

Supporting Students in Achieving their Postsecondary Goals

Analysis finds that OneGoal's postsecondary success model has significant positive impact on students' critical high school milestones and college outcomes.

Young people in Chicago have a myriad of aspirations, and for nearly 70 percent of high school freshmen, attending and graduating from college is of high importance, according to the UChicago Consortium of School Research. A college education increases the likelihood of higher lifetime earnings, social mobility, and long-term job security. However, due to inequities in the education system and other systemic barriers, students do not always have the resources or guidance to navigate the complex college application process. OneGoal targets these barriers to support students in achieving their postsecondary goals.

The Inclusive Economy Lab partnered with OneGoal and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to examine the effectiveness of OneGoal's program model and to provide empirical evidence about whether the components theorized to improve college success made a difference for students from low-income households.

Key Findings

Comparing OneGoal Fellows to similar CPS students who did not participate in OneGoal or similar programming, our study found evidence that OneGoal has a strong, positive, and statistically significant effect on postsecondary enrollment, persistence, graduation, and nearly all academic outcomes of interest.

OneGoal Fellow Outcomes



HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

OneGoal Fellows attend nearly **5 extra days** on average each year



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Over **99%** of OneGoal Fellows complete high school, vs. 83% of peers



COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

OneGoal Fellows submit **1.6 more applications** than their peers, a nearly 19% increase



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

OneGoal Fellows are **46%** more likely to enroll



COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

OneGoal Fellows are **47%** more likely to persist for at least two years

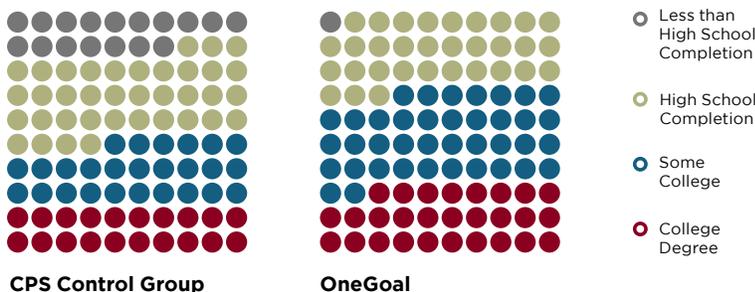


COLLEGE GRADUATION

OneGoal Fellows are **40%** more likely to complete a degree

OneGoal's Cumulative Impact

Comparison of Highest Level of Education Achieved



“The results are highly encouraging across a broad swath of academic outcomes, suggesting that OneGoal's interventions have important potential for designing a pathway toward greater postsecondary success for more of the City's young people, including Black and Latinx students, who are disproportionately underserved.”

Carmelo Barbaro, Executive Director, Inclusive Economy Lab

About the Program

OneGoal is a postsecondary access and success organization dedicated to closing the degree divide and creating a more equitable future. The OneGoal classroom-based model serves students whose postsecondary opportunities might be limited due to their academic and socioeconomic profiles. Currently serving over 13,000 students in six regions across the country, the program utilizes a cohort model intended to generate camaraderie and peer support as students navigate the college transition. The cohort spends one class period per day together for two academic years (11th and 12th grades) focused on exploring their college and career aspirations, completing applications and securing financial aid, and preparing for potential postsecondary challenges. In the third year, directly following high school graduation, students continue to receive remote, one-on-one support from OneGoal.

About the Study

The Inclusive Economy Lab conducted a quasi-experimental impact evaluation of OneGoal's program, which included more than 7,000 OneGoal Fellows in Chicago who were expected to graduate from high school between the years of 2011 and 2020. Using propensity score matching, Fellows were matched with CPS students from their respective schools and class years who had similar academic profiles but no exposure to OneGoal or similar programs. This process allowed any differences in outcomes between the groups to be attributed to OneGoal, controlling for impact of other factors.

Next Steps

The findings presented in this study are part of a broader effort by the Inclusive Economy Lab to understand what organizations provide postsecondary and college success supports to low-income CPS students. The Inclusive Economy Lab conducted a landscape scan of college access and success organizations serving high school students in Chicago, as well as a descriptive analysis of participant data. Quasi-experimental program evaluations of other college access and success programs in Chicago will be conducted to produce a meta-analysis based on the findings. This process will facilitate a deeper understanding of how best to support college access and success for young people in Chicago, yield actionable evidence to improve practice, and help more students achieve upward social mobility.

The Inclusive Economy Lab is also separately partnering with OneGoal on a forthcoming, multi-year, randomized controlled trial evaluation of OneGoal's traditional program model that can account for both observable and unobservable differences between OneGoal Fellows and their control group counterparts and provide even stronger causal evidence of OneGoal's impact on students' academic outcomes during and after program participation.

About Inclusive Economy Lab

Founded in 2015, the UChicago Inclusive Economy Lab (formerly the Poverty Lab) conducts rigorous studies that expand economic opportunity for communities that have been harmed by discrimination, disinvestment, and segregation. The lab partners with policymakers, community-based organizations, and others to identify their most urgent and pressing challenges, co-generate evidence about what works, and translate findings into policy changes that reduce urban poverty and improve people's lives. One of five Urban Labs based at the Harris School of Public Policy, the Inclusive Economy Lab is led by Pritzker Director Marianne Bertrand, Chris P. Dialynas Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the Booth School of Business.

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