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University of Chicago Analysis Finds OneGoal Boosts College Graduation by 40 Percent among Chicago Public Schools Students from Low-Income Communities

Study also finds significant positive impact on critical high school milestones, college enrollment and persistence

Chicago, April 12, 2022 — The postsecondary success model of OneGoal, a national non-profit dedicated to closing the degree divide in the United States, has made a significant impact on college enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates among Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students from low-income communities, according to a [new analysis](#) by the University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab.

The analysis reveals that OneGoal’s program, which works to address barriers to postsecondary access and success, shows impressively strong effects on enrolling in a two- or four-year college (a 46 percent increase) and graduating (a 40 percent increase), as well as statistically significant positive impacts on nearly all academic milestones measured in the study.

“This report provides a deep and comprehensive look into OneGoal’s program model and the impact of their supports on student success,” said Carmelo Barbaro, Executive Director, Inclusive Economy Lab. “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.”

The Inclusive Economy Lab, part of the Harris School of Public Policy, conducted a quasi-experimental evaluation of OneGoal’s program. Researchers compared more than 7,000 OneGoal Fellows to students from the same communities who had similar academic profiles and who were expected to graduate from high school between the years of 2011 to 2020.

OneGoal’s three-year program utilizes a cohort model intended to generate camaraderie and peer support as students navigate the college transition. The cohort spends one class period together every day 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.

The Inclusive Economy Lab's evaluation compared the outcomes of OneGoal participants in Chicago to those of students who were similar demographically and academically in 10th grade but did not participate in the program. Key findings of the evaluation include:

- **OneGoal increases Fellows' high school graduation rate by an estimated 15.9 percentage points** on average, with 99.38% of OneGoal Fellows graduating high school as compared to 83.49% of their comparison group peers.
- **OneGoal increases the rate at which Fellows enroll at a match institution by an estimated 7.7 and 7.2 percentage points** on average, compared with OneGoal and CPS guidelines, respectively. An academic match occurs when the prospective student's academic qualifications align with the selectivity of the college in which they enroll. Of OneGoal Fellows, students met or exceeded academic match at an average of 19.51%, compared to 11.77% of non-OneGoal Fellows.
- **OneGoal increases Fellows' year-to-year persistence rate by an estimated 15.8 percentage points** on average, with 49.39% of OneGoal Fellows persisting compared to 33.55% of their non-Fellow peers.
- **OneGoal increases Fellows' 6-year college graduation rate by an estimated 8.2 percentage points.** OneGoal Fellows saw an average graduation rate of 28.49%, while non-Fellows saw an average graduation rate of 20.28%.

"The results of the Inclusive Economy Lab's comprehensive examination of OneGoal's student support program highlight an important strategy for supporting more CPS graduates to achieve their goals in the transition to and through college," said Executive Director of the Chicago Public Schools Office of School Counseling and Postsecondary Advising Dr. Heidi Truax. "We appreciate the commitment of our partners and remain dedicated to innovation as we strive to break down entrenched barriers and build brighter futures for all of our young people."

"OneGoal was designed to support a student population with significant barriers to their educational goals. We are proud to see this study affirms that OneGoal has been life-changing for these students in Chicago," said OneGoal CEO Melissa Connelly. "The research also underscores the broader need for us all to work together to make earning a degree or credential easier for students. It's why we are innovating in bold ways to ensure more OneGoal students have access to pathways with a high probability of success, leading to careers with family-sustaining wages."

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.

About OneGoal

[OneGoal](#) is a leading 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. Students take the OneGoal class during their junior and senior years of high school and continue receiving one-on-one support through the first year of their postsecondary journey. 85% of OneGoal high school graduates enroll in a postsecondary institution and 74% of those who enroll persist one year after high school. The new OneGoal Postsecondary Leadership Series equips school leaders with the skills, knowledge, and support to achieve more equity in advising and increase postsecondary success for students across entire districts.

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