

The Boston Foundation

Success Boston

Boston, MA

Challenge

Success Boston, Boston's citywide college completion initiative, launched in 2008 in response to a longitudinal study by Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies that revealed that while Boston high school graduates were enrolling in college at greater rates, only 35% of those who enrolled had successfully completed a two- or four-year degree by the time they turned 25.

Innovation

Early evidence shows strong signs of success (class of 2009 students who received transition coaching had one-year college persistence rates that were 20% or more above their peers) and college completion rates have already surpassed 50%. This success has attracted additional funding allowing the partnership to reach more students and more quickly and sustainably meet its goals.

This public-philanthropic partnership led by the City of Boston has implemented a four-part strategy: getting ready, getting in, getting through, and getting connected—to ensure our youth are prepared to meet the challenges of higher education and earn a degree that will allow them to thrive in the workplace. Together, the partners are working to achieve a 70% college completion rate for Boston Public Schools students who enroll in college. Success Boston's theory of change is that current student support systems are inadequate for meeting the needs of all learners and that cross-sector collaboration, driven by data and mutual accountability, is critical to creating more equitable systems. Collaboratively, the partners are focused on improving academic preparation, providing transition coaching as students move from high school through the first two years of college, and offering as-needed supports through higher education institutions until students successfully attain a degree and connect to the workforce.

Public Sector Partners

The City of Boston,
Boston Public Schools,
Corporation for National
and Community Service

Other Partners

37 area institutions of
higher education led by
UMass Boston and Bunker
Hill Community College
and local nonprofit
partners including the
Boston Private Industry
Council and uAspire

