



CORE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

College opportunity for all



COLLEGE
POSSIBLE™
CHICAGO



The growing college degree divide

A student’s future should be determined solely by their aspirations, motivation and effort, not by their family’s income

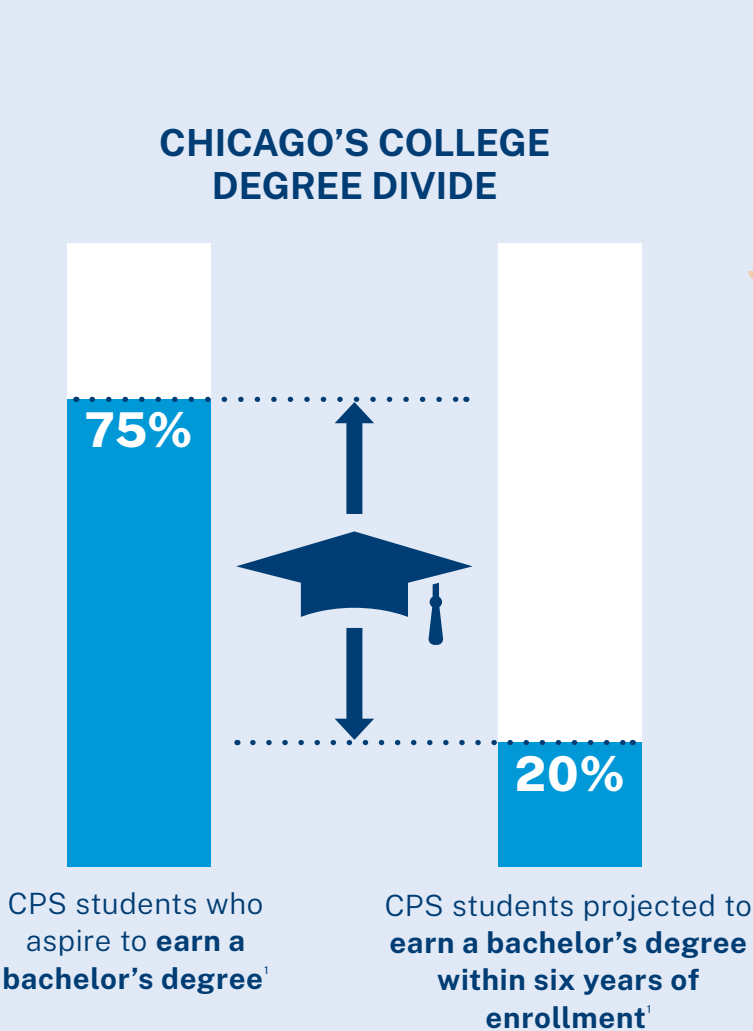
Yet across Chicago, there’s a widening gap between the aspirations of students from under-resourced communities who want to earn a college degree and their degree attainment, due to the systemic, unfair barriers these individuals face.

A reported 75% of Chicago Public School (CPS) freshmen aspire to go to college but only 20% are projected to earn a bachelor’s degree within six years of enrolling.¹ That translates to over 20,000 students each year who won’t earn a degree, creating an aspiration gap in a system where 78% of students come from an economically disadvantaged background.²

While there is no single cause, contributors to this “degree divide” include inequitable academic prep, complex college systems and resource-constrained staff. Early evidence indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has widened these barriers, putting the diversity of our future workforce and equitable economic mobility at continued risk.

¹ UChicago Consortium on School Research, 2021. “The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students: 2020.” <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/postsecondary-attainment-indices>

² Illinois Report Card, 2020–2021. <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com> 299025



THOSE WITH
A COLLEGE
DEGREE ARE:



3.5x less likely
to live in poverty³



24% more likely
to be employed⁴



And earn upward of
\$1.2M more
in their lifetime⁵

Strong communities start with college equity

When students from under-invested communities earn a bachelor's degree, especially those who are the first in their family to attend college, they are 24% *more likely* to be employed and 3.5 times *less likely* to live in poverty when compared with peers who don't attend college.³ Evidence shows that college graduates earn upward of \$1.2 million more in their lifetime, and have higher rates of civic engagement than their high school graduate peers.⁵

Evidence also shows that removing barriers to college access and success can create a richer educational experience on college campuses, while also building a more diverse, skilled workforce. These are critical factors in strengthening Chicago's economy and in fueling greater innovation, stronger communities and more equitable economic mobility.

³ "It's Not Just the Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and to Society," 2015. <https://www.luminafoundation.org/resource/its-not-just-the-money/>

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2019/44-6-percent-of-high-school-dropouts-and-72-3-percent-of-college-graduates-employed-in-august-2019.htm>

⁵ Lumina Foundation, "Stronger Nation Report," 2015. <https://www.luminafoundation.org/news-and-views/stronger-nation-2015/>

"College Possible has taught me to ask for help and realize I'm not alone in my college journey. Through this program, I have a team of people who support me and want to see me succeed. With their help I was able to earn acceptance and enroll in my dream school."

Camila,
Ohio Wesleyan University





We empower the college dream

We believe a stronger Chicago starts by expanding equitable access to a college degree

Founded in 2015, College Possible Chicago has grown to support more than 1,600 students from Chicago’s under-resourced communities, helping them persist on the path to a college degree. Our pioneering model matches eligible students with near-peer coaches and an intensive curriculum designed to help them overcome the most common barriers to getting into college and completing their degree—all at no cost to students or their families.

Through our partnerships with colleges and Chicago Public Schools, we are advancing college equity for the greater Chicago community.

* Fiscal year 2023

WHAT SETS US APART:



Near-Peer Coaches

Students benefit from the relatability, recent experience and trusted relationship with our near-peer coaches who deliver an intensive curriculum of personalized interventions.



6+ Years of Support

Students enrolled in our Core Program receive one of the longest support cycles available, starting their junior year in high school and continuing through degree completion.



Support for Unenrolled Students

Students who unenroll or stop out of college continue to receive coaching support to help them get back on track toward their college degree goal.



Free to Students

Thanks to the generous support of our funders and partners, our college access and success programs are offered at no cost to students or their families.



AmeriCorps

A PROUD AMERICORPS PROGRAM

AmeriCorps is a federal agency that brings people together to tackle the country’s most pressing challenges through national service. Our AmeriCorps members commit to a year of service as College Possible coaches in communities throughout the country. Many represent the identities of the students they serve, and each brings a commitment to social justice and closing the college equity divide.

College access and success programs offered in Chicago



Core Program

Our most comprehensive college access and success program. Eligible students receive at least six years of near-peer coaching support to navigate and overcome the most common barriers to getting into and through college.



Connects

Customized college partnerships to match, recruit, and support the college persistence and degree completion of College Possible students on partner campuses.



“College Possible offers a structured and applicable, yet fun, approach to college preparation and exploration. Students who wouldn’t otherwise have an opportunity for supplemental test prep or college visits are developing a hunger to aspire for more.”

Anna Pavichevich,
Principal, Amundsen High School

Over 20 years of national, evidence-based results

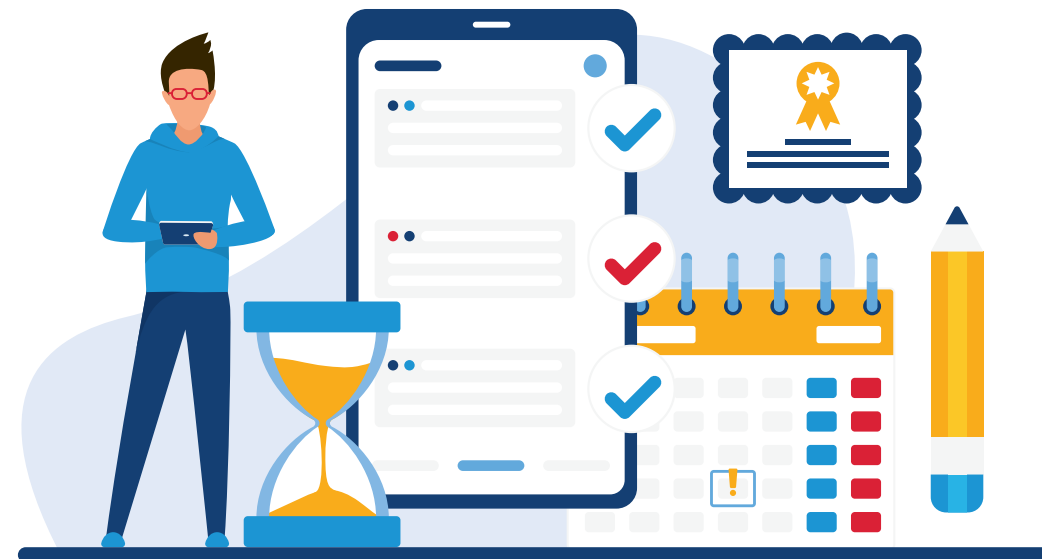
As one of the largest college access and success organizations in the country, our evidence-based programs have earned national credibility. Compared with their peers from similar backgrounds, College Possible students are **30% more likely** to enroll in college the year after high school graduation, and **three times more likely** to earn a bachelor's degree after graduating from high school.⁶

30%

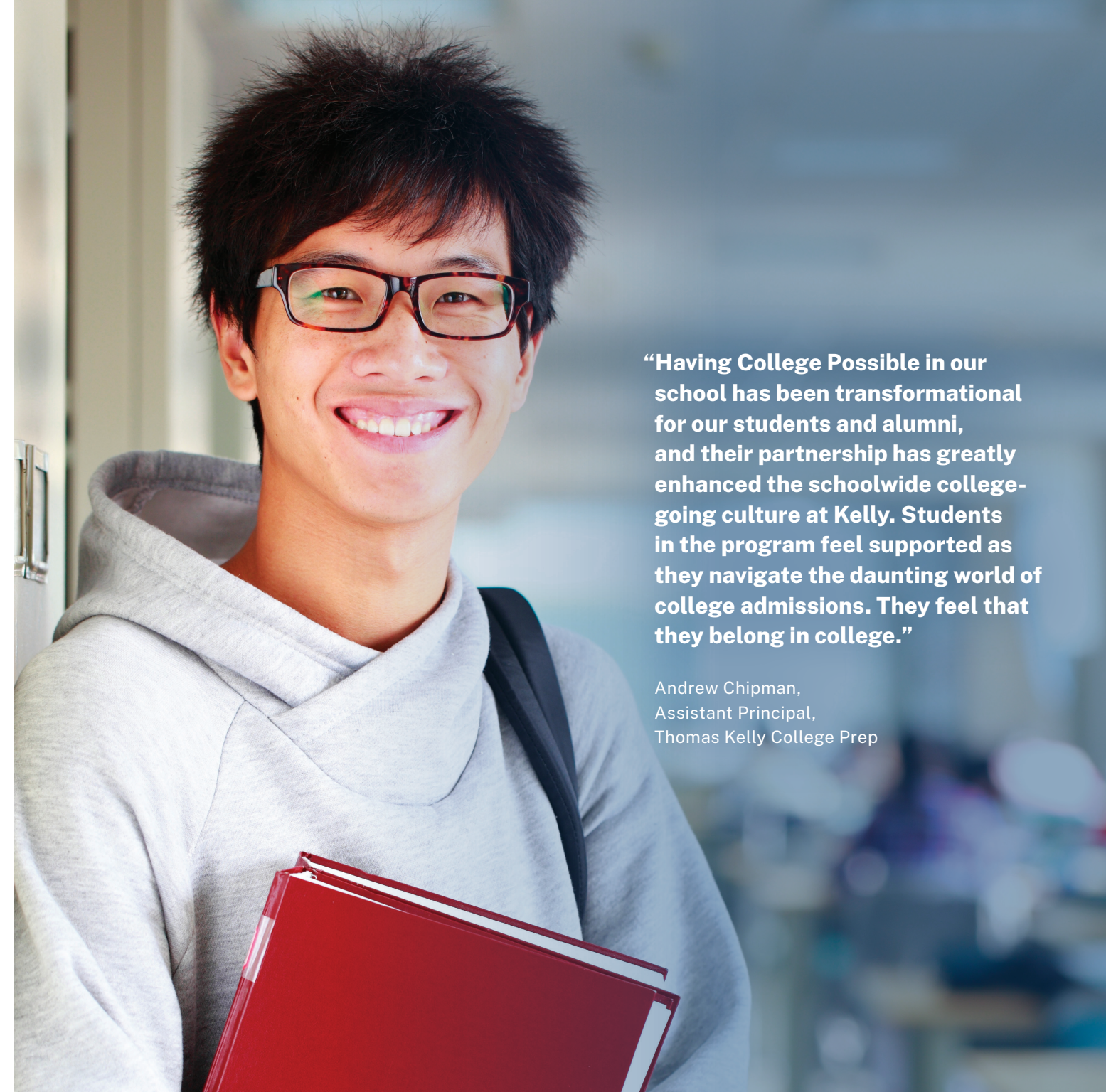
more likely to enroll in college the year after high school graduation

3x

more likely to earn a bachelor's degree after graduating high school




⁶ The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States. p 121. 2019. http://pellinstitute.org/indicators/reports_2019.shtml



“Having College Possible in our school has been transformational for our students and alumni, and their partnership has greatly enhanced the schoolwide college-going culture at Kelly. Students in the program feel supported as they navigate the daunting world of college admissions. They feel that they belong in college.”

Andrew Chipman,
Assistant Principal,
Thomas Kelly College Prep



“With the financial and emotional support I have received through College Possible, I feel more than ready to achieve what I want in the future. Thanks to their help, I will be able to graduate from college debt-free, and knowing my coach will be there to support me makes me feel secure.”

Gea,
DePaul University

“College Possible provided structure to my busy days. My coach checked in and genuinely wanted to see me succeed. When you join, it’s not just your coach [you have access to]. You have the entire College Possible team ready to help you.”

Kryssy,
University of Illinois–Chicago

THE COLLEGE POSSIBLE STUDENT JOURNEY

1 Explore and prepare

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR YEAR

- SAT prep
- Introduction to the college process
- College fit exploration
- Paying for college

2 Select, apply and finance

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR YEAR

- Financial aid and scholarship applications
- College application and essay prep
- College visits and decision
- Plan for housing and transportation

3 Transition to college

SUMMER BRIDGE

- Enrollment checklist
- Class registration
- Acclimate to campus

4 Persist through graduation

COLLEGE YEARS

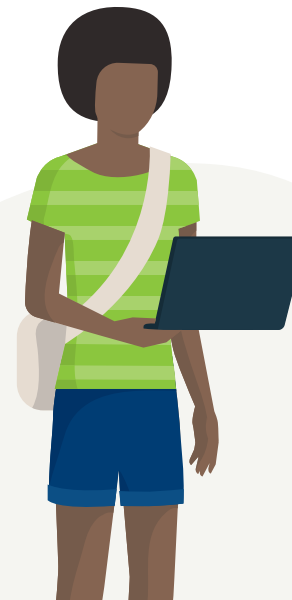
- Navigate complex college systems
- Access campus and community resources
- Form supportive peer and campus relationships
- Adjust to the rigors of the first year
- Stay on track academically
- Renew financial aid and scholarships
- Budget and manage time

5 Transition to Career

GRADUATION

- Explore internships and jobs
- Resume and interview prep

Near-peer coaches provide proactive, personalized support to help students **navigate and break through the most common barriers** on their path to a college degree





Learn more or get involved

PARTNER

Our strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations help us expand our reach and the breadth of support we provide to students nationwide. To explore partnership opportunities, contact our program team at CHInfo@CollegePossible.org.

GIVE

Your financial support helps us continue to expand our coaching and support at no cost to enrolled students or their families. To make a donation, or to explore a broader funding partnership, contact us at CHInfo@CollegePossible.org or visit CollegePossible.org/DonateCHI.

SERVE

If you know a current college student or recent grad interested in making a meaningful difference in the lives of youth, encourage them to explore a life-changing year of service as a College Possible Chicago AmeriCorps coach at CollegePossible.org/Serve.

College Possible Chicago

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