

# GETTING TO GRADUATION



**COLLEGE  
POSSIBLE™**  
OREGON

**WHY COLLEGE POSSIBLE?**

# BECAUSE IT'S TIME.

Because we believe in the transformative power of education.

Because systemic injustices in higher education have persisted for generations.

Because when **all** students have the opportunity to earn a college degree, it changes the lives of not just those students, but benefits our shared communities.

Because we can—and we must—do better.

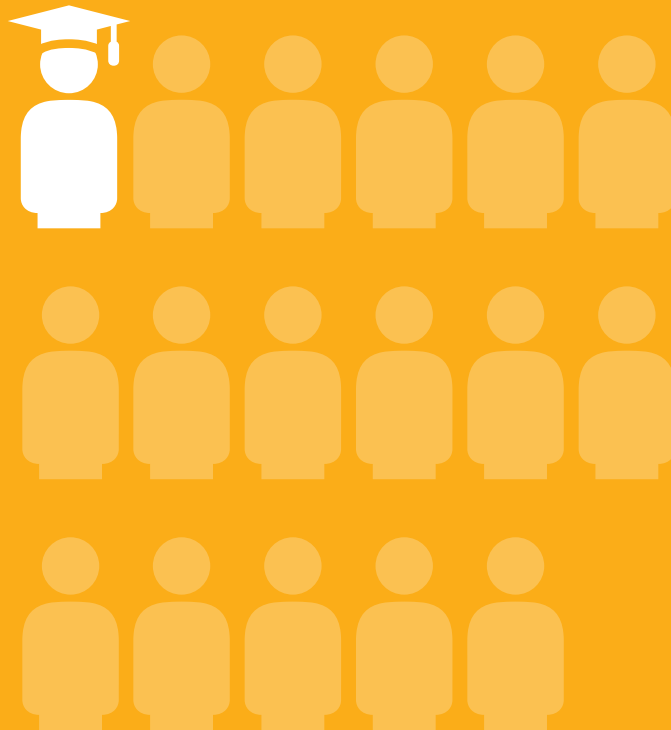
**> \$90,000 Household Income**  
1 in 2 chance of graduating college



*"If the ladder of educational opportunity rises high at the doors of some youth and scarcely rises at the doors of others, while at the same time formal education is made a prerequisite to occupational and social advance, then education may become the means, not of eliminating race and class distinctions, but of deepening and solidifying them."*

President Harry S. Truman, 1947

**< \$30,000 Household Income**  
1 in 17 chance of graduating college



# INEQUITY IS BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM.

Students from low-income backgrounds, students of color and students who are the first in their family to attend college are the fastest growing demographics at Oregon's colleges and universities. Yet they are the least likely to earn a degree due to systemic barriers that are out of their control.

**Early inequity** — Public schools are unequally resourced resulting in students not being adequately prepared for college.

**Exclusionary policies** — First-year students are required to live on campus, core classes are only offered at times that conflict with working hours and dining halls are closed during breaks under the assumption all students are able to go home.

**Hidden expectations** — Things like attending office hours might be crucial to finding success in a course, but no one explains what they are, how to prepare or what it takes to get the most out of them.

**Lack of diverse faculty** — Advisors may struggle to relate to underserved students and don't understand the needs of students' families, home obligations or work commitments.

## REPRESENTATION MATTERS:

45%

of the undergraduate population in the U.S. are people of color

vs.

24%

of the full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

Sources:

The Chronicle of Higher Education  
National Center for Education Statistics



*“ Back in high school, all of my teachers would tell me, ‘You’re going to be just fine. You’re going to make a lot of friends, especially attending OSU because it’s a big campus.’ My first year here was a bit rough with transitioning and adjusting to a new environment. I was kind of sad not seeing a lot of diversity around campus.*

*This year, **I was able to connect and make more new friends** because I joined clubs and other student organizations.”*

HongAn Huynh Le  
Oregon State University

# WHY AREN'T STUDENTS GRADUATING?

The social and financial barriers are often hidden and misunderstood.

- Being surrounded by students from middle- and upper-income backgrounds can be shocking and leave students **feeling like they don't belong**.
- A lack of representation leads to professors and staff **setting lower expectations** for underserved students instead of providing the support they need to be successful.
- Being the first in their family to attend college, often through great sacrifices made by their families, can **multiply the pressure to succeed**.
- Working to be able to pay bills or send money home means **having less time** to study or build a social network, or needing to take fewer credits.



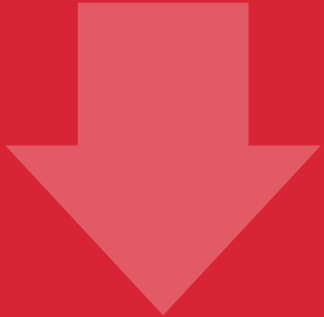
Only 8% of Oregon students from low-income backgrounds earn a bachelor's degree by age 25.

*Compared to 28% for all income levels.*

Source: Oregon Learns

# College Enrollment Rates 2019–2020

NATIONALLY



**-20%+**

STUDENTS FROM HIGH  
POVERTY SCHOOLS



**-30%+**

COLLEGE POSSIBLE  
STUDENTS



**Consistent  
year-over-year**

Proving that our support and  
interventions work—even  
amidst incredible barriers.



# RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The pandemic has laid bare the systems of oppression that have been present in our communities long before COVID-19, and violent events against Black people have amplified the horrifying effects on those systems. College Possible believes that access to equitable education is one pillar to ending the systemic injustices that have persisted for generations.

**Throughout the pandemic, College Possible has consistently and successfully been able to provide support and programming to all students.**

PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATES (APRIL 2020)

**17.3%**

high school  
diploma or less



**8.4%**

bachelor's degree



“College Possible is one of the biggest reasons why I’ve had the college experience I’ve had. **The program not only prepared me academically and helped me with the financial aspect, but also helped me find my place of belonging on campus.** My College Possible coach helped me with my Student Ambassador application, helped me register for classes, figure out what classes were best for me during a certain term, pushed me to join school clubs, provided additional resources that I might need and overall has been a great friend — a friend that wants me to succeed and someone I can trust; who I can talk to beyond just being my College Possible coach.”

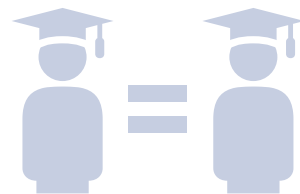
Citlaly Arroyo-Juarez  
Portland State University

# TOGETHER, WE HAVE THE POWER TO CREATE CHANGE.

Our goal is to secure \$1 million from individuals over the next three years to support more students getting to graduation.

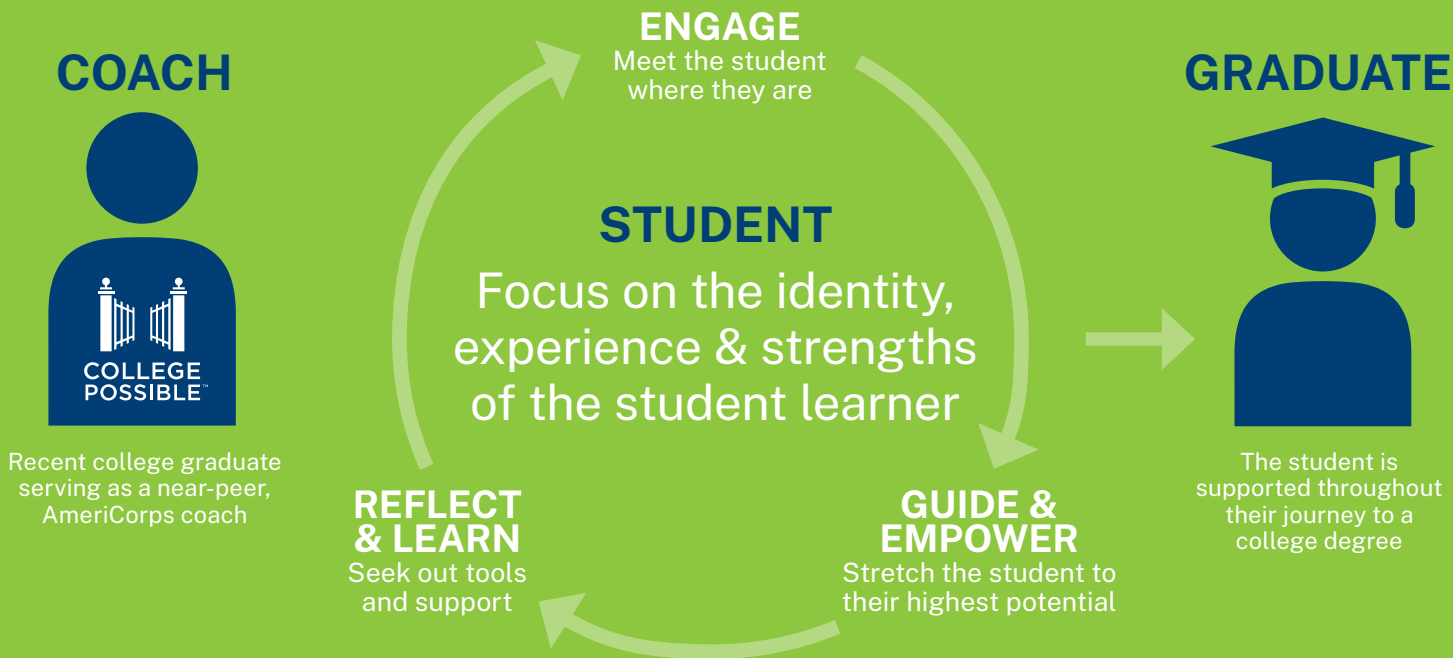
We invite you to join us in becoming a member of our

**Getting to Graduation—Leadership Circle.**



We are working toward students from low-income backgrounds earning degrees at the same rate as their more affluent peers.

## Asset-based coaching model:



# WHAT MAKES COLLEGE POSSIBLE DIFFERENT?

In addition to having 20 years of data showing our model works:

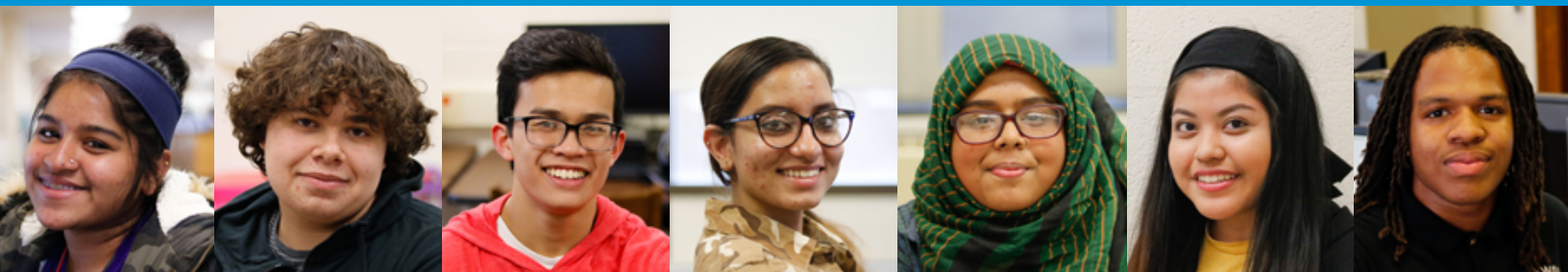
- We **focus on a student's potential**, primarily serving the academic middle—students who are less likely to be encouraged to go to college and may not see college as an option.
- We **take our services into schools**, where students have fewer barriers to attending coaching sessions.
- Our **near-peer coaches**, recent college graduates themselves, meet students where they are and infuse learning with personal experiences.
- Our **coaching model is asset based**, affirming the unique identities, experiences and strengths of underserved students.



College Possible is the only program in Oregon that continues with students until they earn a college degree.



**COLLEGE POSSIBLE STUDENTS ARE THE MOTIVATED, TALENTED  
AND SKILLED LEADERS OUR COMMUNITIES NEED TO THRIVE.**



# GETTING TO GRADUATION PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT.

- Development and implementation of **culturally-responsive coaching** for college students that will better address the unique struggles they face on their path to a degree.
- **More face-to-face meetings** with coaches to help students feel more connected on campus and ensure they're utilizing the available support services.
- A new senior leadership position to increase strategic capacity for our college success program. The new Assistant Director of College Success will focus on deepening our college partnerships to co-create student success initiatives to better support students on Oregon campuses.

**Increased resources will allow us to better support college students and dramatically increase the graduation rate.**



The difference between graduating or dropping out could hinge on a student's ability to come up with just one thousand dollars.

Source: The University Innovation Alliance



*“ My college degree is how I showed my parents I am thankful and beyond grateful for their sacrifices that allowed me to be in the United States and to obtain a college education that will set me up for success. ”*

Ha-Quyen Nguyen  
Portland State University graduate





# THE VALUE OF A COLLEGE DEGREE

On average, bachelor's degree holders earn \$25,000 more annually compared to those with a high school diploma.

A college degree remains the surest path out of poverty and the best bet for social and economic advancement. More college graduates translate into better individual lives, more vibrant communities and a stronger state.

AVERAGE ANNUAL  
EARNINGS:

**\$64,000**

bachelor's degree

**\$25,000  
MORE**

**\$39,000**

high school diploma

# Getting to Graduation Leadership Circle

Thank you to these generous donors who have supported the Getting to Graduation campaign from the start. We're so appreciative of their leadership, vision and trust.

Sona Karentz Andrews and Steve Samuelson

Anonymous (2)

Lynn and David Bangsund

Ginnie Cooper

Stephanie Fowler and Irving Levin

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Judith Ramaley

The Renaissance Foundation

James and Shirley Rippey Family Foundation

Jennifer Schuberth and John Urang

Ken and Marta Thrasher

Christine and David Vernier

# \$1 MILLION, THREE YEARS, MANY DREAMS REALIZED.

The Getting to Graduation—Leadership Circle is a group of investors who are committed to education equity and are willing to make a commitment of \$7,500 or more over three years.

It's time to do better. Together, we can make college dreams possible for more students in Oregon.

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*"A college degree is powerful. It can unlock economic opportunity and actually change the course of someone's life. I know that was true for me.*

*College Possible gives students more college enrollment options, better access to financial aid and greater odds of getting to graduation.*

*Your support will allow more deserving students in Oregon to pursue their dreams of college and make a better future possible."*

**Ken Thrasher, Board Chair, College Possible Oregon**



Ken Thrasher, Briana Falduti (AmeriCorps Alumna), Herico Aiten (College Possible and Portland State University Alumna), Marta Thrasher

Making college admission and success possible for students from low-income backgrounds through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support.



## CollegePossible.org

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#GettingToGraduation