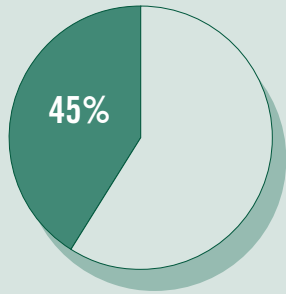
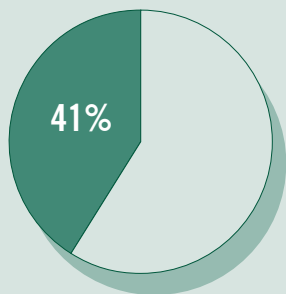


Fewer than half of community college students meet their educational goals



Nationally, of community college students who seek an associate degree or higher, 45 percent earn an associate or a bachelor's degree or transfer to a four-year institution within six years.



Nationally, of students enrolled in a certificate program (study oriented toward a particular job or industry), 41 percent achieve that goal, earn a degree or transfer to a four-year institution within six years.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *NCES (2001). Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study 1996–2001 (BPS:96/01). Analysis by Community College Research Center.*

# Success Is What Counts

*National initiative promotes change to improve student success at community colleges*

ACHIEVING  
THE DREAM<sup>SM</sup>  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGES  
COUNT

## OPPORTUNITY IS A STARTING POINT, BUT CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES CHANGE LIVES

Achieving the Dream is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed (earn degrees, earn certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies). The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that have faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. Achieving the Dream acts on multiple fronts, including efforts at community colleges and in research, public engagement and public policy.

Community colleges are open-enrollment institutions that enroll almost half of all U.S. undergraduate students. But access alone isn't enough. Too many students are leaving community colleges without attaining their goals. As a result, they risk losing the opportunity to learn and to earn a livable wage. When community college students fail to meet their academic goals, our country loses opportunities. However, when community college students succeed, they improve their own lives and benefit the nation.

## WE MUST HELP MORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED — IT CAN BE DONE

Educating a competitive workforce, stimulating local economies and helping individuals improve their lives all depend on maximizing educational success — for everyone. This is the critical work of community colleges.

Community colleges educate students who are likely to face academic, personal and financial challenges. These students often are the ones who were not well served by their previous education and therefore have the greatest academic need. They include adults returning to education after a long period of time and traditional college-age students. They are individuals who work, care for dependents and juggle other commitments.

Achieving the Dream supports colleges' efforts to help students overcome these challenges, stick with their studies and reach their academic goals.

**Using data to drive change.** Achieving the Dream focuses colleges and others on understanding and making better use of data.

In the Achieving the Dream model, every decision made at a college — from setting educational strategies and allocating resources to scheduling classes and organizing student services — is grounded in data about student outcomes.

Central to this work is being open and forthright about current performance; setting measurable goals that consider outcomes of all students; and making lasting, institutional change to achieve them. Because there are disparities in student outcomes at community colleges, this work includes disaggregating student achievement data — breaking it down by race, age and other demographic characteristics — to better understand and begin to close performance gaps.

While many colleges look at data at single points in time, Achieving the Dream colleges track cohorts of students over a period of time. The 2003 cohort, for example, includes students who started college in fall 2003. This approach makes it possible to accurately assess students' progress and outcomes and to identify gaps in achievement.

The initiative also collects this data from the colleges (without any information that identifies individuals) and assembles it in the Achieving the Dream database — the only known database that allows researchers to assess the progress of a group of community college students. Achieving the Dream researchers are analyzing the progress of cohorts of all Achieving the Dream students.

*continued on reverse*

**Strategies for improvement.** Participating colleges are identifying practices that will help more students — particularly students of color and low-income students — continue their studies and earn certificates and degrees.

For example, colleges are **putting a sharper focus on developmental education.** Close to half of community college students (and in some settings, significantly more) need developmental education. When these students successfully complete their developmental education sequences, they have at least the same chances of completing a degree or transferring as their peers who began their studies in college-level courses.

Other strategies aim to increase student engagement with **instructional techniques**, such as collaborative learning, paired classes and learning communities; **student success courses**, which teach critical skills, such as time management and study skills; **advising services** because students need to set goals in order to meet them; and **greater involvement of faculty, staff and community members** in improving student outcomes.

## NATIONAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The initiative's national partners contribute diverse strengths and expertise to helping community colleges better serve their students.

Lumina Foundation for Education provided funding for the initiative's startup, funds the 2004 colleges, and is providing ongoing funding for other participating colleges as well as other elements of the initiative.

Additional funding for the 2005 and 2006 colleges is provided by College Spark Washington (Washington state), The Heinz Endowments (Pennsylvania), Houston Endowment Inc. (10 Houston-area colleges), KnowledgeWorks Foundation (Ohio) and Nellie Mae Education Foundation (Connecticut).

**American Association of Community Colleges**  
[www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)

**College Spark Washington**  
[www.collegespark.org](http://www.collegespark.org)

**Community College Leadership Program, University of Texas-Austin**  
[www.utexas.edu/academic/cclp](http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cclp)

**Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University**  
[ccrc.tc.columbia.edu](http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu)

**The Heinz Endowments**  
[www.heinz.org](http://www.heinz.org)

**Houston Endowment Inc.**  
[www.houstonendowment.org](http://www.houstonendowment.org)

**Institute for Higher Education, University of Florida**  
[www.coe.ufl.edu](http://www.coe.ufl.edu)

**Jobs for the Future**  
[www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org)

**KnowledgeWorks Foundation**  
[www.kwfdn.org](http://www.kwfdn.org)

**Lumina Foundation for Education**  
[www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org)

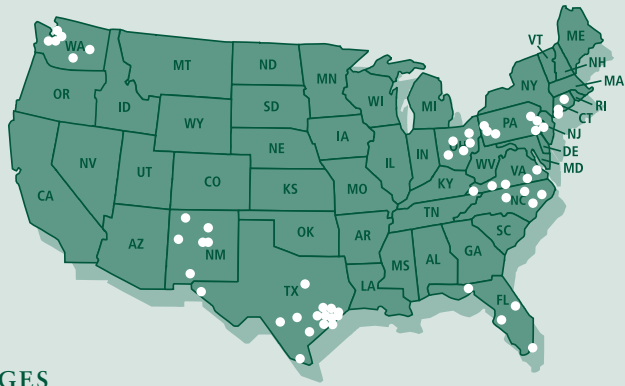
**MDC**  
[www.mdcinc.org](http://www.mdcinc.org)

**MDRC**  
[www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org)

**Nellie Mae Education Foundation**  
[www.nmefdn.org](http://www.nmefdn.org)

**Public Agenda**  
[www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org)

## ACHIEVING THE DREAM COLLEGES



### 2004 COLLEGES

#### FLORIDA

**Broward Community College, Fort Lauderdale**  
**Hillsborough Community College, Tampa**

**Tallahassee Community College, Tallahassee**

**Valencia Community College, Orlando**

#### NEW MEXICO

**Central New Mexico Community College, Albuquerque**

**New Mexico State University-Dona Ana, Las Cruces**

**San Juan College, Farmington**

**Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe**

**Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque**

**University of New Mexico-Gallup, Gallup**

#### NORTH CAROLINA

**Durham Technical Community College, Durham**

**Guilford Technical Community College, Jamestown**

**Martin Community College, Williamston**

**Wayne Community College, Goldsboro**

#### TEXAS

**Alamo Community College District, San Antonio**  
(Northwest Vista College, Palo Alto College, San Antonio College, St. Philip's College)

**Brookhaven College, Dallas**

**Coastal Bend College, Beeville**

**El Paso Community College District, El Paso**

**Galveston College, Galveston**

**Houston Community College System, Houston**

**South Texas College, McAllen**

**Southwest Texas Junior College, Uvalde**

#### VIRGINIA

**Danville Community College, Danville**

**Mountain Empire Community College, Big Stone Gap**

**Patrick Henry Community College, Martinsville**

**Paul D. Camp Community College, Franklin**

**Tidewater Community College, Norfolk**

### 2005 COLLEGES

#### CONNECTICUT

**Capital Community College, Hartford**

**Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport**

**Norwalk Community College, Norwalk**

#### OHIO

**Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland**

**Jefferson Community College, Steubenville**

**North Central State College, Mansfield**

**Sinclair Community College, Dayton**

**Zane State College, Zanesville**

### 2006 COLLEGES

#### PENNSYLVANIA

**Community College of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh**

**Community College of Beaver County, Monaca**

**Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia**

**Delaware County Community College, Media**

**Montgomery County Community College, Blue Bell**

**Northampton Community College, Bethlehem**

**Westmoreland County Community College, Youngwood**

#### TEXAS

**Alvin Community College, Alvin**

**Brazosport College, Lake Jackson**

**College of the Mainland, Texas City**

**Lee College, Baytown**

**North Harris Montgomery Community College District, The Woodlands**

**Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View**

**San Jacinto College, Pasadena**

**Texas Southern University, Houston**

**University of Houston-Downtown, Houston**

**Wharton County Junior College, Wharton**

#### WASHINGTON

**Big Bend Community College, Moses Lake**

**Highline Community College, Des Moines**

**Renton Technical College, Renton**

**Seattle Central Community College, Seattle**

**Tacoma Community College, Tacoma**

**Yakima Valley Community College, Yakima**

Achieving the Dream includes 14 national partner organizations, 58 colleges in nine states (55 community colleges and three open-admission, four-year institutions in Texas) and many dedicated individuals.

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