



**College Now**  
*Greater Cleveland*

2019 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# Transforming College and Career Access



## LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

While celebrating College Now's 50th anniversary last year, we had the unique opportunity to reflect on just how much this organization has grown and changed since its inception in 1967. We looked through old files and photos and discovered some of the earliest records of College Now's work with students in Greater Cleveland. We read about former scholarship recipients such as four-time Pulitzer Prize winner Gregory Moore and Olympian Toccara Montgomery, students who, without College Now's support, would not have been able to realize their postsecondary dreams. Through these materials, we revisited the organization's growth from a few advisors in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) to the robust organization it is today. And, as we reflected on the past and looked toward the future, one word kept coming to mind:

Transformation.

For years, College Now has embraced transformation as a vital part of its organizational success. Not even 10 years after the organization's founding, it expanded to provide services to suburban Cleveland schools. College and career services were provided in the community as early as 1983 and, in 1991, College Now began to serve adult learners. The transformation of the organization continued. In 2009, College Now leveraged the AmeriCorps College Guides program to ensure that a college advisor was placed in a CMSD high school every day of the school year; in 2014, College Now began managing the AmeriCorps program for the entire state of Ohio. Meanwhile, in 2011, the College Now Mentoring Program was launched with a pilot cohort of 43 scholarship recipients who earned a 72 percent on-time graduation rate – which is 30 percentage points above the national average for students receiving the Federal Pell grant.

Over the past year, this transformation has gone even further. In July, College Now was awarded an astounding \$6.1 million in 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding over five years, which will enable the organization to offer its impact! programming at nine sites in Greater Cleveland and Lorain County. The staff has grown to unprecedented numbers as College Now has increased its reach to new locations, including an expansion into Lake County. And, at the beginning of 2019, Cleveland was named the fourth Say Yes to Education chapter in the country! This means that every student in the CMSD who meets residency and enrollment requirements will be eligible for a tuition gap-closing scholarship at an Ohio four-year university, two-year college, Pell-eligible trade/certificate program or one of the over 100 private colleges in the Say Yes Higher Education Compact.

It is this historical proven track record of success that prepares College Now for its next transformation: administering the Say Yes Cleveland Scholarship and providing mentors to every Say Yes scholarship recipient as part of the College Now Mentoring Program. This means mentor recruitment efforts must be increased significantly as the program likely more than doubles in size!

Through this exciting transformation, we cannot forget College Now's true strength – transforming the lives of the students served. While College Now has grown and changed as an organization throughout its first 50 years of service, it has always maintained the same laser focus and objective: to increase postsecondary educational attainment in Greater Cleveland through college and career access advising, financial aid counseling and scholarship and retention services. While change is inevitable, the consistency of mission has helped College Now thrive, grow and expand to where it is today. We are grateful for your partnership and support, and we cannot wait to see where the future takes us as we begin our next 50 years.

Sincerely,



*Mark D. Ross*

**Mark Ross**  
Chair, Board of Directors



*Lee A. Friedman*

**Lee A. Friedman**  
Chief Executive Officer

## MISSION

College Now's mission is to increase postsecondary educational attainment in Greater Cleveland through college and career access advising, financial aid counseling and scholarship and retention services.

## FINANCIAL RESULTS

### Operational Revenue

Ending July 31, 2018

Foundations	\$3,992,110
Corporations	\$2,097,694
Individuals and Organizations	\$366,809
Government Grants	\$4,087,088
Fee for Service	\$1,190,263
Special Events	\$603,885
	<b>\$ 12,337,849</b>

### Operational Expenses

Ending July 31, 2018

Advising and Counseling Services	\$6,614,625
Scholarship Awards	\$3,591,596
Scholarship and Retention Services	\$928,207
General Administration	\$559,293
Fundraising	\$ 611,105
	<b>\$12,304,826</b>

## COLLEGE NOW AT A GLANCE 2017-2018 ACADEMIC YEAR

**29,000**

Number of individuals served by College Now

**\$3.5 Million**

Total amount of College Now scholarships awarded

**\$76 Million**

Scholarship dollars awarded to Greater Cleveland students since inception

**\$160 Million**

Amount of financial aid the more than 10,000 current college students served by College Now have received

**\$70,000**

A \$500 investment in College Now advising services results in an average of \$70,000 in financial aid awarded per student over four years of college

**1,700**

High school graduates and adult learners who receive College Now scholarships

**\$2,000**

Average College Now renewable scholarship award

**4 Stars**

Highest ranking awarded by Charity Navigator, the nation's largest independent charity evaluator

**185**

Venues in Northeast Ohio where College Now provides services

**1,100**

Number of community members from over 450 companies volunteering as mentors for College Now scholarship recipients

**\$116 Million**

Total estimated amount saved by 1,350 individuals who received College Now's student loan restructuring services over the last five years

**72%**

Average graduation rate for College Now scholarship recipients, compared to the national average of 42% for students receiving the Federal Pell grant



## MAKING POSTSECONDARY DREAMS A REALITY: SAY YES CLEVELAND

When College Now was founded in 1967, the goal was to provide Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) students with the resources they needed to get to college. Through advising, scholarship and retention services, College Now has worked tirelessly for over 50 years to provide the supports students need to succeed in CMSD and throughout Northeast Ohio.

There has always been a goal of doing more to help every CMSD student afford a postsecondary education. As other cities throughout the nation developed promise programs and universal scholarships, Cleveland also contemplated these things and wondered what could similarly be done here.

And then, the opportunity presented itself in Say Yes to Education, a nonprofit that helps communities improve education by providing support services and tuition scholarships.

Almost three years ago, the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation, CMSD, Cuyahoga County, United Way of Greater Cleveland and College Now got together to start the work of turning Cleveland into the next Say Yes to Education city. Through deep, intense community commitment, which included evaluating the services in Cleveland currently providing student supports, reviewing how those services can become even more effective, and raising nearly \$90 million against a goal of \$125 million for scholarships, the dream of ensuring all students are able to achieve

a postsecondary education is being realized on a grand scale.

As a Say Yes to Education chapter, CMSD students will receive services in schools and tuition scholarships upon graduation. Services will range from legal and health to college and career advising, from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Students will be able to receive one of two scholarships once they graduate: a Say Yes Cleveland tuition gap-closing scholarship available to all eligible students attending an Ohio public four-year university, two-year college, or Pell-eligible trade/certificate program, or a Say Yes Compact tuition gap-closing scholarship available to all eligible students attending over 100 private colleges in the Say Yes Higher Education Compact nationwide. College Now will be administering the scholarship and each scholarship recipient will participate in the College Now Mentoring Program.

It is the hope of the entire Cleveland community that Say Yes Cleveland will completely change the postsecondary conversation. An educated workforce is what Cleveland needs to be competitive in a global economy. The support from the community on this massive project demonstrates an understanding of this need and a willingness to dedicate resources to make it happen.

To all of the partners who worked tirelessly to bring Say Yes to Cleveland, we cannot thank you enough for your support in this endeavor.

## CMHA CEO AND COLLEGE NOW ALUM JEFFREY PATTERSON REFLECTS ON HOW COLLEGE NOW SHAPED HIS CAREER

For Jeffrey Patterson, CEO at Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, College Now Greater Cleveland is more than just another organization that helps support and better the lives of Greater Cleveland residents. As an alum, Jeff credits College Now with being a driving force in his career path.

“I was a good student [in high school at Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s Lincoln-West],” Jeff said. “I had about a 3.0 GPA. There was a lot of focus on those with a 3.5, the ‘cream of the crop.’ But there weren’t a lot of resources for average students.”

Jeff, however, found resources with College Now. College Now helped Jeff get on track during his junior and senior years of high school, assisting him with everything from looking at colleges to preparing for the ACT to evaluating and applying for financial aid. Once Jeff enrolled at Mount Union College, he also received financial assistance from College Now, which helped him cover the cost of books.

Jeff earned his B.A. in political science in 1989 and began the first stage of his post-graduate career with the City of Cleveland, which is where he said College Now truly played the most influential role in his life.

In the late 1980s, College Now collaborated with the City of Cleveland on an internship program. Jeff participated in the program, working jobs in the summer with the City, and applied for an internship in Mayor Voinovich’s office after he graduated. He worked in the labor relations department of

the Mayor’s office. Eventually, the internship led to a full-time job and, at 25, Jeff became the City of Cleveland’s youngest-ever labor relations manager. He served as a member of Mayor Michael White’s cabinet (Mayor White was also a College Now scholarship recipient!) and worked with Mayor White and College Now to reinvigorate the City of Cleveland internship program.

After more than a decade of working for the City of Cleveland, Jeff joined CMHA in the early 2000s. He was appointed as CMHA’s Chief Executive Officer in 2012.

“My work and the work of College Now is rooted in caring about people,” Jeff said. “College Now is important to this community because of its specific interest in individuals and their success. There is nothing like the connection of someone from your hometown talking to you about what you’re going through. You can often talk to them about embarrassing things you don’t want to talk to other people about; you can ask them for guidance because you know they’ve been there.”

“College Now is transformative because it removes obstacles for people who want to grow,” Jeff continued. “It’s like knowing that, if you have a huge problem, you can count on X. That letter, X, may feel like the biggest hurdle and the most important letter to gather. But with the help of College Now, you have that letter and suddenly you can change your focus. You have an incentive to go out and gather the rest of your letters.”

“College Now is important to this community because of its specific interest in individuals and their success. There is nothing like the connection of someone from your hometown talking to you about what you’re going through.”

– Jeffrey Patterson, CEO, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority



### LEARN MORE

- > To learn more about Say Yes Cleveland, including residency and enrollment requirements for receiving the Say Yes Cleveland Scholarship, visit [www.sayyescleveland.org](http://www.sayyescleveland.org).



## COLLEGE NOW MENTORING PROGRAM TRANSFORMS LIVES OF BOTH MENTEES AND MENTORS

When College Now launched its Mentoring Program in 2011, it asked potential mentors a fundamental question: “When you were in college, did you have all the answers? Don’t you wish you had someone to help you figure it all out?”

Most College Now scholarship recipients are from low-income backgrounds, and most are first-generation college students – which means they are the first in their families to go to college. First-generation college students tend to need guidance, which often cannot be found at home, through some of the challenging questions that arise during the college-going process, such as who to talk to about financial aid concerns over even a less complex question, like how to use their meal plans in the dining hall. College Now created the Mentoring Program to help address this need. The Mentoring Program partners each College Now scholarship recipient with a volunteer mentor in the Greater Cleveland community who has been through it before, who can answer the student’s questions, provide guidance and insight and serve as a steadfast supporter throughout the student’s college career.

The Mentoring Program also brings valuable social capital to its mentees. Students who come from more-educated families often have connections to the workforce and industries that first-generation students do not possess; the Mentoring Program helps bridge that gap and gives students an entrée to the working world that they can leverage throughout their schooling. Mentors represent more

than 450 employers across Northeast Ohio, offering a plethora of industry connections to students.

The College Now Mentoring team works intensely to make sure that mentees are matched with mentors who share their career or extracurricular interests to ensure that students are placed into partnerships that will provide them with worthwhile career connections. Community support for the Mentoring Program is overwhelming. Of the over 1,100 mentors volunteering in the program during the current school year, over 360 come from 10 of the largest and most well-known companies and organizations in Greater Cleveland. And, College Now employees support the program as well, with 28 staff members serving as mentors!

The vast community support is deeply appreciated, as College Now must recruit hundreds of mentors each year to serve the next incoming class of scholarship recipients. The commitment is minimal – mentors commit to a four-year relationship with their students, which includes exchanging messages twice per month via an online mentoring platform and meeting in person three times per year – but the results are powerful. All mentors need is Internet access, a college degree and to complete the application and screening process.

### TOP 11 COMPANIES MENTORS PARTICIPATING 2018-19:

KeyBank	>	69
Cuyahoga Community College	>	63
The Sherwin-Williams Company	>	44
Cleveland Clinic	>	29
Medical Mutual of Ohio	>	29
Swagelok	>	29
Deloitte LLP	>	28
PNC	>	28
College Now Greater Cleveland	>	28
The MetroHealth System	>	25
PwC	>	24

The program isn’t only transformational for the students involved. Mentors find that working with their mentees during their college career opens their own eyes to the challenges faced by today’s college students.

Barbara, whose mentee, Sharareh, graduated in May of 2018, said that she learned “college students have many more challenges in their lives than just the academic portion. They worry about what is going on in their family, their friends and, of course, worry about money. The decisions they need to make during their college years are difficult.”

Tom, who is mentoring Austin, a junior, said that he and his mentee have built a great relationship over the past three years. “We’ve really grown to be friends,” Tom said, “and I am very proud of how he has matured and grown as a person at school. I like to think I have been able to offer him some useful tips and advice along the way on his classes, career and personal life.”



“Watching [Shaina] grow and become more confident in herself has been a wonderful experience,” said Andrea of her mentee, a college senior. “Watching Shaina learn from some of her personal struggles and seeing how resilient she is encourages me... This experience has been educational. I’m excited about being there to watch her graduate, and I am so proud of her.”

### HOW TO BECOME A MENTOR

- > College Now is always looking for new mentors to join the Mentoring Program – and the need this year is more critical than ever. With the January 2019 announcement of Say Yes Cleveland, the Mentoring Program will more than double to encompass all students who will receive a Say Yes Cleveland scholarship administered by College Now. This means College Now must recruit almost 900 mentors for students graduating from high school this spring!
- > If you are interested in learning more about the Mentoring Program or becoming a mentor yourself, please visit [www.collegenowgc.org/become-a-mentor](http://www.collegenowgc.org/become-a-mentor).



## CLEVELAND FOUNDATION COLLEGE NOW SCHOLARS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO IMPRESS

When Anna Marshall was a senior at John Hay Early College, she knew she wanted to go to college – but didn’t know all the steps she needed to take to get there. Luckily, as one of the highest-achieving students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), Anna was selected to participate in the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars Program, an innovative program developed in partnership between College Now and the Cleveland Foundation.

In 2011, the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars Program was created to avoid the trend of “under-matching,” which occurs when academically-qualified students attend a college or university that is less selective than their academic abilities merit. This program targets the highest-performing students in the CMSD and exposes them to and matches them with highly selective schools that offer the academic, financial and social resources to help them earn their degrees.

Students work with a dedicated College Now advisor, Martha Basile, who provides substantial personalized guidance and individualized support. Students in the program must have a 3.3 weighted GPA and at least a 25 composite ACT score to participate. During the 2017-2018 school year, 47 CMSD students participated in the program; their average ACT score was a 29, and their average weighted GPA was 4.18.

With these impressive credentials, students in the program who graduated in May 2018 were accepted into more highly-selective institutions than ever before. One graduate of the Cleveland School of

Science and Medicine was accepted to Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University and Yale University. He was the first student in the history of the program to be accepted to Stanford, where he received a full four-year scholarship as part of the QuestBridge College Match program. QuestBridge is an extraordinarily competitive national opportunity to help outstanding low-income high school seniors gain admission to and receive a full four-year scholarship at some of the nation’s most selective colleges. Three other students also were QuestBridge participants, and received full four-year scholarships to Vassar University, Wesleyan University and Vanderbilt University respectively.

Overall, this past year’s participants in the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars Program were accepted at 74 different institutions in what was the most impressive list of acceptances of the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars Program’s history.

Anna, a graduate of Cleveland State University’s Mandel Honors College, now serves as an AmeriCorps member with College Now at John Marshall High School. She highlighted the focus on “best fit” college options as a major asset of the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars Program.

“Programs like this one are important because of the individualized support and the breadth of opportunities to which they expose students,” Anna said. “These programs have the potential to make a world of difference in the opportunities students have for success after high school.”

## COLLEGE NOW LAUNCHES INTENSIVE ADVOCACY WORK FOCUSED ON COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

With 50 years of experience as a direct service provider, College Now and the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland (the Compact) recently had the opportunity to expand their work into the realm of advocacy. With capacity-building grants from the National College Access Network (NCAN) and ArcelorMittal, College Now and Compact staff members began creating an organizational infrastructure to engage in advocacy efforts focused on the affordability of higher education in Ohio.

As a starting point, Kittie Warshawsky, Chief External Affairs Officer with College Now, and Margie Glick, Manager of Partnerships and Programs with the Compact, created a communications toolkit for legislators to explain the affordability issues in Ohio and the challenges they pose to Ohio residents. Nationally, Ohio ranks 45th nationally in college affordability, and state aid in Ohio has not increased commensurately with rising tuition costs.

Kittie and Margie also travelled to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of the Ohio Congressional delegation to raise constituent concerns related to college affordability, the need to increase the Pell grant and the complications inherent in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Furthermore, College Now and the Compact submitted two letters to the United States Secretary of Education when the Department sought public comment on topics related to college access.

Because 2018 was a critical election year in Ohio, College Now and the Compact also took the time to meet with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Richard Cordray and Republican lieutenant governor candidate Jon Husted to outline College Now and the Compact’s aligned priorities and further inform both candidates about the need for increasing the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, the state’s financial aid grant for Ohio students as well as advocate for the need for student loan debt relief.

Additionally, College Now and the Compact met with elected officials in the Ohio Statehouse to continue to educate members on issues of affordability and postsecondary attainment. Given the important role the state occupies in the college affordability and student debt collection space, knowing the ins and outs of the state legislative process is vital for College Now to effectively advocate for its students and programs.

In January of 2019, College Now and the Compact hosted a bipartisan breakfast for members of the Northeast Ohio Caucus to discuss issues and challenges related to higher education in Ohio as well as to brief representatives about the work being done by College Now and the Compact. The breakfast also showcased both organizations as a resource for legislators as they craft the biannual state budget.

While College Now is still in the early stages of its advocacy efforts, the past year has laid the groundwork for continued advocacy work on a larger scale. Advocacy takes time, and it is vital in order to ensure that the voices of the students College Now serves are heard in Columbus and in Washington, DC.

Ohio’s only need-based aid program, the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, has dropped from its peak of \$223 million in FY08 to \$99 million in FY18 – a decline of 56%.



## IMPACT! BRINGS DEEP LEARNING TO CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

When College Now’s impact! program launched its Fall session at the Cleveland Public Library Main Branch in October 2018, College Now site coordinator Matthew Markusic asked the high school students in attendance if anyone had taken the SAT before.

Not one of his students raised a hand.

By the end of the session in December, students had taken the test three times – a pre-test at the start of the session, an official standardized test in early December and a post-test at the session’s end. And while the goal of impact! is to help students meet state and local standards in core academic subject areas, specifically math and reading, as well as prepare for the SAT, the transformation these students experienced beyond their test scores was impressive.

In 2012, College Now secured a competitive 21st Century Community Learning Center grant from the Ohio Department of Education to launch the impact! program – a standardized test preparation afterschool program hosted at two branches of the Cleveland Public Library. In the past six years, the program has seen tremendous growth. The most significant expansion occurred in 2018 when the Ohio Department of Education awarded College Now nine grants totaling \$6.1 million for the program over five years. Of these grants, three were renewals to continue work already being done in Euclid, the Main Branch of Cleveland Public Library and at Wellington Exempted Village School District in Lorain County; three were new dollars coming directly to College Now to establish the program at City Life, Greater Cleveland Youth for Christ in the Near West-Side

neighborhood of Cleveland, at Clearview High School in Lorain County and the MLK, Jr. Branch of the Cleveland Public Library in Cleveland’s University Circle neighborhood; and three were awarded to community partners who contract with College Now to provide this program in Warrensville, at the Longfellow Middle School in Lorain County and at Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland’s Broadway Club in the Broadway Slavic Village neighborhood.

The impact! program is offered three times per year at each location, and each session provides students with ACT, SAT and/or PSAT test-taking strategies, enrichment activities that complement their regular academic programming and the necessary tools to prepare for postsecondary education. Along with the standardized testing practice exams, an eight-week session includes two family nights and a parent orientation.

In addition to the daily SAT/ACT prep, which includes reading, math, and science lessons, students at impact! sites throughout Northeast Ohio also undertake a massive college and career project each session. Students spend time researching colleges they are interested in attending, majors they may want to pursue and taking personality tests to learn more about the skills they will bring to their postsecondary endeavors. Students present this project during the last family night of each session.

Students participating in Matthew’s session at the Cleveland Public Library during the Fall of 2018 also had the opportunity to participate in an innovative project that built on the skills they learned during the session.

When Matthew and his supervisor, Bailey Capelle, one of College Now’s Managers of Advising Programs and Services, attended a conference in Toronto in early 2018, they were introduced to a method of project-based learning called the Korda Method. The Korda Method empowers students to utilize deep learning to solve rigorous challenges posed by community organizations. Excited to test this new teaching methodology, Bailey and Matthew implemented a pilot program at the Cleveland Public Library Main Branch in partnership with community development organization Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc., which was looking for ideas on uses for a community green space in the Kinsman/Central neighborhoods of Cleveland.

Throughout their impact! session, students at this Cleveland Public Library site participated in activities that emphasized teamwork, creative thinking and scientific research, all of which they applied to this project with Burten, Bell, Carr. Students spent the last three weeks of their session working in teams to research possible options for the green space, learning about other community green spaces and visiting the site for additional inspiration. On the last day of their session, after much preparation and

practice presentations, students presented their final projects to representatives from Burten, Bell, Carr, College Now and Wildfire Education, an organization led by the creator of the Korda Method, Doris Korda. In their final presentations, one group of students proposed turning the green space into a multi-use public park, while the second proposed the creation of a Zen garden to help improve the mental health of area residents.

At the end of the session, students reflected on the transformations they had undergone as a result of their participation in the program. One student said that she learned that having to break from your original plan is not always a bad thing, and that the skills she developed helped her learn how to more easily adapt to working with new ideas and people. A second student admitted that impact! helped teach her that she may not necessarily always be right, and that working in a group requires listening to the ideas of groupmates and making decisions as a team. Students also recognized that impact! helped them develop research skills that they will utilize in their senior year of high school as well as their college years.



“impact! provided the type of space and environment that allowed me to feel comfortable while learning. You can gain so much from this program if you are willing to give it a chance.”

– Jaritza, Fall 2018 impact! participant



## FEDERAL PROGRAMMING HELPS ADVISORS TARGET STUDENTS EARLY

When College Now refreshed its strategic plan with the Board of Directors in 2015, it developed three areas of focus, one of which was increasing early awareness of college and career readiness. By targeting students earlier in their secondary schooling, this area of focus ensures that they move through their educations with a fuller picture of what exactly they need to do to achieve their college and career goals.

As part of this work, College Now has put into practice research-based models that focus on early awareness in several school districts throughout Northeast Ohio. The programming is supported by competitive federal and state grant funding that College Now has successfully won.

In both the Cleveland Heights-University Heights and the Parma City school districts, middle school students are being advised by College Now advisors through Federal GEAR UP grants. In Cleveland Heights-University Heights, the GEAR UP 2 New Heights program targets students in middle school and will follow these cohorts through high school and into the first year of their postsecondary educations. By partnering with local organizations and businesses, GEAR UP 2 New Heights is exposing students to career opportunities early in their educational careers, which gives them time to understand what different career fields require, both in terms of education and eventual career responsibilities. Students also take college and career field trips, as well as participate in internships and work-based learning experiences. Similarly, middle school students in Parma are receiving services early in their education journeys

to more fully inform and impact their high school experiences.

Likewise, in the Warrensville Heights school district, eighth-grade students participate in the #CareerU program, which began in 2017 when College Now won a \$100,000 Community Connectors grant from the Ohio Department of Education. #CareerU is a school-based mentoring program that helps eighth-grade students build a foundation for postsecondary and career success. #CareerU is an extension of the True2U mentoring program, which College Now co-designed with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Students meet with mentors to explore their interests and their futures, and mentors use a research-based college and career access curriculum to help students develop personal, academic and career goals. During the 2018-2019 school year, #CareerU is serving over 100 eighth-grade students with 25 mentors. In addition to their monthly mentoring meetings, students take college and career field trips, participate in workshops that help them to discover their skills and passions and attend college and career fairs for exposure to new and exciting postsecondary opportunities.

As College Now deepens its early access advising work, it is the organization's goal that students will reach their high school years with a better understanding of the pathways they must take to reach their postsecondary and career goals. By developing plans at an earlier point in their schooling, students will have a stronger chance of taking the appropriate steps while still in high school to make their college and career dreams a reality.

## GRASSROOTS EFFORTS WORK TO CHANGE BROADWAY SLAVIC VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD'S COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

One of College Now's greatest strengths is the deep community partnerships and collaboration it forges with partner organizations. Perhaps one of the strongest examples is the grassroots efforts of community-building occurring in Cleveland's Broadway Slavic Village neighborhood.

College Now has worked directly in this community since 2011 thanks in large part to financial support from Third Federal Savings & Loan. College access advisors work at Cleveland Central Catholic High School, as well as in numerous Cleveland Metropolitan School District buildings within the community's P-16 service area, including Jane Addams, John Adams, Washington Park, East Tech and New Tech at East Tech high schools as well as at Fullerton, Miles Park, Miles, Mound, Warner Girls Leadership Academy and Willow middle schools.

In addition to its school-based advising services, College Now also offers several other programs and services to students in the area to help them prepare for their postsecondary journeys. For example, eighth-graders from Miles Park Elementary participated in a high school and college transition workshop entitled "What I Wish I Knew," where a panel of current high school students shared information such as the best ways to maintain GPA, extracurricular activity participation, finding money

for college and researching best-fit postsecondary educational institutions.

To further help students shape their postsecondary plans, College Now hosted the fourth annual P-16 Majors Fair in 2018, which engaged approximately 70 students in grades 8-12 from five of the P-16 schools. Forty community professionals volunteered to participate in the Majors Fair, where they shared their majors, where they attended college and their career experiences with students to give them a better understanding of their postsecondary options.

Students in the P-16 area also went on college tours, attended a college workshop series and have started to participate in the impact! program, discussed elsewhere in this report, which is being hosted in the area thanks to a collaboration with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland's Broadway Club.

These grassroots efforts, which have been made possible through deep partnerships with Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Neighborhood Leadership Institute, Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland, Slavic Village Development, University Settlement and NewBridge Cleveland Center for Arts & Technology, have helped College Now become a trusted Broadway Slavic Village partner that is playing a vital role in helping to transform the college-going culture of P-16 students and their community.



"The P-16 Majors Fair is one of College Now's most unique activities that engages the community and gets students excited about their futures."

– Michele Scott Taylor, Chief Program Officer, College Now Greater Cleveland



## COLLEGE NOW ADULT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES HELP ADULT STUDENTS FIND RESOURCES TO RETURN TO COLLEGE

When she was in college, Trayshawna was in a car accident that forced her to take time off from her job in a restaurant. She still worked about 10 hours per week at a second job, but the wages she was earning were not enough for her to pay for college out of pocket. She finished out her semester and had a plan to get back on track when her next semester rolled around. However, because of the accident, Trayshawna had to buy a new car – and that expense, plus raising her children, made it financially impossible to continue her education, despite her needing only one more class to finish her accounting degree.

Trayshawna’s story is all too common. Adult students return to school but, with their other financial, familial and professional obligations, they often do not have the time and/or finances to finish their education, which can be detrimental when it comes to career advancement, as, often, earning a degree could mean also earning a raise or promotion.

In 1991, the Cleveland Foundation awarded College Now a \$100,000 grant from the Jane D. White Fund No. 2 to establish the Adult Student Counseling Program. Today, the robust Adult Programs and Services team offers adults and non-traditional students the college access and career advising, financial aid counseling, scholarship services and student loan debt counseling resources and tools they need to return to school, complete their degrees and advance their careers.

Over the past year, the team has employed new tactics to help students connect with and identify in-demand careers and the pathways that are needed to achieve positions in those fields. One of these initiatives has been the creation of the Managing Advancement Programs (MAP) database, which links postsecondary credentialing and degree programs to specific jobs in high-demand fields in the region that pay family-sustaining and living wages. Made possible through funding from the Deaconess Foundation, College Now advisors and trained College Now partners will use the MAP database with clients and students to help guide them toward these in-demand careers and opportunities. Currently, the database houses 500 educational programs that lead to local in-demand jobs in the manufacturing, IT and healthcare sectors, identified and populated thanks to research from Team NEO on in-demand jobs in Northeast Ohio. The database will be updated regularly with current educational programs and, as it grows, also will expand to include other training programs that lead to local in-demand jobs in other industries.

In addition to the support from the Deaconess Foundation for the MAP database, the Adult Programs and Services team also has worked closely with Cleveland State University to develop the (Re)Connect to College Program to support “comebacker” students in earning their degrees. The goal of the (Re)Connect program is to recruit, retain and graduate students who have previously stopped out of the university before completing their undergraduate program.

The (Re)Connect program understands the obstacles that many adults returning to school face and works to overcome those barriers by providing financial aid, academic support, advising services and more. As a participant in the (Re)Connect program, Trayshawna was able to complete her undergraduate degree with support from both College Now and Cleveland State University. Once she completed her degree, Trayshawna received a promotion and a raise!

College Now also has worked with the University of Akron to implement a similar (Re)Connect to College program through a partnership with New Horizon Federal Credit Union, which provides adult students with education loans to help them get back to college. These loans are used to cover costs that prohibit access to postsecondary education, such as paying

off a defaulted loan in order to reenroll in school or to secure transportation to enable borrowers to get to class and complete their educations.

The results of the program have been so impressive that they have caught the attention of the Ohio Department of Higher Education, which is now implementing a statewide effort, Finish for Your Future, to equip up to five of Ohio’s public postsecondary institutions with more tools to better serve adult learners. This effort will ensure that Ohio has the skilled workforce needed to thrive well into the future as adults are provided with more opportunities to earn certificates and degrees after high school. Given that 65 percent of all jobs in Ohio will require postsecondary education by 2025, this initiative is more vital than ever.



“I received a loan through the New Horizon Federal Credit Union and the College Now Adult Learner scholarship, which helped me pay for my tuition. You don’t know how much of a burden was lifted because of that.”

– Megan, Cleveland State University, Class of 2019

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- > College Now works onsite with employers to help retain and promote incumbent talent and, where applicable, helps employees leverage employers’ tuition assistance programs.
- > Visit College Now’s website for more information about how College Now can provide these services onsite to your workforce at <https://www.collegenowgc.org/adult-programs-and-services/>.



# COLLEGE NOW DONORS 2018

This list reflects gifts and multi-year pledges from January 1 - December 31, 2018. We have made every effort to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this report. If an error or omission has occurred, please accept our sincere apologies.

## INVEST IN SUCCESS HONORS FOUR FOUNDATIONS SUPPORTING COLLEGE NOW FOR 50 YEARS

On June 12, 2018, College Now hosted its fifth annual Invest in Success event, which honors an individual or organization in Greater Cleveland dedicated to the cause of educational attainment and the mission of College Now. The George Gund Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and The John Huntington Fund for Education were recognized as the four funders that have supported College Now since its beginning. Representatives from the four foundations shared in a video presentation what makes College Now an appealing organization worthy of their sustained philanthropic support.

Helen Williams, program director for education at the Cleveland Foundation stated, "College Now has stood the test of time because it has been clear about its mission of helping students, yet has also adapted to changing circumstances."

"I look at the map and marvel at everyone that has been impacted as College Now expands," said Dan Keenan, executive director of the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.

"College Now's work is tremendously important because it might be the lifeline that helps a young person succeed," noted David Abbott, executive director at the George Gund Foundation.

"Our economy is dependent on these graduates coming out with skills and being able to fulfill these jobs," concluded Anna Adams, treasurer at the John Huntington Fund for Education.

Following the video and award presentations, former College Now advisor Carolyn Beeler introduced the evening's keynote speaker, Greg Moore, a College Now scholarship recipient who shared his story of the life-changing support he received from Carolyn. At his conclusion, Greg was surprised with the creation of the Gregory L. Moore Scholarship, which will be given to a Cleveland Metropolitan School District graduate pursuing journalism or communications.

College Now would like to extend a sincere thank you to all its partners – including the four celebrated at Invest in Success – who recognize the critical need for increasing the educational attainment level in the community.



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The Cleveland Foundation  
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Cuyahoga County  
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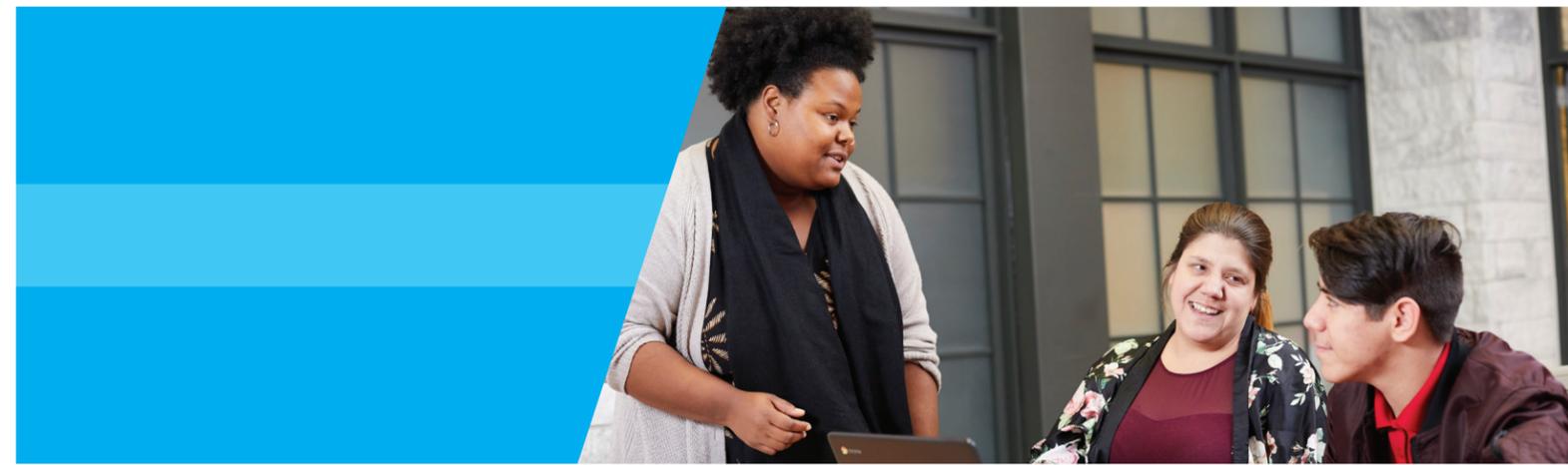
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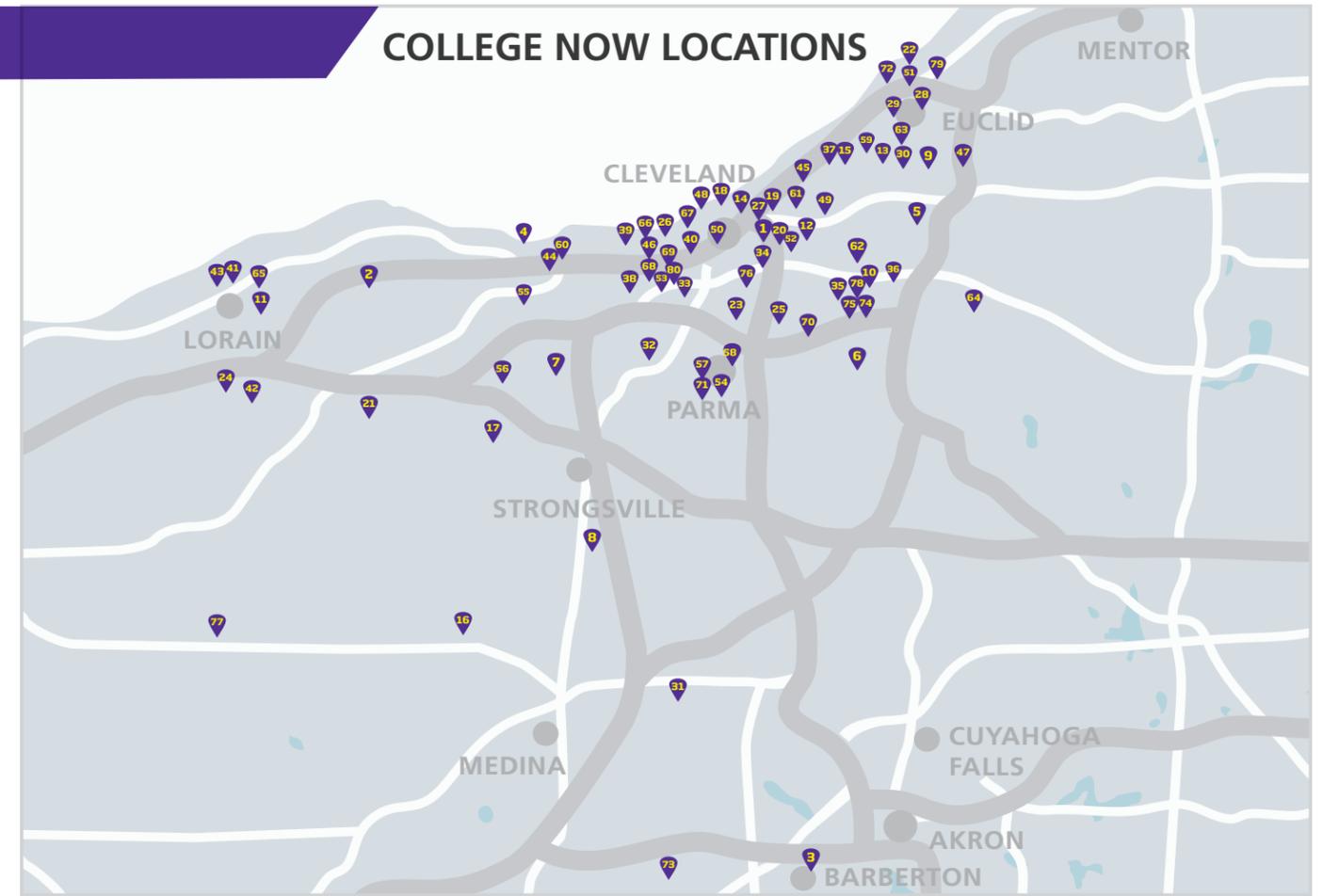
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