

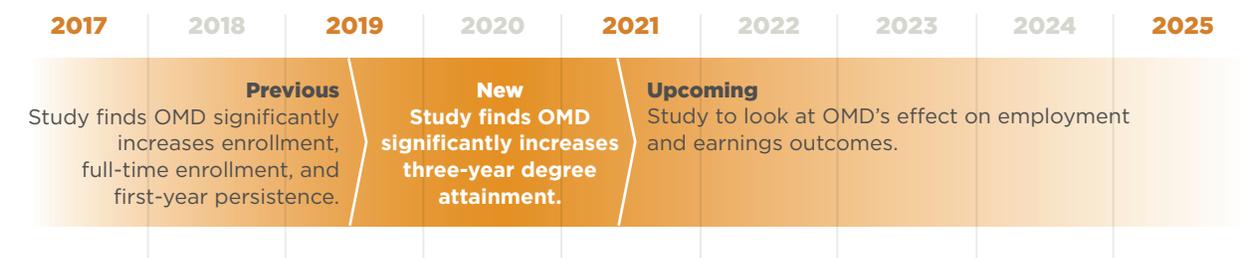
Cultivating Student Success in Community College

Interim results demonstrate that comprehensive community college support program has statistically significant impact on degree attainment.

Community colleges have the potential to serve as powerful vehicles for social mobility in the U.S., particularly for first-generation and low-income students, who are much more likely to enroll in two-year colleges.¹ Unfortunately, in Chicago, fewer than one in four community college students graduates within three years.² While education leaders have worked to increase enrollment, there is only an emerging body of evidence about how best to support students to increase persistence and graduation.

In light of this, the University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab has partnered with Chicago nonprofit One Million Degrees (OMD) to evaluate the efficacy of OMD’s holistic approach to improving graduation rates and preparing students for professional success. Through a randomized controlled trial (RCT), the eight-year study ultimately seeks to provide causal evidence on whether this bundle of comprehensive services helps students graduate from college and succeed in the workforce.

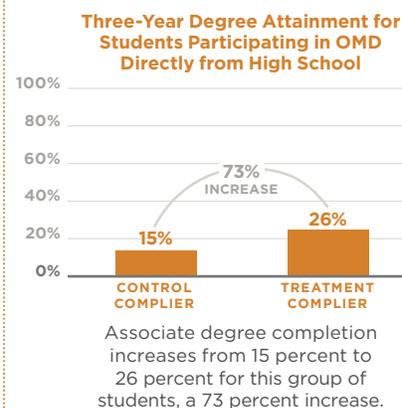
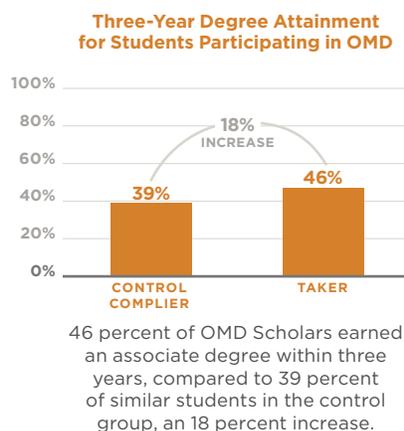
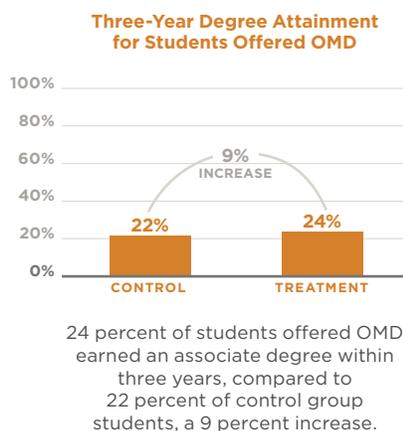
Research Roadmap



New Key Findings 2021

After three years, students who are offered or who participate in OMD are significantly **more likely to earn an associate degree.**

The impact of the program on degree attainment is **greatest for Scholars who applied during the senior year of high school.**



¹ Pew Research Center (2019). *A Rising Share of Undergraduates are From Poor Families, Especially at Less Selective Colleges.*
² City Colleges of Chicago. (2018). *FY2018 Completion Update.*

About One Million Degrees

One Million Degrees (OMD) is a Chicago-based non-profit organization that partners with local community colleges to support students financially, academically, professionally, and personally. The four cornerstones of the program are:



Financial Support

- OMD provides scholars with a **performance-based stipend** up to \$1,000 annually (\$750 for suburban campuses).
- OMD also operates an **enrichment grant fund** to which students apply to cover select expenses.
- For students whose financial aid leaves tuition gaps, OMD provides **last-dollar scholarships**; however, because scholars must qualify for a Pell Grant or Chicago STAR (a local college promise program for high school graduates), these funds are infrequently needed.



Academic Support

- OMD offers academic support in the form of **private tutors** and referrals to campus tutoring resources. Further, all students are assigned to an OMD staff person embedded on their college campus. These **Program Coordinators (PCs)** provide **individualized support** in registering for classes, developing academic plans, and applying for jobs or four-year colleges. PCs have a **student caseload of 65:1**, significantly smaller than typical advising caseloads in community college.



Professional Support

- OMD pairs every student with a **coach**, local professionals who volunteer to support scholars in a mentoring capacity. Coaches and scholars jointly attend monthly **professional development programming** led by OMD.
- Outside of formal OMD programming, coaches meet with scholars to provide them with personalized supports, **job shadowing**, and **networking opportunities** that help them fulfill their career development goals as well as personal ambitions.



Personal Support

- One of the primary personal supports for OMD students is the **Program Coordinator** embedded on their college campus who aids scholars in navigating challenges that arise and support them in **achieving their individualized goals**.
- Further, scholars develop *close interpersonal relationships* with other scholars during **welcoming orientation events** and monthly OMD programming, which bolsters their connection to college and fosters a sense of belonging.

About the UChicago Inclusive Economy Lab

Founded in 2015, The UChicago Inclusive Economy Lab (formerly 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. inclusiveeconomy.uchicago.edu



Read more
about the study at
bit.ly/iel-omd.