in Memphis. Strategies for this initiative largely focus on college access and include intensive pre-college mentoring, financial aid assistance, and a bilingual marketing and information campaign. Additionally, the grant emphasizes data-driven decision-making and outcomes measurement, working with the community, and partnership building.<sup>46</sup>

### *Colleges of Memphis Collaborative*

[www.collegesofmemphis.org](http://www.collegesofmemphis.org)

Regular meetings between the Mayor's Office and college and university presidents, known as the Colleges of Memphis Collaborative since 2010, have developed strong relationships be-

tween the city and local postsecondary education institutions. As such, local institutions have undertaken a number of efforts to support the mayor's attainment agenda, including focusing on improving transfer and articulation policies in the region. The University of Memphis, for instance, has become closely articulated with local community colleges, and the institution's Office of Academic Transfer and Articulation provides information to students about statewide articulation agreements as well as those specific to academic programs, both within the state and with Northwest Mississippi Community College.

### **What Are the Opportunities—and Obstacles—Affecting Memphis's Efforts to Improve Attainment?**

Memphis has a number of key conditions that make increasing college attainment possible: City leadership that envisions an educated Memphis, commitment from higher education institutions, private and philanthropic investment, and an active workforce development board. Perhaps the most effective component of this city's work is the shared commitment and buy-in of leaders across these sectors who see the value and benefits of the college completion agenda. A sound collective impact strategy requires that CEO-level leaders across sectors sustain active engagement together over time.<sup>47</sup>

Much of Memphis's momentum stems from Mayor Wharton's passion and willingness to cross sectors and to encourage a collective agenda, rather than separate efforts. With the recent joining of the Community Partnership for Attainment, Memphis is working in tandem with other collaborations to define and reach a postsecondary goal by 2025. The city's college completion work thus far has found strong support from a host of national philanthropies and private donors in addition to Lumina, including the Ford and Gates Foundations, as well as from local donors. Memphis continues to actively seek funding and partnership opportunities to expand its college completion efforts. Collective philanthropic investment in Memphis has galvanized interest, ignited conversation, encouraged alignment, and organized citywide commitment to the college completion agenda. This external investment in Memphis has also fueled collaborative internal investment. However, continued resources for coalition-building have yet to be determined; Leadership Memphis highlighted this as a major challenge for the work ahead.

<sup>46</sup> Lumina Foundation. 2011. Latino Student Success: A Key Driver on the Road to Goal 2025. Indianapolis, IN: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news\\_releases/2011-11-07.html](http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news_releases/2011-11-07.html).

<sup>47</sup> Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011. Collective Impact. Stanford, CA: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact).

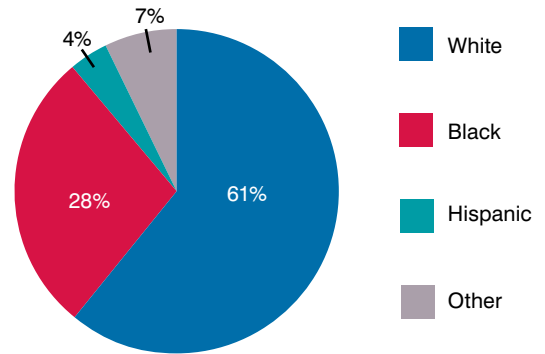
# Baltimore/Washington, D.C., Metro: A Dual Tale of Two Cities on College Completion

Note: In IHEP's Smart Money report, Baltimore/Washington, D.C., Metro was classified as a single MMSA.<sup>48</sup> Since then, OMB split the region into two separate MSAs (Baltimore/Columbia/Towson, and Washington/MD/VA) based on the most recent U.S. Census data. In conducting our research for this report, we found that each city has unique circumstances surrounding completion barriers and efforts; therefore, we have reported their stories separately here.

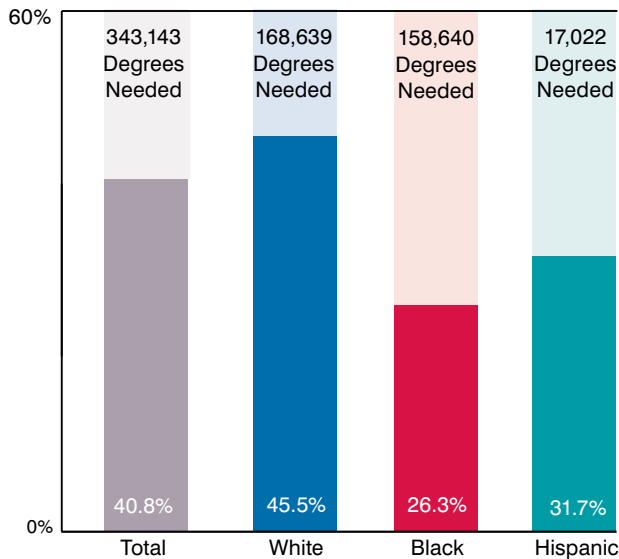
## BALTIMORE, MD.: BUILDING BLOCKS TOWARD BETTER ATTAINMENT



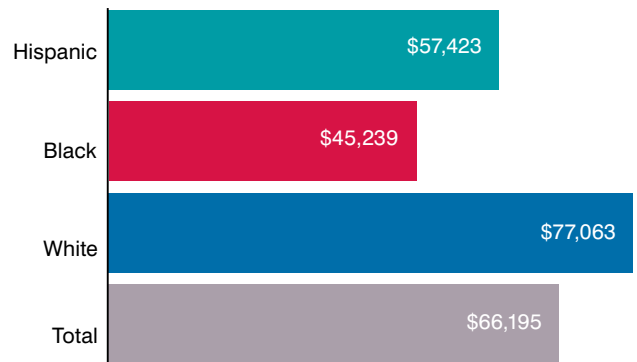
### Population by Race/Ethnicity



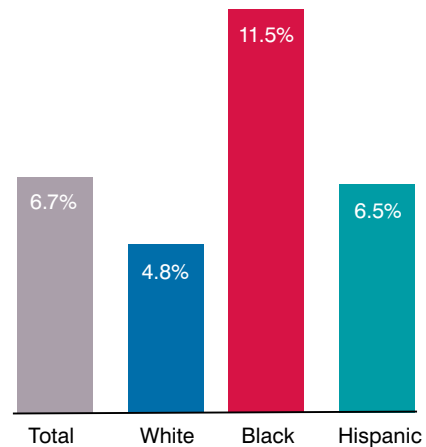
### Adults (25+) with College Degrees and Number Needed to Reach 60% Attainment Today



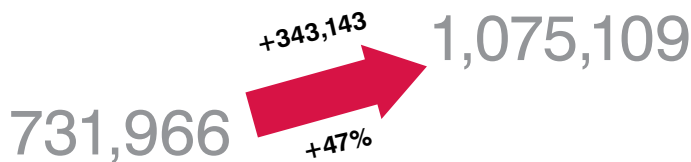
### Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



### Unemployment by Race/Ethnicity



### Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.  
Note: Degree attainment rates are for residents ages 25+ and unemployment rates are for residents ages 16+. The racial/ethnic groups in this report are mutually exclusive (i.e., White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic).

<sup>43</sup> Kienzl, Gregory S., Sponsler, Brian A., Wesaw, Alexis J., Kumar, Amal, and Jill Jones. 2011. *Smart Money: Informing Higher Education Philanthropy*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/Publications/publications-detail.cfm?id=146>.

## Attainment Needs and Opportunities in Greater Baltimore's Counties

		Adults (25+) with College Degrees	Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today*	Number of Institutions	2011–12 Headcount Enrollment
<b>Greater Baltimore</b>		<b>40.8%</b>	<b>343,143<sup>44</sup></b>	<b>40</b>	<b>193,259</b>
<b>MD</b>	Anne Arundel County	42.7% (↔)	61,375	3	27,617
	Baltimore City	29.7% (↓)	122,901	14	46,800
	Baltimore County	41.2% (↔)	101,655	15	81,023
	Carroll County	38.5% (↔)	23,774	2	7,413
	Harford County	39.2% (↔)	33,637	2	9,837
	Howard County	64.1% (↑)	Reached	3	16,646
	Queen Anne's County	37.1% (↓)	7,372	1	3,923

\*The calculation used to estimate the number of degrees needed to reach the attainment goal did not take into account natural growth (the number of degrees to be produced in the coming years at the current rate of degree production) or additional degrees from new immigrants with college degrees coming to the United States. It signals only the number of degrees that would be needed if the MMSA were to have a 60 percent attainment rate today.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System IPEDS, Fall 2011 Enrollment Component; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

Note: The analyses include all Title IV two- and four-year institutions.

IHEP convened Baltimore area stakeholders in partnership with the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) in 2013. Meeting attendees included representatives from local postsecondary institutions, state higher education agencies, and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations focused on college access and success. Attendees gathered to discuss barriers to college completion as well as current local efforts to increase attainment, summarized below. Note that stakeholders focused primarily on Baltimore City rather than Columbia and Towson (also part of the MSA), and this focus is reflected in the summary.

The following organizations represent the participants who convened in Baltimore:

- The Abell Foundation
- Baltimore City Community College
- Baltimore City Public Schools
- Baltimore Collegetown Network
- Baltimore Development Corporation
- BuildingSteps
- Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

- Coppin State University
- Maryland Higher Education Commission
- Towson University
- University of Baltimore
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County

### Why is Raising Attainment Important to the City of Baltimore and its Citizens?

Job growth in metropolitan Baltimore has been faster than national job growth since the 2008 recession, and sources estimate that 66 percent of jobs in the state will require a postsecondary credential by 2018.<sup>50,51</sup> Finding local talent to fill those positions is a challenge, however, particularly in Baltimore City where education and employment outcomes stand in contrast to the rest of the area. Only 30 percent of Baltimore City residents over the age of 25 have a college degree, compared with 41 percent in the MSA overall. The problem is particularly pervasive among Black and Hispanic populations, who make up the majority of Baltimore City residents, only 18 percent and 22 percent of whom are college graduates, respectively. As such,

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2013. *Baltimore Area Employment—March 2013*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/ro3/cesqbalt.htm>.

<sup>51</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P., Smith, Nicole, and Strohl, Jeff. 2010. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Retrieved from <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/state-levelanalysis-web.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> The number of degrees needed at the MSA level is smaller than the sum of degrees needed at the county level, owing to the counties with more than 60 percent current degree attainment.



the median household income in Baltimore City is less than two-thirds that of the region (under \$40,000 compared with roughly \$66,000), and the unemployment rate is nearly twice as high (11.5 percent compared with 6.7 percent).<sup>52</sup>

Stakeholders noted that area employers cannot find enough skilled employees locally, and have voiced these concerns to the Chamber of Commerce and Workforce Boards. In particular, employers find that workers lack the math and science skills needed in the growing health and science fields. The anticipated growth in jobs within the Baltimore area indicates a real opportunity for youth and adults to earn gainful employment if postsecondary credentials are acquired.

### What Actions are Under Way in Baltimore to Increase Attainment?

According to local stakeholders, one of the primary barriers to increasing postsecondary attainment in Baltimore is a lack of alignment between K–12 and higher education systems as a whole, although there are some examples of interaction between specific institutions in the two sectors. Less than half (44 percent) of Baltimore City high school graduates participate in postsecondary education directly following high school, compared with 66 percent of high school graduates nationwide.<sup>53</sup> Attendees expressed hope that successful implementation of the Common Core Standards and use of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers assessments will improve college and career readiness in Baltimore and reduce the need for college remediation. In addition, the state of Maryland recently passed legislation related to improving college and career readiness, which facilitates K–12/postsecondary alignment with transitional coursework for high school students who do not test college-ready, as well as dual enrollment partnerships.<sup>54</sup>

Baltimore does not as yet have a centralized or coordinated approach to its efforts to improve college access and success; however, several promising initiatives are under way.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

<sup>53</sup> Durham, Robert E., and Linda S. Olson. 2013. *College Enrollment and Degree Completion for Baltimore City Graduates through the Class of 2012*. Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Education Research Consortium. Retrieved from <http://baltimore-berc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Collegereportjuly2013.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Maryland General Assembly. 2013. *College Readiness and Completion Act of 2013: Senate Bill 740*. Retrieved from <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2013RS/bills/sb/sb0740f.pdf>.

### Abell Foundation Initiatives

[www.abell.org](http://www.abell.org)

The Baltimore-based Abell Foundation is a highly visible supporter of education and workforce efforts in the city. Below are brief descriptions of several of the foundation's initiatives relevant to college attainment:

- **Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC):** The Abell Foundation and the Open Society Institute launched BERC in 2008 in partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools, Johns Hopkins University, Morgan State University, and other civic and community partners. Modeled after the Consortium on Chicago School Research, BERC conducts and disseminates research intended to inform policies and practices that can increase educational attainment rates of students in Baltimore.
- **CollegeBound Foundation Scholarship Program:** In partnership with CollegeBound, the Abell Foundation supports a college retention program that provides 2007–2011 local high school graduates attending designated in-state postsecondary institutions with a last-dollar scholarship and personal and academic supports. Initial program data indicate a 90 percent first-to-second-year retention rate.
- **Year Up Baltimore:** A career training initiative located in several cities nationwide, the Baltimore program launched in 2010 as the first to partner with local community colleges. Year Up Baltimore enrolls low-income high school graduates in either the Community College of Baltimore County or Baltimore City Community College, and provides participants with a year of intensive training and internships in information technology.

### Building STEPS

[www.buildingsteps.org](http://www.buildingsteps.org)

Building STEPS is a college access and support program for high-performing, low-income students, intended to generate interest in STEM careers. Funded by local philanthropic organizations since 1999, the program provides participants with college access services such as campus visits, college and financial aid application assistance, and test preparation. The

program partners with seven Baltimore City Schools to serve approximately 100 high school students per year. The program also partners with employers and the city (through its Youth Works program) to provide 11th and 12th graders with seminars and paid internships to build their knowledge of STEM careers and give them substantive work experience. Once in college, participants receive support from a one-on-one adult volunteer and a peer mentor to support their progress. Building STEPS is currently at work on a strategic plan to determine whether expansion into additional schools is feasible, and is working on a partnership with the school system to become more systemic. Building STEPS cites an 84 percent college degree completion rate over the course of the program.

### *Baltimore Collegetown Network (BCN)*

[www.baltimorecollegetown.org](http://www.baltimorecollegetown.org)

Postsecondary institutions collaborate with representatives of the local government, businesses, and the community through the Baltimore Collegetown Network (BCN), a coalition of 14 local colleges and universities established in 1999. BCN primarily promotes Baltimore's educational and cultural offerings, and advocates for expanded transportation options for area students. BCN has also facilitated agreements between area institutions allowing for cross-enrollment.<sup>55</sup>

### *Institutional Partnerships*

Representatives from local colleges and universities also discussed their institutions' efforts to partner with K–12 guidance counselors, students, and their families to help boost college preparation and access. Baltimore University (BU), for example, partners with Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) and the SEED School of Baltimore to prepare high school students for college. BU's College Readiness Preparatory Series provides 11th and 12th grade students with instruction in reading,

writing, information literacy, and math; a six-week on-campus summer program and paid work experience; and enrollment in college credit courses. Area colleges such as the Community College of Baltimore County and Morgan State University also partner with BCPS to provide eighth grade students with exposure to a college environment through campus visits.

### **What are the Opportunities—and Obstacles—Affecting Baltimore's Efforts to Improve Attainment?**

Much of the dialogue in Baltimore centered around the city itself rather than surrounding counties, and reflected a focus on the goal to successfully transition students to postsecondary education, rather than a robust discussion on the college completion agenda. The completion agenda in Baltimore does not currently have clear support from leadership, nor centralized resources. Although statewide initiatives such as the governor's recent Skills to Compete initiative are helping to bolster existing efforts, the stakeholders expressed a desire for city leadership to convene, champion, and build an area-wide coalition for college completion. Some K–12/postsecondary collaboration is occurring at particular institutions; however, there is a need to systematize these practices on a larger scale.

Stakeholders also discussed the need to better leverage city and state longitudinal data systems to inform institutions about student academic needs and to monitor student outcomes. Involvement by philanthropy, business, and city government is needed to effectively implement a collective impact framework. Stakeholders felt that the local philanthropic community is increasingly becoming more interested in educational reform, but the city has not yet developed a centralized postsecondary attainment agenda to which philanthropic organizations can commit their resources over the long term. To that end, several foundations are conducting a feasibility study to determine whether a cradle-to-career collective impact model similar to StriveTogether would be viable in Baltimore.

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<sup>55</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.baltimorecollegetown.org/>.

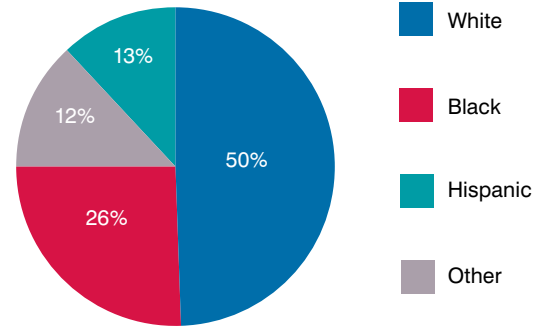
## WASHINGTON, D.C.: WORKING TO RAISE ATTAINMENT BY WIDENING THE LOCAL PIPELINE

### Greater Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area (Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area)

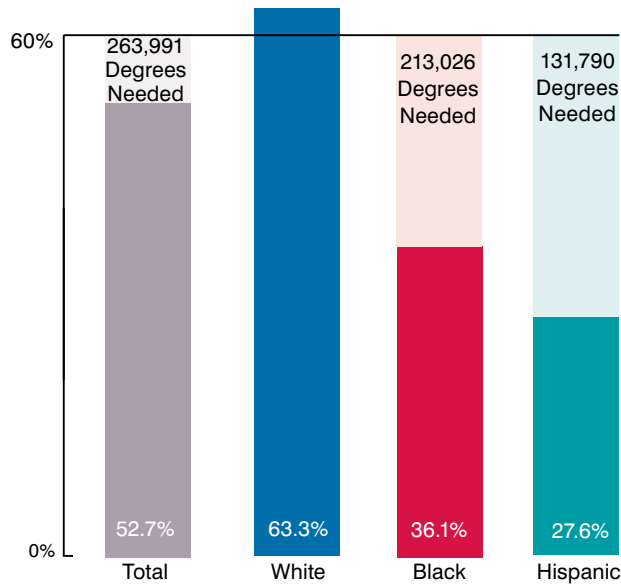
#### Population

**5,416,691**  
(8<sup>th</sup> largest MSA)

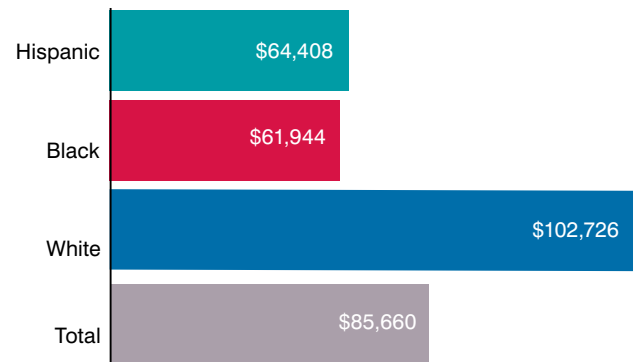
#### Population by Race/Ethnicity



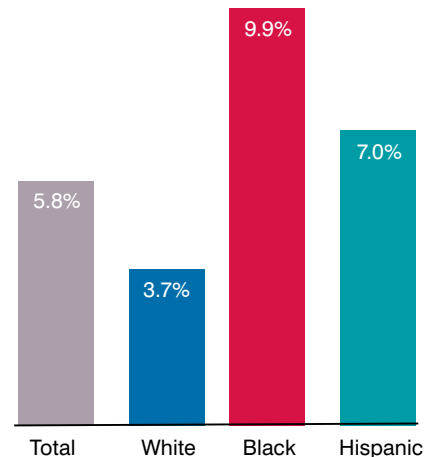
#### Adults (25+) with College Degrees and Number Needed to Reach 60% Attainment Today



#### Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



#### Unemployment by Race/Ethnicity



#### Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.  
 Note: Degree attainment rates are for residents ages 25+ and unemployment rates are for residents ages 16+. The racial/ethnic groups in this report are mutually exclusive (i.e., White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic).

## Attainment Needs and Opportunities in Metro D.C. Counties

		Adults (25+) with College Degrees	Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today*	Number of Institutions	2011–12 Headcount Enrollment
<b>Metro Washington, D.C.</b>		<b>52.7%</b>	<b>263,991<sup>51</sup></b>	<b>80</b>	<b>490,754</b>
<b>DC</b>	District of Columbia	52.3% (↔)	30,639	17	63,704
<b>MD</b>	Calvert County	36.3% (↓)	13,580		
	Charles County	33.7% (↓)	24,363	2	12,788
	Frederick County	43.4% (↓)	24,988	5	12,872
	Montgomery County	62.0% (↑)	Reached	12	43,847
	Prince George's County	35.8% (↓)	132,294	13	110,879
<b>VA</b>	Alexandria City	64.5% (↑)	Reached	1	361
	Arlington County	73.8% (↑)	Reached	8	23,802
	Clarke County	35.9% (↓)	2,400		
	Fairfax City	59.3% (↑)	114		
	Fairfax County	63.3% (↑)	Reached	17	122,594
	Falls Church City	74.3% (↑)	Reached		
	Fauquier County	38.5% (↓)	9,324		
	Fredericksburg City	37.2% (↓)	3,024	1	5,036
	Loudoun County	63.0% (↑)	Reached	1	338
	Manassas City	34.0% (↓)	5,792		
	Manassas Park City	32.0% (↓)	2,269		
	Prince William County	44.4% (↓)	36,701	1	344
	Spotsylvania County	37.0% (↓)	17,487		
	Stafford County	44.1% (↓)	12,067		
	Warren County	26.9% (↓)	8,244		
<b>WV</b>	Jefferson County	34.6% (↓)	8,775	2	94,189

\*The calculation used to estimate the number of degrees needed to reach the attainment goal did not take into account natural growth (the number of degrees to be produced in the coming years at the current rate of degree production) or additional degrees from new immigrants with college degrees coming to the United States. It signals only the number of degrees that would be needed if the MMSA were to have a 60 percent attainment rate today.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System IPEDS, Fall 2011 Enrollment Component; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

Note: The analyses include all Title IV two- and four-year institutions.

<sup>56</sup> The number of degrees needed at the MSA level is smaller than the sum of degrees needed at the county level, due to the counties with over 60 percent current degree attainment.

IHEP convened D.C. metro area stakeholders in 2013. Meeting attendees included representatives from local postsecondary institutions, state education agencies, and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations focused on college access and success. Attendees gathered to discuss barriers to college completion as well as localized efforts in place aimed at increasing attainment, which is summarized below.

The following organizations represent the participants who convened in Washington, D.C.:

- Capital Partners for Education
- College Success Foundation
- DC Alliance of Youth Advocates
- District of Columbia College Access Program
- Office of the State Superintendent of Education
- See Forever
- United Negro College Fund
- University of District of Columbia
- University of Virginia
- Year Up

### **Why is Raising Attainment Important to Metropolitan Washington, D.C., and its Citizens?**

The Washington, D.C., area, including the neighboring Maryland and Virginia suburbs, draws highly educated professionals from all over the world to fill jobs in the federal government and professional and business services. In the past, solid government jobs that generated middle-class incomes were also plentiful for non-bachelor's degree holders, including local residents. However, the majority of these jobs now require a bachelor's degree at a minimum. As such, the new knowledge economy has put Washington's attainment gaps in sharper relief.

Washington, D.C., has the highest proportion of adults age 25 and over with college degrees (53 percent) among the largest 100 metropolitan areas.<sup>57</sup> Yet, those rates are misleading, largely reflecting the education levels of people who move to D.C. from other areas, rather than indicating the success of the city's residents through the local education pipeline. Within the city of Washington, D.C., proper, the differences in attainment

levels by race and ethnicity are particularly stark: The majority of White residents (89 percent) hold college degrees, in comparison with only 26 percent of African Americans, an even larger discrepancy than for the metropolitan area as a whole.<sup>58</sup> As one stakeholder said: "College completion and college access gets overlooked in D.C. because it looks as though we are sailing above the national norm."

Stakeholders described two major barriers to educational attainment in Washington, D.C.: A long history of underserving the educational needs of D.C. students, and inadequate social services and support systems for poor city residents. The majority of students in D.C. public schools are low income, as indicated by their eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch.<sup>59</sup> As such, students often face challenges typical of low-income, first-generation students, such as a lack of college awareness, aspiration, and planning. In terms of barriers particular to the city, stakeholders perceived the public transportation system to be more costly than in other cities and limited in poorer areas of the city, and, unlike in other cities, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority does not offer discounts or passes to students. In addition, the limited number of public postsecondary options for D.C. residents was also highlighted as a contributing factor to low attainment rates. While the city is home to a number of well-known selective private institutions, such as Georgetown University and George Washington University, there are very few open-access, nonprofit postsecondary options. The creation of the city's first community college in 2009 has expanded opportunities for the city's residents. Neighboring Maryland and Virginia suburbs do offer additional options; however, D.C. residents may not have the means necessary to make the long and often costly commutes across the border.

### **What Actions are Under Way to Increase Attainment in D.C.?**

D.C.'s newest, and promising, opportunity for change is the Raise DC initiative, which began in 2012. Raise DC is a cradle-to-career partnership modeled on the StrivePartnership, designed to help local youth succeed. The partnership involves members from philanthropy, government, business, and nonprofit communities working alongside the District of Columbia Public Schools, public charter schools, and local postsecondary institutions. Initially led by the Mayor's Office, the initia-

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> DC Action for Children. 2012. "Table: Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility." *Kids Count Data Center*. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/4778-free-and-reduced-price-lunch-eligibility?loc=10&loct=3#detailed/3/any/false/1024,937,809,712,517/3534,894,897/11147>.

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey.

tive transitioned to an independent backbone organization to ensure the sustainability of the work. The partnership issued a Report Card in 2013 as part of a collective effort to identify specific markers of success for children and youth as they transition through the educational pipeline.<sup>60</sup> The city also recently began tracking postsecondary outcomes through the National Student Clearinghouse in collaboration with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

Raise DC sponsors five “Change Networks,” each focused on a critical sector related to increased attainment. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the backbone organization of the College and Credential Completion Network (C3N), the postsecondary change network of Raise DC. C3N brings together approximately 120 local college access programs, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, institutions of higher learning, community-based organizations, and nonprofits, which strive collectively to improve the District’s level of college and career education attainment. One example of this collaborative approach is the Data Sharing Initiative, developed in response to a previous lack of knowledge concerning District-wide gaps in college access services. As a result of this initiative, OSSE and C3N have determined that there is a glaring lack of college access services available to middle-grade and early high school students, prompting a coordinated expansion of C3N members’ programs into these grades.

OSSE also runs several other initiatives aimed at increasing college access and success in the D.C. metro area, including the DC Tuition Assistance Program (DCTAG) and the Career and Technical Education Taskforce. Since 1999, DCTAG has provided scholarships to make private institutions in D.C. and public institutions in other states more accessible to D.C. residents, given the lack of postsecondary options within D.C. Since its inception, DCTAG has awarded more than 16,000 scholarships averaging \$6,587 per year, totaling more than \$200 million.<sup>61</sup> Established in 2012, the Career and Technical Education Taskforce brought together the Workforce Investment Council, D.C. Public Schools and Public Charter School Board, the University of the District of Columbia Community College, and city education and industry leaders to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to improve the quality and outcomes of career

and technical education (CTE) in the city. As a result, the city will be funding nine career academies beginning in the 2014–2015 academic year, to prepare students for local in-demand, high-wage jobs in information technology, engineering, and hospitality. These career academies will provide students with dual enrollment, internships, mentorships, and work-based learning. The city will also provide additional funding for CTE programs and a CTE certification fund.

Other citywide efforts aimed at increasing attainment rates include the following:

- OSSE’s Dual Enrollment Program started in fiscal year 2013 to make dual enrollment more accessible to District students by removing financial hardship as a barrier. The program covers unmet tuition, fees, and book and transportation costs at District postsecondary institutions. The program served more than 120 students during the Fall 2012 semester.
- The Mayor’s Scholars Fund, a 100 percent need-based scholarship program that provides financial support to low-income District students who attend public and private colleges and universities in the District of Columbia. Last year, OSSE awarded approximately \$1.2 million to 185 resident students.
- The Counselor Professional Development program, which provides customized training modules to high school counselors on relevant and timely topics surrounding student college and career readiness. The program aims to ensure that the District’s public and public charter school counselors have access to the skills they need to support their students along a successful path to college.

### **What are the Opportunities—and Obstacles—Affecting D.C.’s Efforts to Improve Attainment?**

Washington, D.C., has clearly been increasing its focus on coordinated efforts to improve the postsecondary educational attainment of its youth, but alleviating barriers to educational and economic opportunities in the city will require a long-term commitment to these efforts. Public services, especially public education, are beginning to improve in order to adequately serve all of the city’s residents. Data and resources were previously limited, but new cradle-to-career initiatives such as Raise DC represent a powerful opportunity for collective impact. Importantly, such efforts seem to have the involvement, support, and civic infrastructure to move the city forward in a compelling direction.

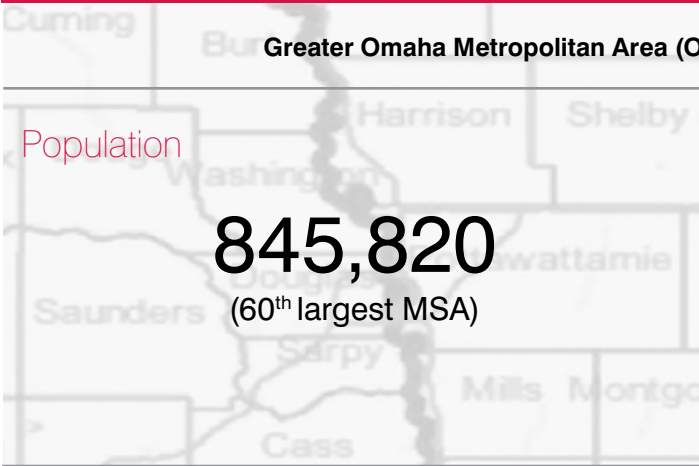
<sup>60</sup> Raise DC. 2013. *Baseline Report Card: Prepared Youth. Productive Residents. Thriving Communities*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://raisedc.net/pdfs/DME-003-ReportCard2.0.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education, District of Columbia. 2010. *Tuition Assistance Grant Program 10 Year Accomplishments Report: 1999-2009*. Retrieved from <http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/dctag-10-year-accomplishments-report.pdf>.

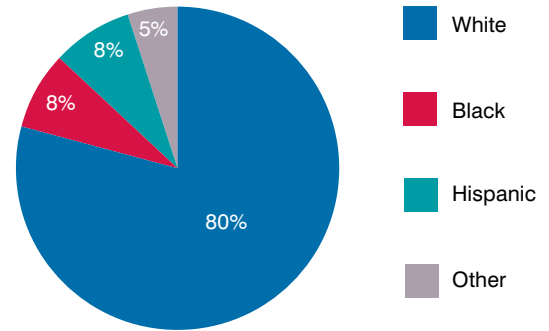


## OMAHA, NEB.: PREPARING THE POPULATION FOR THE SILICON PRAIRIE

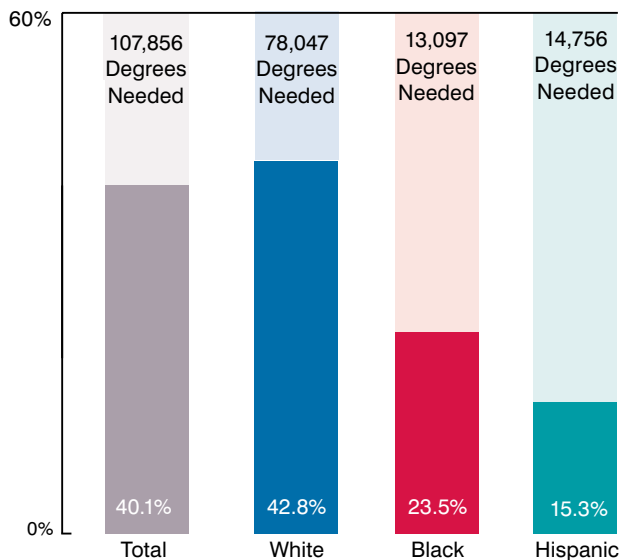
### Greater Omaha Metropolitan Area (Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA Metro Area)



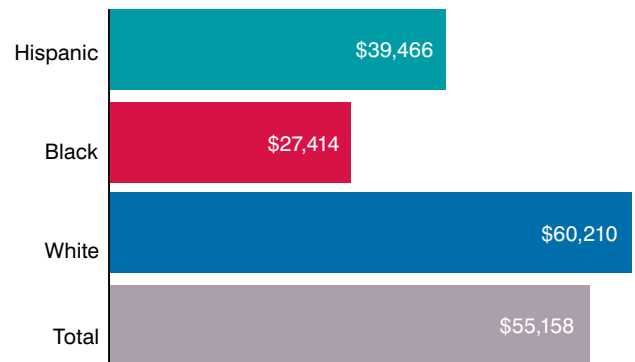
### Population by Race/Ethnicity



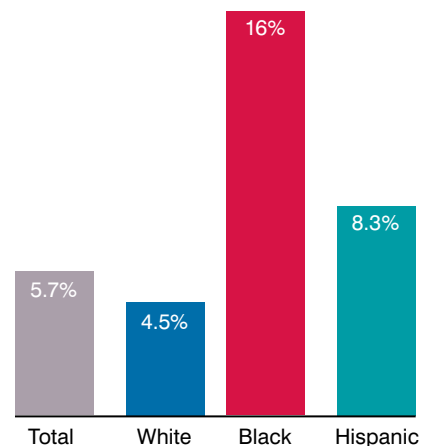
### Adults (25+) with College Degrees and Number Needed to Reach 60% Attainment Today



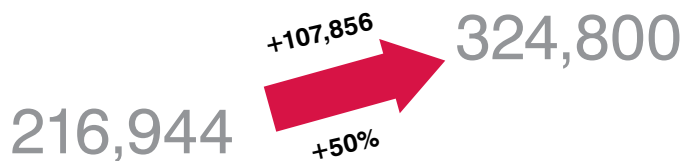
### Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



### Unemployment by Race/Ethnicity



### Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.  
Note: Degree attainment rates are for residents ages 25+ and unemployment rates are for residents ages 16+. The racial/ethnic groups in this report are mutually exclusive (i.e., White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic).

## Attainment Needs and Opportunities in Greater Omaha's Counties

		Adults (25+) with College Degrees	Degrees Needed to Reach 60% Today*	Number of Institutions	2011-12 Headcount Enrollment
<b>Greater Omaha</b>		<b>40.1%</b>	<b>107,856</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>79,786</b>
IA	Harrison County	24.4% (↓)	3,692		
	Mills County	33.4% (↓)	2,755		
	Pottawattamie County	26.7% (↓)	20,303	3	10,193
NE	Cass County	33.7% (↓)	4,509		
	Douglas County	42.5% (↑)	56,237	18	60,229
	Sarpy County	45.2% (↑)	13,925	2	9,364
	Saunders County	34.5% (↓)	3,526		
	Washington County	37.9% (↓)	2,908		

\*The calculation used to estimate the number of degrees needed to reach the attainment goal did not take into account natural growth (the number of degrees to be produced in the coming years at the current rate of degree production) or additional degrees from new immigrants with college degrees coming to the United States. It signals only the number of degrees that would be needed if the MMSA were to have a 60 percent attainment rate today.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 Enrollment Component; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

Note: The analyses include all Title IV two- and four-year institutions.

IHEP convened a meeting with Omaha area stakeholders in partnership with the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) in 2013. Meeting attendees included representatives of local higher education institutions and K-12 school districts, nonprofit college access and outreach programs, and the Omaha and Council Bluffs Chambers of Commerce.

The following organizations represent the participants who convened in Omaha, Neb.:

- Avenue Scholars Foundation
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska
- Building Bright Futures (BBF)
- College Possible
- Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Iowa Western Community College
- Latino Center of the Midlands
- Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
- Metropolitan Community College of Omaha
- United Way of the Midlands

- University of Nebraska Omaha
- Urban Education Network of Iowa

### Why is Raising Attainment Important to Omaha and its Citizens?

Recently ranked 17th among 200 MSAs for businesses based on economic growth,<sup>62</sup> Omaha is part of a growing "Silicon Prairie" attracting technology start-up companies to the area, and is home to five Fortune 500 companies including ConAgra Foods. There is a need to tap into the local, underserved population to fill these growing economic opportunities. Omaha's unemployment rate, 5.7 percent, may be lower than the national average of 7.9 percent, but unemployment for African Americans in the area is nearly three times the Omaha average, at 16 percent.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, the college attainment rate is much lower for minorities, with just 15 percent of Hispanics and 24 percent of African Americans holding college degrees compared with 43 percent of White residents.<sup>64</sup> Omaha is proud to be home to Fortune 500 CEOs, including billionaire Warren Buffett, but in order to truly maximize its economic potential the city must focus its efforts on increasing the degree completion and job placement rates of its underserved communities.

<sup>62</sup> Badenhausen, Kurt. 2013. "Best Places: By the Numbers." *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2013/08/07/best-places-by-the-numbers>.

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, five-year estimates.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



The Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area centers around Omaha, but also includes Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the Missouri River, and spans eight counties. Stakeholders highlighted three major barriers to educational attainment affecting the region. First and foremost, high levels of poverty in segregated areas such as North Omaha endure in sharp contrast with the relative affluence of the rest of the city. Second, stakeholders also assert that the city has not fully addressed the needs of its growing population of immigrants and refugees, who have difficulty acquiring education, language, and job skills. Of foreign-born residents living in the Omaha metro area in 2010, nearly twice as many entered the United States during 2000–09 than the previous decade.<sup>65</sup> Although Nebraska passed the Dream Act, which provides in-state tuition to undocumented students, those without documentation cannot receive any federal financial aid, and immigrant families still often do not have the means to pay for college. Finally, transportation, particularly in the predominantly African American area of North Omaha, was noted as severely lacking, making it difficult for individuals without cars to access more centrally located education and work opportunities.

Further, stakeholders cited a need to “merge practices on both sides of the river” to make college more accessible for students throughout the MSA. The state border makes collaboration “more difficult than it needs to be.”

### **What Actions Are Being Undertaken to Increase Attainment in Omaha?**

Leadership for increasing educational attainment has been driven largely by local universities, namely the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the Metropolitan Community Col-

lege of Omaha (Metro), as well as by the corporate, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors. State and local government have not been major actors to date. One participant stated, “The tendency is for us to be a conservative public policy state. The private sector is the go-to.” Below are several major programs and partnerships under way in Greater Omaha, most of which are focused on underserved student populations.

#### *The Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium*

[coe.unomaha.edu/moec](http://coe.unomaha.edu/moec)

Stakeholders cited the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC), established in 1988 and housed at UNO, as one of the most successful partnerships in the region. MOEC brings together in regular meetings public school administrators representing the 11 superintendents of K–12 districts in the area (including Council Bluffs, Iowa) and postsecondary institutional stakeholders, and offers them opportunities to partner, collaborate, and share best practices. The consortium has appointed task forces on topics such as curriculum, teacher preparation, and technology, and works across state lines to affect policy and institutional practice.

#### *Avenue Scholars*

[www.avescholars.org](http://www.avescholars.org)

Another collaborative program noted is Avenue Scholars, which has served approximately 1,000 students in seven schools since 2008. These students represent the lowest quartile of high school performers from low-income households. The program partners with the business and philanthropic communities, UNO, and Metro to guide at-risk high school students through the postsecondary pipeline and careers. Students in the program are closely mentored by “Talent Advisors” who

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<sup>65</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey.

help them develop academic, career, and financial plans and assist with job placement. Students stay enrolled as a cohort at Metro, where they have access to additional support through the “Avenue Center,” and can also access resources offered through UNO.<sup>66</sup> Nearly all 2011 scholars graduated from high school, and of those who entered postsecondary education, the majority (85 percent) persisted through the second year of college.<sup>67</sup>

### **College Possible**

[www.collegepossible.org/omaha](http://www.collegepossible.org/omaha)

College Possible is a national college access program serving low-income, first-generation students in four metropolitan areas, including Omaha since 2011–12. The program pairs high school juniors and seniors with AmeriCorps members who act as coaches to guide them through college applications and standardized test preparation. Coaches also hold workshops to help students with the transition to college. College Possible serves more than 600 high school students in Omaha through eight partnering high schools in four districts.

### **Latino Center of the Midlands**

[www.latinocenterofthemidlands.org](http://www.latinocenterofthemidlands.org)

The Latino Center of the Midlands in Omaha was established in 1971 to serve the area’s growing population of Latino residents, with an emphasis on education. The center partners with Metro and Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln to provide services to adult learners including computer literacy training, GED preparation, and pathway to citizenship classes. The center

partners with both UNO and Metro to raise scholarship funds and offer English as a Second Language course work, and separately with UNO to offer residential Latina summer academies that provide career exploration opportunities.

### *Institutional Initiatives*

In addition to community initiatives described above, there are also strong institutional partnerships that facilitate increased attainment in Greater Omaha. A partnership between Metro and UNO has facilitated transfer and articulation agreements that span the Iowa and Nebraska state lines. Institutions on both sides of the river meet regularly to design programs at affordable tuition levels for students throughout the region, thereby alleviating barriers that stakeholders cited to making postsecondary education more accessible. Metro and UNO have also collaborated to reform remedial coursework and link workforce experience with competency-based credentials to help accelerate degree completion.

Metro has collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce to focus on competency-based, short-certificate, and skills-based programs in addition to its focus on adult education. Metro also partners with Bellevue University, a private, nonprofit institution that offers an accelerated bachelor’s degree program to associate’s degree holders. Students transferring from Metro receive a college application fee waiver, have access to a Metro advisor on the Bellevue campus, and are eligible for two \$500 grants.

In addition to its partnership with Metro, UNO has articulation and in-state tuition agreements with Iowa Western Community College. UNO also assists the local disadvantaged population with its Thompson Learning Community Program, Young Scholars Program, and Goodrich Low-Income Scholarship

<sup>66</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.avescholars.org/index.php/program-overview>.

<sup>67</sup> Avenue Scholars Foundation. 2012. Annual Report September 1, 2011–August 31, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.avescholars.org/index.php/about/2012-annual-report>.

Program, all of which provide financial aid and advising support and have achieved higher graduation rates for participants than the institutional average. Finally, UNO offers dual enrollment and a summer bridge program that provides low-income high school sophomores from both Nebraska and Iowa with the opportunity to obtain college credits.

Private postsecondary institutions in the area also offer supportive programs to disadvantaged students.

The College of Saint Mary is one of few institutions nationwide that offers a residential and support program for single parent students, the Mothers Living & Learning program. Since 2000, the program has been providing counseling, workshops, and community resource referrals to approximately 50 students annually, and has achieved a graduation rate of 85 percent, double that of the institution overall. In 2013, Creighton University launched the Ignation College Connection program to help high-achieving, low-income, first-generation, or underrepresented minority students prepare for college. This pre-college enrichment program provides approximately 40 junior and senior high school students per year with academic counseling and support, mentoring, tutoring, writing seminars, ACT preparation, career guidance, and financial literacy.

At the city level, efforts such as the Greater Omaha After School Alliance and the Middle School Learning Center Initiative expand and improve after-school programs through professional development and partnerships with community-based organizations. Collaborations between these City of Omaha initiatives and partners such as Building Bright Futures and the Sherwood Foundation make after-school programs available for free.

### **What are the Opportunities—and Obstacles—Affecting Omaha’s Efforts to Improve Attainment?**

The initiatives described above exemplify collective impact to some degree. Stakeholders see themselves as part of a coalition that is moving the needle on educational attainment, and they talked at length about the shared vision and mobilization of community actors and organizations in Omaha. Yet while higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and philanthropy have been actively involved in college completion efforts, what is lacking is the civic infrastructure and leadership needed to fully embrace the collective impact model. The city could make a significant impact on college completion if key local and state government actors were more invested in the work.

Another essential piece of the collective impact framework that seems to be missing from Omaha’s efforts, and that stakeholders expressed a need for, is the uniform collection and assessment of data at the regional level. Participants concurred that good work is not enough: “We have to know if it is working.” Omaha does not currently have any benchmarks or specific goals in place related to college attainment, at either the city or institutional levels. The Omaha Chamber of Commerce is currently assessing employer needs and skills shortages that can be addressed through education, and expects to release those findings in early 2014. Stakeholders stated that although they have not yet collected MSA-wide postsecondary data indicators, some data collection is occurring at individual program levels. They recognize that current efforts are just a start toward wider assessment and impact. It is unclear how Omaha will sustain and build on its efforts to increase attainment over time; however, the involvement of city leadership will be critical.

# Supporting Cities to Start and Sustain College Completion Campaigns

If the United States is to remain competitive in a knowledge-based and innovative economy, a dynamic workforce trained with the up-to-date skills required for today's jobs and those of the future is critical. Developing these skills depends on strengthening the infrastructure and support systems all along the “cradle-to-career” pipeline. Yet while raising educational attainment is clearly a national imperative, much of the progress—and the effort—must be made by localities if the country is to reach its goals.

The case studies presented here highlight the work that five cities have undertaken to improve college access and completion in order to drive greater attainment in their regions. Each city is clearly different—employing different strategies, engaging different stakeholders, and aiming at different goals. And yet, the commonalities across their efforts are instructive for other cities that might be considering their own attainment agendas. The five themes identified below align with the elements that have been found to make collective impact strategies like StriveTogether a promising framework for the field: Stakeholder commitment (leadership), evidence-based decision making (data), cross-sector engagement (partnerships and policies), and investment toward partnership sustainability (money).

**Leadership Matters:** Although some of the cities profiled in this report have undertaken initiatives to improve attainment without

city leadership involvement, it clearly makes a difference when these stakeholders are not only supportive, but central to the effort. Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, Jr., for example, serves as a strong and influential leader who is fully committed to the cause and empowers other community leaders to achieve change. However, the attainment agenda cannot be driven by one person alone. Cities also need “facilitators of change” to act as agents who can mobilize and organize partners from different sectors in support of a collective attainment agenda. Leadership Memphis and PeopleFirst help play this important role to galvanize support for that city's completion initiatives.

**Data Matter:** In order to properly target their efforts to promote greater attainment, cities must first assess the needs of the specific populations most in need of support. Each of the MSAs profiled here presents a “tale of two cities,” with stark contrasts in the educational attainment, employment, and demographic characteristics of residents living on in different parts of the cities. Omaha, for instance, is home to Warren Buffet and hi-tech startups, but North Omaha has one of the highest concentrations of African Americans living in poverty in the country. Understanding the root cause of discrepancies in attainment rates is essential to properly setting goals, targeting supports, allocating resources, and tracking progress over time. Cincinnati's StrivePartnership is at the forefront of setting and tracking benchmarks along the cradle-to-career pipeline

and regularly reporting results to keep all stakeholders working together to raise attainment. Having recently joined the national StriveTogether network, both Memphis and Washington, D.C., are driving toward major data collection initiatives to better support their work.

**Partnerships Matter:** Cross-sector partnerships involving leadership from local government, K–12 schools, colleges and universities, employers, nonprofit organizations, and private funders are also critical to raising attainment in cities, a central tenet of collective impact. These stakeholders cannot work in silos if they are to be effective. Instead, each must depend on the feedback and involvement of the others to create a seamless system of change (and to avoid duplicating or negating each other’s efforts). Raise DC’s five “Change Networks” offer a model for organizing across critical sectors to increase attainment. Strategic partnerships to align educational innovation with workforce needs are especially important to ensuring that city stakeholders realize a return on their efforts to educate area residents. Further, city involvement in national partnerships, such as CEOs for Cities’ Talent Dividend and the National League of Cities’ Communities Learning in Partnership, can help generate interest, build momentum, and maintain progress toward attainment goals.

**Policies Matter:** Even the most well-intentioned and well-organized efforts to increase college access and success will be ineffective and difficult to bring to scale if the policy context does not support change. Cities must carefully consider—and eliminate—policy barriers that serve as structural impediments to raising attainment. These include lack of curricular coherence between local K–12 and higher education institutions, transfer and articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges, tuition and financial aid policies, and transportation options, all of which are exacerbated in multi-state metropolitan areas such as those presented in the case studies here. The partnerships between the University of Nebraska Omaha and community colleges in both Omaha and nearby Iowa to ease transfer, align tuition costs, and promote dual enrollment demonstrate what is possible. Aligning these policies across institutional and state contexts can help erase the boundaries that

limit individuals from achieving their educational goals that are within close proximity to their homes, but currently just out of reach. As previously noted, congressionally authorized Educational Zone Governance Organizations (EZ-GO) could help to accommodate for the mobility across state lines through formal agency agreements.

**Money Matters:** Although the cities profiled in this report are using different strategies to improve its educational pipeline, one thing is common across the board: Creating citywide change requires significant resources. Organizations participating in the StrivePartnership, for example, have dedicated long hours to establish a shared vision and goals, meet regularly, and develop measurement systems. Strive, as a coordinating body, also needed funds to staff its office and organize its 300 partnering organizations. It has been very successful raising financial resources despite an initial reluctance by funders to pay for overhead costs. Many funders have since seen the benefit of giving money to one coordinating body whose partnering organizations have agreed to specific goals and strategies, and will not duplicate efforts. Through national and local foundational support and by leveraging its network’s combined budget of \$7 billion,<sup>68</sup> Strive has maximized the impact of its resources to achieve transformational change.

Regaining our national competitive stance in college attainment rates must begin at the local level, through collective efforts such as those cited in this report. Major metropolitan stakeholders understand the challenges facing their most critical populations, and the solutions required to help them overcome obstacles to success. Educators, civic leaders, businesses, and community organizations at the local level have the ability to navigate the infrastructure of their cities to affect change much more quickly than is possible at the national level. Further, as stakeholders in these cities expressed, there is a sense of urgency surrounding the need to prepare a skilled *local* workforce that can and should drive our national efforts.

<sup>68</sup> Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011. *Collective Impact*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact).

## National Organizations Working to Support City Attainment Efforts

As highlighted in this report, the case study cities are involved in a number of both local and national initiatives to increase attainment, among them the StriveTogether Network, CEOs for Cities' Talent Dividend, and Lumina Foundation's Latino Student Success Initiative in partnership with Excelencia in Education. Lumina also recently announced a Community Partnerships for Attainment initiative involving 20 communities, including both Cincinnati and Memphis. Other national organizations working as intermediaries to help support cities improve college access and completion include the following:

**The Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions** provides resources for national organizations partnering with cities to help improve college access and completion, and opportunities for them to connect and share best practices. Recent initiatives include the Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) and the Opportunity Youth Network (OYN). OYIF partners with Jobs for the Future to award grants of up to \$500,000 for cross-sector collaboratives that provide youth with opportunities in education and the workforce in 21 communities. The OYN brings together approximately 30 organizations spanning the nonprofit, business, education, philanthropy, and government sectors, all with a demonstrated commitment to helping youth succeed.

[www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-solutions](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-solutions)

**The Brookings Institution** has several initiatives focusing on metropolitan areas. The Metropolitan Policy Program conducts research on the social and economic challenges facing metropolitan areas, identifies potential solutions to address these challenges through state and federal policy recommendations, and convenes stakeholders from major metropolitan areas. The Metropolitan Opportunity Series also identifies policy recommendations to support metropolitan areas, with a focus on poverty and opportunity.

[www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro](http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro)

**National League of Cities (NLC)** facilitates several community-wide education initiatives. As managing intermediary for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Communities Learning in Partnership grant, the NLC's Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF Institute) helped coordinate services offered by K–12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and city governments in four cities selected for a three-year grant. The goal of this project is to implement and strengthen strategies such as K–12/postsecondary alignment, data systems, early assessment, and college access supports to help increase degree attainment rates. For Lumina-funded Municipal Leadership for Postsecondary Success, YEF provides intensive technical assistance to a peer network of six cities to help increase their postsecondary success, and their Postsecondary Success City Action Network provides support for mayors' senior staff members working to lead postsecondary access and success efforts.

[www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/](http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/)

**Say Yes to Education** is a national nonprofit committed to increasing high school and graduation rates for inner-city youth. Say Yes provides support along the entire educational pipeline to address academic, personal, and financial challenges. These supports include mentoring, tutoring, health care, counseling, and scholarships to public universities and 64 private colleges and universities that are part of the Say Yes Higher Education Compact, formed in 2008. Say Yes collaborates with community partners including government organizations, school districts, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, businesses, and faith-based organizations, with the goal of dramatically increasing high school and college graduation rates and in the process achieving citywide transformation.

[www.sayyestoeducation.org/](http://www.sayyestoeducation.org/)





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