



WE ARE...



College Now
Greater Cleveland

2021 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Dear friends of College Now,

This has been a year unlike any other in recent memory. As we sit down to write this annual letter, it is with the knowledge that the world we are living in today is vastly different from the one we inhabited this time last year. The coronavirus pandemic and the racial justice movements of 2020 have touched every aspect of our lives, and our work at College Now is no different.

What we hope to convey in this year's Report to the Community, though, is that College Now has risen to the challenges presented during this truly unprecedented year. When the pandemic was declared in March 2020, our team switched to a virtual model of work immediately without disruption to our services and has continued to deliver at an incredibly high level over the past year. The deaths of Ahmed Arbury, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd – and locally, Desmond Franklin – sparked deep and passionate conversations about equity and systemic racism among our staff and have caused us to put an even more deliberate focus on the way in which our work intersects with the broader movement toward social justice across the country.

That is not to say that this year hasn't been hard. The conversations we have had with students and staff have been some of the most personal and emotional we have ever experienced. We have seen students faced with decisions and obstacles surrounding their ability to obtain effective education that we had never imagined, as schools and universities suddenly moved to remote learning models. We have met with adults and families experiencing loss of income and joblessness and related issues, such as the lack of broadband access, as the entire country, and, in particular, low-income communities, are drastically affected by COVID-19. We have seen students of all ages struggle to access remote learning, whether as a result of the lack of technology, a discomfort utilizing it, or simply the distractions surrounding it. We have seen everything change, and we have reacted accordingly.

Throughout it all, our team at College Now has adapted, experimented, and worked hard to keep our mission going. Education is a crucial need for our students and our community, and we knew that our work could not stop just because we could not meet with students in person. We knew our students needed us more than ever. And our staff stepped up to serve them in ways that, frankly, blew us away.

As you'll read throughout this Report, College Now has worked to make the most out of a year when nothing has been as we predicted. We found new ways to



Mark Ross
Chair, Board of Directors



Lee A. Friedman
Chief Executive Officer

onboard incoming first-year mentors and mentees; we launched a text service for students and families to reach the Resource Center; we managed to hold remote summer scholarship sessions with as many Say Yes and College Now scholarship recipients as possible; we continued to advocate for students faced with barriers to their educations; we looked inward at our own policies and practices surrounding issues of diversity and inclusion; and, above all, we stayed true to our mission.

This hard work has not gone unnoticed. Along with community acknowledgment of the dedication of our staff, College Now was awarded the National College Attainment Network's Member of the Year Award of Excellence at the 2020 virtual NCAN National Conference. This award recognizes the work of a college access and success program to fulfill NCAN's mission of building, strengthening, and empowering communities and stakeholders to close equity gaps in postsecondary attainment for all students.

If there was ever a year that College Now deserves this acknowledgment, it is this one, as this organization has truly stepped up to live our mission during what has been the most challenging year in recent memory. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of our work and emphasized the extent of educational disparities in marginalized communities. We could not be prouder of the commitment of College Now's staff, and we could not be more thankful for your continued support.

We conclude with the hope that, when we write this letter to you next year, it will be with news of a world in a different place than we are now. But, if there is anything we can take from this year, it is that College Now will always be here for our students and will always stay true to our mission of providing educational access to all in our community.

We wish you and your families the very best of health and happiness,

Mark Ross
Chair, Board of Directors

Lee A. Friedman
Chief Executive Officer

WE ARE... INNOVATIVE

31,000 NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED ANNUALLY BY COLLEGE NOW

ADAPTABLE CONNECTED

\$4 Million TOTAL AMOUNT OF COLLEGE NOW SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO STUDENTS LAST YEAR

INTROSPECTIVE

\$22 Million TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET FOR 2020/2021, INCLUDING NEARLY 200 EMPLOYEES

COMMITTED ADVOCATES

\$84 Million TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS DISTRIBUTED BY COLLEGE NOW SINCE INCEPTION IN 1967

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN



College Now
Greater Cleveland

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 Revenues

Ending July 31, 2020

Foundations	\$5,671,361
Corporations	\$3,089,418
Individuals and Organizations	\$631,657
Government Grants	\$5,159,698
Fee for Service	\$3,287,789
Other	\$539,000

TOTAL \$18,378,923

Operational Expenses

Ending July 31, 2020

Advising and Counseling Services	\$7,881,570
Scholarship Awards	\$5,588,318
Scholarship and Retention Services	\$1,583,532
Fee for Service Expenses	\$1,723,283
General Administration	\$752,409
Fundraising	\$802,544

TOTAL \$18,331,656

College Now is a proud partner in the Say Yes Cleveland initiative, which provides wraparound services for Cleveland Metropolitan School District students and tuition gap-closing scholarships for eligible CMSD graduates. College Now administers the Say Yes Cleveland scholarship and also matches each Say Yes Cleveland scholarship recipient with a mentor.



WE ARE INNOVATIVE

For College Now, 2020 was – at it was for nearly all of us – a year of adapting, learning, and challenging our traditional ways of doing things. And, while it required all of us to move outside our comfort zones, the College Now staff worked tirelessly to ensure that the mission of College Now was not lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Going into the pandemic and shifting to a remote work model was certainly a change for College Now’s administrative staff, who were used to working in-person every day in the Cleveland office. However, College Now also was at a unique advantage in our staffing; numerous advisors, who spend most days working in schools across Northeast Ohio, already had extensive experience in remote work environments and communicating with colleagues while physically working in a variety of locations. Of course, the true challenge came in finding ways to effectively reach and serve students who now were shifting to a virtual model of schooling.

As you will read later in this report, College Now’s Advising Programs and Services team performed an impressive and dramatic pivot – literally over a weekend – to a virtual model of serving students, with support from College Now’s Information and Technology team, who helped advisors learn and utilize new forms of technology, such as Microsoft Teams, GoToWebinar, and Google Classroom, to continue to provide advising support to high school students.

Of course, high school students were not the only ones who needed to be reached and served during the pandemic. Knowing that the thousands of scholarship recipients served by College Now also were feeling the pandemic’s effects, the Mentoring and Scholarship teams dove into action in March and April, calling every student receiving a scholarship from College Now or Say Yes Cleveland to check in and see what supports and help, if any, the students needed, including technology support, food and housing assistance, and more. Realizing this was a huge undertaking, the Development team also jumped in to provide additional assistance in making these phone calls and supporting College Now’s college students.

And it was not just the staff who recognized the need to support our students in new and different ways – the community also stepped up. In one example, many students shared that they did not have access to technology to complete their virtual schooling, so College Now worked with community partners to help acquire – and even hand-deliver – the technology students needed to succeed in their remote learning.

The pandemic also affected our work with adult students, and the Adult Programs and Services team at College Now immediately transitioned to providing virtual services, creating a virtual Resource Center and hosting virtual public events around areas of education impacted by the pandemic, such as federal student loan debt.

Relying on its proprietary MAP Database, which identifies in-demand jobs in the region and the educational pathways needed to get there, College Now continued to help adults searching to understand their next steps in the ever-changing workforce environment of the pandemic. With support from the Strive Partnership, College Now worked with the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland to embark on a social media campaign to broadcast College Now’s services to stopped-out students who needed to finish college to find a secure career amid the pandemic.

The innovations made by College Now during COVID-19 have helped us rethink and shape our work moving forward. Realizing that more students than ever have questions about the postsecondary process as COVID-19 changed admissions, graduation, and application procedures, College Now debuted a texting service called Ask Tassel, in which students and families across the state – or even the country! – can text the Resource Center for help and guidance. Additionally, College Now advisors discovered that creating a virtual library of pre-recorded, on demand content for students and their families could be helpful in ensuring students can receive college-going information whenever they need it, and College Now will be embarking on a videography project with the help of the Truist Foundation to further build out our in-house video capabilities and create a virtual content library.



“College Now’s response to the pandemic has been ‘nothing short of outstanding.’”

- NATIONAL COLLEGE ATTAINMENT NETWORK IN 2020 MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTATION



It is because of this dedication and innovation that College Now was awarded the 2020 Member of the Year Award of Excellence from the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) at its 25th anniversary virtual national conference. In recognizing College Now, NCAN cited College Now’s long-standing commitment to students throughout Northeast Ohio and the organization’s early innovation as being the first college access organization of its kind in the country. NCAN called College Now’s response to the pandemic “nothing short of outstanding, demonstrating the agility

of the team and a tremendous commitment to their mission” and described College Now as “an organization that has withstood the test of time and continues to be an important part of the fabric of Cleveland.”

While 2020 was not without its challenges, the innovation and adaptability of the College Now staff shone through even during some of the darkest days. College Now is extremely grateful to our staff and the community for their continued dedication to College Now’s mission and their unending support of this organization.



WE ARE ADAPTABLE

During a typical school year, College Now school-based advisors provide services to students in school buildings, community centers, and libraries throughout Northeast Ohio. Due to health and safety restrictions, the coronavirus pandemic has challenged both students and College Now

advisors to approach postsecondary preparation in new ways. At the onset of the pandemic in Ohio, College Now advisors quickly adapted to serve students via tele-advising methods to help students complete the FAFSA, offer guidance on scholarship applications, and more.



STUDENTS SERVED VIRTUALLY

From March 16 – July 31, 2020, the Advising team served:

- 1,680** in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)
- 1,474** in Northeast Ohio suburban/parochial schools
- 933** in Parma City Schools through the GEAR UP program
- 481** in schools across Lorain County



ADVISING BY THE NUMBERS

- 5,745** Total hours spent on remote advising
- 3,440** Hours planning school and summer programming
- 1,157** Hours on professional development for advising staff

Through summer programming, the Advising team served over **500 students** across 10 different programs, amounting to **8,900 total group and individual sessions**.

This work continues into the 2020-21 school year, and results will be shared in next year's Annual Report.



STUDENTS SERVED BY IMPACT!

In an 11-week period, from March 15 – May 31, 2020, the impact! team served:

- 300** impact!, College Now's standardized test-prep program, served **300 students** from over **50 schools**.
- 60%** increase, or **113 additional students**, who participated in impact!

impact!, College Now's standardized test-prep program also made adjustments to offer remote programming in the spring. When the pandemic hit Ohio, *impact!* was serving students at nine sites across Northeast Ohio. College Now was able to continue all portions of *impact!* programming including instruction, youth development (via virtual college tours, virtual job shadowing, and remote student internships), family engagement, and partner collaboration. In fact, virtual programming allowed College Now to expand its reach and provide *impact!* services to more students than originally anticipated.

impact! has experienced even more growth during the current 2020-2021 school year as the program has expanded to serve 12 sites. With the awarding of three new 21st Century Community Learning Center grants this summer from the Ohio Department of Education, new programming has begun at Euclid High School, Garfield Heights High School, and Warrensville Heights Middle School. Programming continues at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio; City Life Center; Clearview High School; Cleveland Public Library Main Branch; Cleveland Public Library MLK Jr. Branch; Longfellow Middle School; Lorain High School; Warrensville Heights High School; and Wellington High School. *impact!* continues to be held virtually during the 2020-2021 school year.

The Advising team also instituted several Virtual Key Events in the spring to serve students across College Now's footprint. These events provide information that is typically shared through in-person school-based workshops. Sessions were offered monthly at multiple dates and times to provide maximum flexibility for students and families wishing to attend.



VIRTUAL EVENTS ATTENDEES

In an 11-week period, from March 15 – May 31, 2020, the Advising team hosted:

- 71** Freshman Night event attendees
- 53** Sophomore Night attendees
- 55** Junior Night attendees
- 31** ACT/SAT event attendees
- 14** Transition to College event attendees



As the pandemic has continued into the 2020-2021 academic year, the Advising team has remained adaptable and implemented new strategies from lessons learned along the way. A monthly e-newsletter is now distributed to all students served by College Now, sharing information about upcoming programming, as well as delineating college-going tasks all grade levels should be focusing on during a given time period. Additionally, College Now is offering a refreshed set of Virtual Key Events in the new academic year, including:

- > What We Know about Testing During COVID-19: The Importance of Entrance Exams
- > What We Know about College Admissions During COVID-19
- > Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior Nights
- > Senior Nights and College Application Workshops
- > FAFSA Completion Office Hours and Financial Aid Nights

Though it is uncertain how COVID-19 will continue to impact education, College Now is ready to adapt and provide students with the support they need, when and how they need it, to prepare for life after high school.

SUMMER UPWARD BOUND PROGRAMMING

Over the summer, the College Now Upward Bound team used a variety of creative methods to keep students engaged virtually. Students from Warrensville Heights High School and Shaw High School participated in math, science, Spanish, and computer science classes. To supplement their online classes, students participated in hands-on learning activities in the afternoons. Scholars made homemade tacos, practiced yoga, created webpages, built Lego Technic Kits, planted herbs and tracked their growth, and participated in thoughtful discussion about *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. Graduating seniors also received college dorm-kit deliveries from their Upward Bound advisors. Many students stated that their learning helped them to feel better prepared for this virtual 2020-2021 school year!





WE ARE CONNECTED

The College Now Mentoring Program fosters relationships between College Now and Say Yes scholarship recipients and volunteer mentors in the Northeast Ohio community to provide an added layer of support for students navigating higher education. On top of an already daunting experience, this year students endured a particular set of challenges stemming from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through months of uncertainty, the Mentoring Program has ensured that students are staying connected with the supports they need for success.

While COVID-19 has made traditional in-person meetings all but impossible, the College Now Mentoring Program is unique in that the bulk of communication is done online – and has been for years. Mentors and students communicate twice monthly through a virtual platform, using a curriculum developed by College Now. Pairs are asked to meet in person three times every year, as well, though students and mentors have adjusted by meeting virtually this year instead.

When mentors sign up to participate in the program, they often offer support by drawing from their own college experiences, from helping students work through roommate challenges to giving advice on asking for a letter of

recommendation. While no participant in the program has lived through a pandemic before, students were able to lean on the guiding relationships they already had begun to build with their mentors prior to COVID-19.

As a current mentor and retired educator, Elaine Byrd said, “I believe that mentoring is more important than ever. The students have literally been on an emotional and academic rollercoaster for many months. Between the fear of contracting the virus, leaving campus to return home, attending classes online, studying, taking exams, and writing papers, the students have been forced to adapt and adjust to circumstances beyond their control. **They need to know that they’re not alone and are fully supported, no matter what form that takes.**”

Elaine’s mentee, Jessica Cobb, is a third-year student at Baldwin Wallace University. “She’s really become a friend to me,” Jessica said of Elaine. During their initial meeting, the two “clicked instantly” over a shared career field and sense of humor. Over the course of the program, they’ve become close, which provided a solid foundation for connection as routines and norms were uprooted by the pandemic.

BECOME A MENTOR

Now in its tenth year, the Mentoring Program originally started with a small cohort of students and mentors. It has scaled to serve every College Now scholarship recipient and has continued to grow, with this year marking the most students ever in the program, as mentors are paired not only with College Now scholarship recipients, but with Say Yes Cleveland scholarship recipients, as well.

The time commitment to mentor is minimal, but the impact, pre-pandemic, has been significant.

92%
RETENTION RATE FROM STUDENTS’ FRESHMAN TO SOPHOMORE YEAR

66%
GRADUATION RATE FOR MENTORED STUDENTS

500+
LOCAL EMPLOYERS PARTICIPATING IN THE MENTORING PROGRAM

The need for mentors continues to grow, as Say Yes Cleveland enters the third year of its 25-year plan. Every year, College Now will need to recruit at least 850 volunteers to serve as mentors for high school graduates. To learn more about becoming a mentor and to apply, visit www.collegenowgc.org/become-a-mentor/.

Jessica shared that the lack of structure with remote learning has been quite challenging, as well as being apart from her peers and friends on campus. Jessica and Elaine have had to postpone several plans they had made to spend time together, though they’ve stayed in touch by phone. “I think we’ve really helped each other because we’ve both experienced the challenges of isolation this year,” Jessica shared.

Elaine says that Jessica’s character truly shone through while she adjusted to remote learning. With continued support from Elaine, Jessica pressed on with her studies, while also completing job interviews and continuing to serve as an orientation leader and course assistant to guide first-year students through their college debuts.

Elaine and Jessica’s relationship is a testament to the importance of staying connected, especially during tumultuous global and national events. The College Now Mentoring team proudly continues to provide support to the community of program participants as everyone navigates new frontiers. The Mentoring team has ensured that mentors and mentees continue to receive ample support and opportunities to connect by adjusting to online programming that would traditionally have been held in-person, hosting takeovers on College Now’s social media platforms to distribute information about technology access and mental health support to students, and by conducting consistent outreach to program participants.

JESSICA COBB
THIRD-YEAR STUDENT AT BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY



“I believe that mentoring is more important than ever.”

ELAINE BYRD
CURRENT MENTOR AND RETIRED EDUCATOR



WE ARE INTROSPECTIVE

Education and equity are intricately connected. This has been true since the development of early education systems, long before College Now's founding in 1967. While the systems perpetuating inequity are vast, there is opportunity to transform and refine education policies and systems to achieve a more just society. At College Now, we recognize the important role we must play in driving forward social and economic change by increasing postsecondary educational attainment in Northeast Ohio. The national conversations around systemic racism and inequity over the past year have made this recognition more apparent than ever.

Early champions of College Now's work (previously Cleveland Scholarship Program) sought to bridge a gap in education that perpetuates inequity – college affordability. Affordability remains a priority, as it is still one of the greatest challenges facing students today. Last year, College Now awarded \$4 million in scholarships to Northeast Ohio students.

In the last 54 years, though, our understanding of equity, access, and educational attainment has evolved.

Today, College Now's mission is to increase educational attainment; however, we recognize that existing education systems do, in fact, perpetuate inequities that leave disadvantaged students and communities behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified such disparities. Students, particularly students of color and those from low-income backgrounds, have struggled with issues ranging from access to technology to food insecurity.

Racial, social, and economic disparities exist at every point along the higher education pipeline, from the application process to degree completion. While a clear set of solutions does not exist to solving these disparities carte blanche, College Now also recognizes education as a significant tool to improve the lives of individuals to create more equal communities and to foster social and economic mobility in the U.S.

Internally, College Now has been discussing issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion more intensely over the last several years. Currently, over 30 staff members actively participate in the organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and subcommittees. The Committee has supported initiatives such as finding opportunities for staff to receive implicit bias training, circulating antiracist educational resources, and hosting a series of *Through the Lens* panel discussions, amplifying BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) perspectives in the Greater Cleveland community, with particular emphasis on educational experiences.

Committee members also play an active role in reviewing and refining College Now's internal policies and practices, from hiring and onboarding to ongoing training and workplace culture. This year, Committee efforts led to College Now's recognition of Juneteenth as an annual employee holiday, as well as an opportunity for all staff to engage with The Racial Equity Institute's Groundwater Approach.

College Now acknowledges that these internal reflections and actions are necessary to the process of dismantling and reforming harmful systems. We also understand that ongoing work is required to play a role more effectively in advocating for change in the broader context of education systems and policies.

College Now is committed to a culture of continuous learning and transparent growth. It is our hope that, by engaging in this introspective work, College Now will be better equipped to propel equitable and antiracist practices forward in our community's education systems. This work often will result in discomfort, but it is necessary to build a community free of the racist and oppressive systems that impact our staff, students, and community every day.



WE ARE COMMITTED

In 2015, Cleveland began its path toward becoming a Say Yes to Education chapter. This work, led by six convening partners – the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Cuyahoga County, and our team at College Now – came to fruition in 2019 when Cleveland officially became the fourth Say Yes city in the nation. In addition to providing support services from Pre-K through high school graduation, Say Yes Cleveland also provides last dollar, tuition-only, gap closing scholarships for eligible CMSD graduates for the next 25 years. College Now remains an integral partner in the work of Say Yes Cleveland, serving as the fiscal agent for the Say Yes Cleveland organization and administering Say Yes Cleveland's scholarship program. All Say Yes Cleveland scholarship recipients are also required to participate in the College Now Mentoring Program.



Of course, scholarship data for the Class of 2020 will be affected by the pandemic, as many students may have made last-minute decisions to take a gap year, enroll in a different school than they originally intended, or otherwise altered enrollment plans based on the ever-changing public health situation and subsequent campus changes being made. To ensure that students were not penalized for situations outside of their control, the Say Yes Cleveland Scholarship Board worked to create short-term policy updates for CMSD students in the Class of 2019, giving students two additional semesters of eligibility in which to use their Say Yes Scholarship dollars. Students also continue to be engaged with the College Now Mentoring Program or with others on the College Now staff to keep them on-track and ready to re-enroll in the fall of 2021.

While postsecondary enrollment numbers are still being finalized for students in the CMSD Class of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Say Yes Cleveland scholarships have already had significantly impacted the Class of 2019.

845
SAY YES-ELIGIBLE GRADUATES

from the CMSD Class of 2019 enrolled in Say Yes-eligible postsecondary programs within one year after high school, which represented a **4.4% enrollment increase** over the Class of 2018.

\$1.2
Million

The Say Yes Cleveland Scholarship Fund awarded **\$1.2 million** in scholarship dollars for those students.

SAY YES SUMMER SESSIONS

This year was the first year that College Now hosted Summer Sessions for Say Yes Scholarship recipients. This is a required summer meeting session between Say Yes Scholarship recipients, their families, and College Now staff to ensure that students understand the full extent of their scholarship awards, what financial aid will cover, and where loans may be necessary to make an educated postsecondary decision.

Over the summer of 2020, Summer Sessions were hosted virtually, and College Now received support from these community partners to connect with students and help them book sessions:

- > Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation
- > Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio
- > Esperanza
- > Neighborhood Leadership Institute

613
86%

These summer interviews were incredibly effective; of the **613 sessions** that were completed, **86% of students** enrolled in a postsecondary program.



WE ARE ADVOCATES

Over the past year, College Now's Adult Programs and Services team has been recognized both locally and nationally for our work with adult students in Northeast Ohio. As Ohio strives to reach its goal of 65 percent of Ohioans ages 25-64 having a degree, certificate, or other postsecondary

workforce credential by 2025, the efforts to increase the number of degree holders across the state grow increasingly urgent. College Now has long assisted Ohioans in meeting this goal, and this past year has been no different, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TALENT HUB

In early 2020, Cleveland, along with Northeast Indiana, Southwest Florida, and Tampa Bay, was designated a Talent Hub by Lumina Foundation, in partnership with The Kresge Foundation, and received a \$125,000 grant to support local efforts to increase educational attainment. This recognition from Lumina Foundation and The Kresge Foundation, two national philanthropic powerhouses, is especially gratifying. The designation is awarded to communities that meet rigorous standards for creating environments that cultivate, attract, and retain talent, particularly among students who are adults; Black, Hispanic, and/or Native American; from low-income households; and/or are the first in their families to attend college.



Building on College Now's (Re)Connect to College program with Cleveland State University (CSU), discussed in last year's Annual Report, the Talent Hub in Cleveland has been used as a framework to emphasize that equity in educational access is key to the region's success, and it has worked to boost access, persistence, and completion for Black adult students. Working closely with Team NEO and CSU, the Talent Hub has joined existing efforts to fill in-demand careers by highlighting the availability and staying-power of adult learners graduating from local schools.

The work of the Talent Hub continued through 2020, despite the chaos caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. College Now has collected and analyzed student data from CSU and employment data from Cuyahoga County to lead the way to more equitable outcomes for our Black residents. The final report is expected to be completed in April 2021.

INSTITUTIONAL DEBT

College Now has long supported individuals facing seemingly insurmountable student debt challenges. Especially during COVID-19, this has been a major focus of our services as students worked to understand their repayment options and situations during the federal government's pause on student loan debt collection. However, another major area of student debt that has come into focus this year is institutional student debt; here in Ohio, that means debt that students owe to postsecondary public institutions, as opposed to loans owed to banks or the U.S. Department of Education.

Institutional student debt can be just as — or, in some cases, even more — debilitating as federal student loan debt, as it can affect students' educational journeys. Institutional debt can include tuition, fees, room and board costs, and even parking tickets and library fines that students have been unable to pay. When students owe this debt to an institution, their transcripts can be withheld, the institution is mandated by state law to send the debt to the state's Attorney General's office, where the debt collects interest and fees and becomes an even larger balance owed. When transcripts are withheld, students cannot transfer schools, and cannot get jobs in which transcripts are required for hiring.



390,000

A 2020 POLICY MATTERS OHIO REPORT SHOWED THAT THE OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IS CURRENTLY HOLDING MORE THAN 390,000 STUDENT-DEBT ACCOUNTS FOR COLLECTION. OHIO LAW REQUIRES INSTITUTIONS TO TURN OVER ALL DEBTS TO THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IN THE SHORTEST AMOUNT OF TIME OF ANY STATE, MAKING THE PROCESS ESPECIALLY PUNITIVE IN OHIO.

College Now, Policy Matters Ohio, and other student-focused groups throughout the state have embarked on several initiatives throughout the year to encourage Ohio to implement policy changes related to institutional debt to make degree achievement more attainable for all Ohioans. Groups have been asked to submit op-eds to newspapers throughout the state, to advocate for state legislation to

address this issue, and to educate policy makers on the challenges students face when saddled with institutional debt through direct, one-to-one communication. As the state budget and agenda is set for 2021, it is College Now's hope that this issue of institutional debt will be addressed at the state level to improve educational opportunities for all students.



WE ARE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

College Now's commitment to making education more affordable is a cornerstone of our mission. Since our founding in 1967, College Now has awarded \$84 million in scholarship dollars, but the need for college affordability is ever present and growing. College Now is fortunate to receive continued

support from the Northeast Ohio community to provide scholarship funding for students. This past year, College Now worked with community supporters to establish several new scholarships, four of which include the Benko Scholarship, the Thaxton Scholarship, and the Manley-Parham Scholarships.

ROBERT PATRICK BENKO SCHOLARSHIP

John Wilson created the Robert Patrick Benko Scholarship to honor his childhood friend Bob Benko and his deep love of learning and education. Born and raised in Northeast Ohio, Bob passed away at the age of 31 while completing his Ph.D. in economics.

Along with the involvement of Bob's family, John established this fund to support an outstanding LGBTQ high school student or ally. This is the first scholarship at College Now to specifically recognize an LGBTQ student or ally who has contributed to initiatives that support diversity and inclusion. The first recipient of the Benko Scholarship matriculated to the Cleveland Institute of Art in fall 2020.

This is the second scholarship created by John at College Now. Along with his partner, Lawrence Li, John established a fund at the Cleveland Foundation to provide renewable scholarships to College Now to award to academically qualified immigrants and first-generation U.S. citizens called The New Generation Scholarship. John and Lawrence hope that these scholarships will continue to drive forward thriving, diverse communities by expanding education opportunities for students.

"This scholarship has allowed me to focus on my schoolwork by lessening the stress of financial worry. Going to the Cleveland Institute of Art and studying animation has been a dream of mine for years and I'm able to do this now thanks to the scholarship."

BRIDGET WITWER
FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE BENKO SCHOLARSHIP

"The College Now New Generation Scholarship has given me the opportunity to pursue my education and further develop as both a community member and leader. After graduating, I plan to pursue professional school to obtain my Doctorate in Optometry."

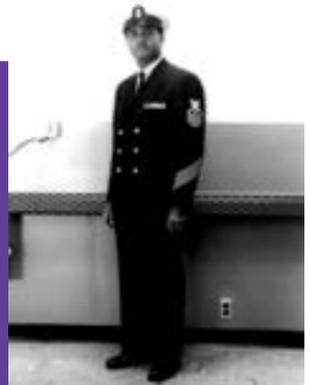
SANDY HUYNH
FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE NEW GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP

CORA PAULINE PARHAM AND BRAVITT COLA MANLEY, SR. SCHOLARSHIPS

In honor of their grandparents, brothers Matt Manley and Justin Manley established the Cora Pauline Parham and Bravitt Cola Manley, Sr. Scholarships in the summer of 2020.

Both Cora and Bravitt highly valued education. Cora was a homemaker, and while not a college graduate herself, emphasized the importance of education to her daughter (Matt and Justin's mother), who went on to graduate from the University of Virginia with a degree in economics. Bravitt also encouraged his children to pursue higher education and served in the U.S. Navy for 21 years, retiring with the rank of Chief Petty Officer. His service was another factor inspiring the Manley brothers to give back to others through the gift of affordable education.

Because of their grandparents and parents, Matt and Justin understand that education leads to opportunities. They believe that, "through education, all things are possible." Through their scholarships, which will be awarded to Black students in Greater Cleveland, Matt and Justin hope to inspire the next generation of scholars with this same sentiment.



GREG AND SUZANNE THAXTON SCHOLARSHIP

Along with support from the Nordson Corporation Foundation, where Greg worked for 30 years, including 12 as Chief Financial Officer, Greg and Sue established the Thaxton Scholarship to reinforce their strong belief in the value of education. As a first-generation college graduate, Greg experienced first-hand the personal satisfaction and professional growth earning a college degree brings.

Greg and Sue feel strongly about giving back to their community. In addition to their newly established fund with College Now, the Thaxtons have supported a scholarship at their high school alma mater in Huron, Ohio, for the last seven years.

In establishing this scholarship opportunity at College Now, the Thaxtons hope to motivate and assist future students to achieve the gratification and success that can come with educational attainment. The first Thaxton Scholarship will be awarded to a graduate of Elyria High School or Lorain High School in summer 2021.

In addition to the ever-growing new support of College Now's scholarship program, we are grateful for longstanding scholarships supported by the Cleveland Foundation, Cuyahoga County, the George Gund Foundation, the John Huntington Fund for Education, Jimmy Malone, and the Jane D. White Fund #2. It is this continued investment by so many funders that truly makes College Now's work community-driven.



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This list reflects gifts, payments, and multi-year pledges from January 1 - December 31, 2020. 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.

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90%

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 RATE AMONG COLLEGE
 NOW SCHOLARSHIP
 RECIPIENTS, COMPARED
 TO THE NATIONAL
 AVERAGE OF 74% FOR
 ALL STUDENTS**

\$2,300

**AVERAGE AMOUNT
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 ADULT LEARNER
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Preformed Line Products Co.
PwC
The Ratner Miller Shafran Foundation
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Walter J. and Janice A. Romansky
Alan and Barbara Rosskamm
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Robert and Donna Simoneau
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Sally and Terry Stewart
James and Kathleen Szabo
Lorraine Szabo
Julie A. and George M. Szeltner
Michele Scott Taylor and Douglas Taylor
Third Federal Savings & Loan
Howard J. and Sara S. Tucker
Sue M. and Bill Tyler
United Way of Greater Cleveland
Mary C. Warren
Kittie D. Warshawsky and Timothy J. Tibbitts
William M. Weiss Foundation
George A. Wenz
Westfield Group
Peter and Robin F. Winokur
Alenka M. Winslett
Milton A. & Roslyn Z. Wolf Family Foundation
Philip Woodcock and Virginia Benjamin
Timothy and Sandy Wuliger
Thomas Zlatoper

5+ YEARS OF CONSECUTIVE GIVING

Julie Allen
Jennifer L. and Mark J. Altstadt
Amazon Smile
Suzanne Aral-Boutros and Akram Boutros

Richard and Sherry R. Aronson
Ric and Kate Asbeck
Banks-Baldwin Foundation
Barberton Community Foundation
Jack W. & Shirley Berger Fund of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland
Cynthia Emlen Boncella
Gabe and Tracy Bruno
Buckley King LPA
Brian and Sherry Buckner-Sallee
Annette Busse
M.E. & F.J. Callahan Foundation
Bailey Capelle
Capital One
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation
Sunil and Cynthia Chand
Victor Courtney
Richard J. and Michelle Creger
Robert R. & Gay C. Cull Family Foundation
Cuyahoga County
Ward and Colleen Dumm
Fortney Foundation
Matthew H. and Erin Frank
Greg and Kathleen Freeh
Jennylee Gandarilla
James R. and Laura Geuther
Barbara Ginn
Deborah Glosserman
Goodman Real Estate Services Group
Cathy and Bill Graham
Greater Cleveland Community Shares
Sarah Griffin
John and Penny Grunden Jr.
Sheldon R. and Nancy W. Hartman
Shane Hollett
Elizabeth Honold
Deanna Jarvis
Libby Kannard and Bill Janesh
Amy E. Kellogg
Kathleen Kennedy and Doug White
Brett Ketvertis
William and Jean Koehler
Michele L. Krantz
Steven Kutnick and Jacquelyn F. Darrow
Bobby R. Larkin, Sr. Charitable Association, Inc.
The Laub Foundation
The Fred A. Lennon Charitable Trust
Catherine L. & Edward A. Lozick Foundation
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Network for Good
Evelyn B. Newell
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George F. Schaefer
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Katharyn Schwab
The Sears-Swetland Foundation
Racheal Seibert
Joanne Siegla
Jeremy and Emily Spivack
Starting Point
Howard A. and Terri Steindler
William Stultz
Swagelok Company
Swaminathan and Garg Foundation
The Swamy Family Foundation
Taylor Oswald
TEGNA Foundation
The Treu-Mart Fund
Tucker Ellis LLP
United Way of Central Ohio
United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
Jessica R. Vitale
Elizabeth H. Warshawsky
Krissie Wells and Alex Nosse
Dickson L. and Ann T. Whitney
Laurel Wilder and Zack Meisel
WJW Fox 8 Cleveland
John H. and Jacqueline F. Woods
Steven and Ellen Young
Dan & Ellen Zelman Family Foundation

Community and Educational Partners

ACE Mentor Program of Cleveland
Akron Public Schools
AT&T
Avon Local School District
Baldwin Wallace University
Bank of America
Bay Village City School District
Bedford City School District
Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation
Berea City School District

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Cleveland
Bowling Green State University
Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio
Breakthrough Charter Schools
Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School
Broadway-Slavic Village P-16
Brunswick City School District
Care Alliance Health Center
Case Western Reserve University
Catholic Charities
Centers for Families & Children
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative
City Club of Cleveland
City Life Center
City of Barberton
City of Cleveland
City Year
Clearview Local Schools
Cleveland Art Museum
Cleveland Browns
Cleveland Central Catholic High School
Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District
Cleveland Hillel Foundation
Cleveland Indians
Cleveland International Film Festival
Cleveland Metroparks
Cleveland Metropolitan School District
The Cleveland Museum of Natural History
Cleveland Playhouse
Cleveland Public Library
Cleveland Rape Crisis Center
Cleveland State University
Cleveland Transformation Alliance
Cloverleaf High School

\$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

Code M Magazine
 Columbia Local School District
 The Council for Economic Opportunities
 in Greater Cleveland
 Cuyahoga Community College
 Cuyahoga County
 Cuyahoga County Public Library
 Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative
 Destination Cleveland
 East Cleveland City School District
 Eastern Michigan University
 Educational Service Center of
 Northeast Ohio
 Elyria City School District
 Esperanza Inc.
 Euclid City Schools
 Euclid Public Library
 Fairfax Renaissance Development
 Corporation
 Fairview Park High School
 Federal Reserve Bank
 Firelands Local School District
 Friendly Inn Settlement
 Future Plans
 Garfield Heights City School District
 Gesher
 Great Lakes Science Center
 Greater Cleveland Neighborhood
 Centers Association
 Greater Cleveland Partnership
 Habitat for Humanity
 Higher Education Compact of
 Greater Cleveland
 Highland Local School District
 Hiram College
 Holy Name High School
 i know i can
 Indiana Wesleyan University
 Job Corps
 John Carroll University

Kent State University
 KeyBank
 Lakeland Community College
 Lakewood City Schools
 Link 4 Schools
 Lorain City School District
 Lorain County Community College
 Lorain County JVS
 Lorain County Urban League
 MAGNET
 Magnificat High School
 Manufacturing Works
 Mayfield City School District
 Medical Mutual of Ohio
 The MetroHealth System
 Miami University
 Midview Local School District
 Minds Matter of Cleveland
 Norman S. Minor Bar Association
 Moms First
 NASA Glenn Research Center
 National College Attainment Network
 National Scholarship Providers Association
 Neighborhood Connections
 Neighborhood Leadership Institute
 NEO Talent Exchange
 New Hope Fellowship Church
 NewBridge Cleveland
 Nordson Corporation
 North Olmsted High School
 Notre Dame College
 Oberlin College
 Ohio Association of Student Financial
 Aid Administrators
 Ohio Department of Education
 Ohio Department of Higher Education
 Ohio Means Jobs
 The Ohio State University
 Ohio University
 OhioGuidestone
 Olmsted Falls City School District
 Open Doors Academy
 Padua Franciscan High School
 Parma City School District
 Passages
 Playhouse Square
 PNC
 Polaris Career Center
 Promise Academy
 PwC
 Rocky River City School District
 Salvation Army
 Say Yes to Education Cleveland
 ServeOhio
 Shaker Heights City School District
 Solon City School District
 South Euclid-Lyndhurst City School District
 St. Edward High School

St. Ignatius High School
 St. Joseph Academy
 St. Martin de Porres High School
 Starting Point
 Summer on the Cuyahoga
 Summit Education Initiative
 Teach For America
 Team NEO
 The Sherwin-Williams Company
 Towards Employment
 Trinity High School
 U.S. Department of Education
 Union Home Mortgage
 United Way of Greater Cleveland
 United Way of Summit County Financial
 Empowerment Center
 University Circle Inc.
 University Hospitals Health System
 University of Akron
 University of Toledo
 University Settlement
 Urban League of Greater Cleveland
 Urban League of Lorain County
 Ursuline College
 Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School
 Wadsworth City School District
 Warrensville City School District
 Wellington Exempted Village
 School District
 Westfield Insurance Foundation
 WKYC
 Woman's Leadership Guild
 Women of Color Foundation
 YWCA Greater Cleveland
 Young Latino Network
 Youth Opportunities Unlimited
 True2U Youth Mentoring Program

Scholarship Partners

ACE Mentor Program
 Althans Scholarship Fund
 Suzanne Aral-Boutros Scholarship Fund
 Joseph Babin Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Barberton Community Foundation
 Robert Patrick Benko Scholarship Fund
 Jack W. & Shirley Berger Scholars of
 Promise Fund of the Jewish Federation
 of Cleveland
 Boodle Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Britton Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening
 Foundation Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Micki Byrnes Scholarship Fund
 Cambodian Scholarship for
 Excellence Fund
 Bill Christopher-Alcoa Leadership
 Scholarship Fund
 The Christopher Family Scholarship Fund

City of Cleveland Black History
 Scholarship Fund
 Cleveland Association of Phi Beta Kappa
 Cleveland Browns Foundation
 Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc.
 Cleveland Clinic Louis Stokes Scholars
 Scholarship Fund
 The Cleveland Foundation
 Cleveland Indians
 Cleveland War Memorial Scholarship Fund
 Roy and Willia Coleman Scholarship Fund
 College First Fund of the Cleveland
 Foundation
 The College Now Alumni Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Shirley and Robert Coplan Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Cuyahoga County Scholarship Fund
 Shiksha Daan Scholarship Fund
 Mary M. Doll Endowed Scholarship Fund
 East High Alumni Association
 Judith Embrescia Scholarship Fund
 Thomas J. and Judith Embrescia
 Scholarship Endowed Fund
 Trina Evans Scholarship Fund
 Even Cut Abrasive Company
 Richard J. Fassenmyer Foundation
 Scholarship Fund
 Charles and Francis Feiner Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Ferro Foundation Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Robert L. Fortney Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 General Electric Scholarship Fund
 Eleanor Gerson Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 David Goldston Scholarship Fund
 The George Gund Foundation
 Sondra and Stephen Hardis Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Dee Haslam Scholarship Fund
 Henkel Consumer Adhesives Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 George M. Humphrey Scholarship Fund
 Gilbert and Louise Ireland Humphrey
 Endowed Scholarship Fund
 The John Huntington Fund for Education
 David S. Inglis Endowed Scholarship Fund
 The Intown Club of Cleveland
 Scholarship Fund
 Mayor Frank G. Jackson-Levin College
 of Urban Affairs Scholarship
 Mayor Frank G. Jackson Scholarship Fund
 Charles and Margaret Jones
 Scholarship Fund
 Sharon Kearns Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Margaret A. Kennedy Endowed
 Scholarship Fund

KeyBank
 Kiwanis Scholarship Fund
 KnowledgeWorks Foundation
 Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Charles E. Kullik Scholarship Fund
 Laborers' International Union of
 North America, Local No. 894
 Marcia LaRiche Endowed Scholarship Fund
 Bobby R. Larkin, Sr. Charitable
 Association, Inc. Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
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 Scholarship Fund
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 Foundation
 Lowenthal Family Scholarship Fund
 Malone Family Scholarship
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 Bravitt Cola Manley Sr. Scholarship Fund
 Materion Corporation
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 Mather Endowed Scholarship Fund
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 F.M. Pritchard Fund of the Cleveland
 Foundation
 Florence Mackey Pritchard and P.J.
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 Cleveland Foundation
 Ann Pinkerton Ranney Scholarship Fund
 Raskind Family Scholarship Fund
 William Roberts Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Jane D. White Fund No. 2
 Scholarship Fund
 Walter Romansky Scholarship Fund
 Samuel Rosenthal Foundation Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Rotary Club of Cleveland
 Say Yes to Education Cleveland
 Robert J. Schneider Endowed
 Scholarship Fund

\$137 Million

**TOTAL ESTIMATED
 AMOUNT SAVED BY
 2,750 INDIVIDUALS WHO
 RECEIVED COLLEGE
 NOW'S STUDENT
 LOAN RESTRUCTURING
 SERVICES OVER THE
 LAST SEVEN YEARS**

The Scholarship for a New
 Generation Fund
 Fred E. Scholl Charitable Foundation
 Augie Schroeder Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Schroeder Family Scholarship Fund
 Ratner Miller Shafran Foundation
 The Sherwin-Williams Company
 Kent H. Smith Charitable Trust
 Solow Endowed Scholarship Fund
 The Stocker Foundation Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Ralph P. Stoddard Memorial Fund of the
 Cleveland Foundation
 Swagelok Advantage Scholarship Fund
 Swaminathan and Garg Foundation
 Scholarship Fund
 Swamy Family Scholarship Fund
 Teamsters Truck Drivers Union Local 407
 Greg and Suzanne Thaxton
 Scholarship Fund
 The Union Club Scholarship Fund
 University Hospitals Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Urban Squash Cleveland Scholarship Fund
 Visible Voice Scholarship Fund
 Ella M. Walz Memorial Fund of the
 Cleveland Foundation
 Waxman Family Scholarship Fund
 William M. Weiss Endowed
 Scholarship Fund
 Jane D. White Fund No. 2
 Scholarship Fund
 Thomas H. White Foundation
 Teresa Jane Williams Memorial Fund of
 the Cleveland Foundation
 Milton A. and Roslyn Z. Wolf
 Scholarship Fund
 Youth for Holiness Scholarship Fund

* deceased



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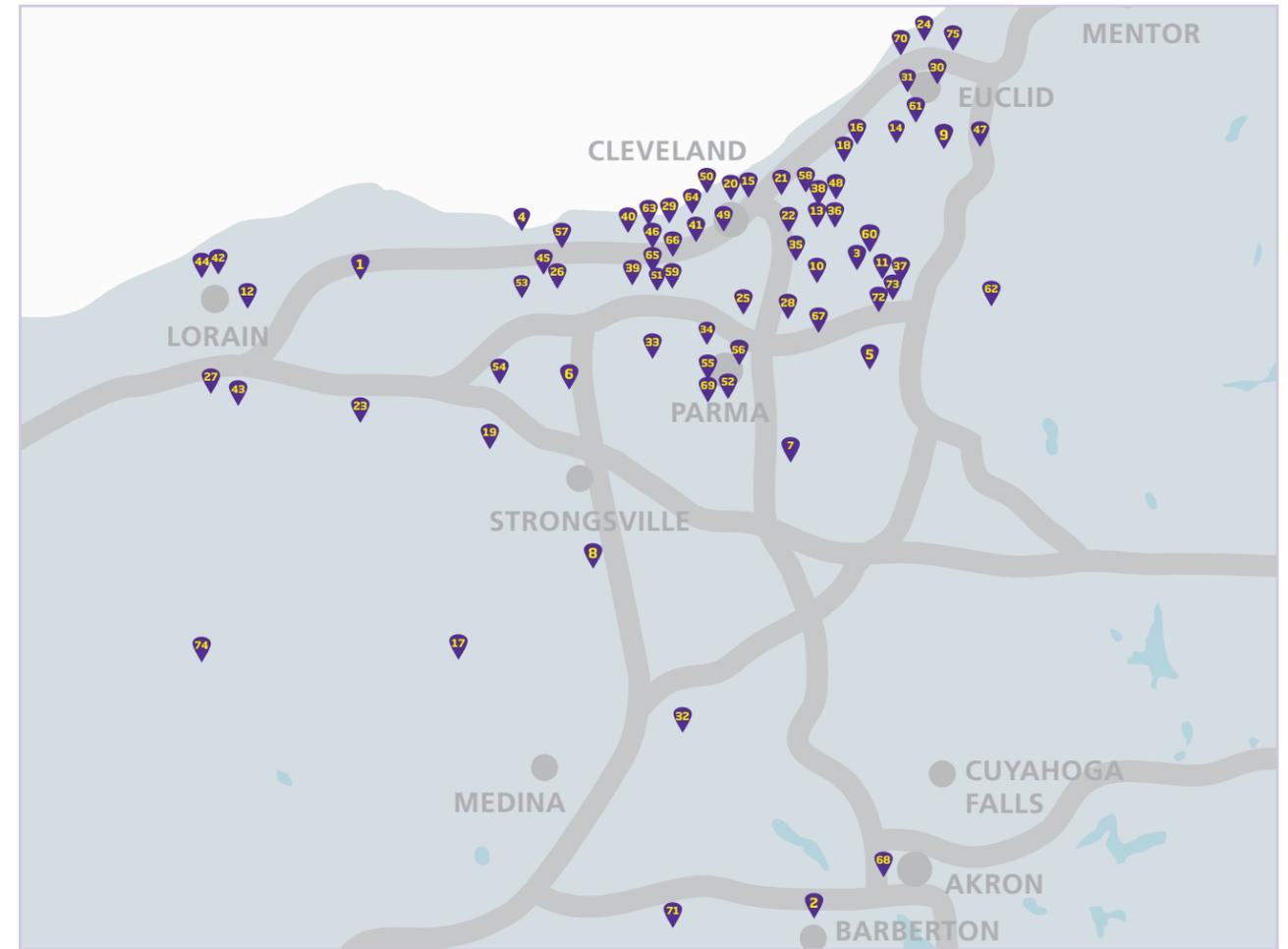
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 Andrew Watterson, blue csr strategies
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2020 COLLEGE NOW LOCATIONS

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 Avon High School | 25 Facing History New Tech High School | 50 MC2STEM-9th Grade |
| 2 Barberton Public Library | 26 Fairview Park High School | 51 New Tech West |
| 3 Bard High School Early College | 27 Firelands High School | 52 Normandy High School |
| 4 Bay High School | 28 Garfield Heights High School | 53 North Olmsted High School |
| 5 Bedford High School | 29 Garrett Morgan School of Science | 54 Olmsted Falls High School |
| 6 Berea-Midpark High School | 30 Ginn Academy | 55 Padua Franciscan High School |
| 7 Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School | 31 Glenville High School | 56 Parma Senior High School |
| 8 Brunswick High School | 32 Highland High School | 57 Rocky River High School |
| 9 Brush High School | 33 Holy Name High School | 58 Saint Martin de Porres High School |
| 10 Charles Dickens K-8 School | 34 James Ford Rhodes High School-3 Schools | 59 School of One |
| 11 Charles Eliot K-8 School | 35 Jane Addams Business Careers Academy | 60 Shaker Heights High School |
| 12 Clearview High School | 36 John Adams College & Career Academy | 61 Shaw High School (East Cleveland)* |
| 13 Cleveland Central Catholic High School | 37 John F. Kennedy/E3agle/PACT | 62 Solon High School |
| 14 Cleveland Heights High School | 38 John Hay High School-3 Schools | 63 St. Edward High School |
| 15 Cleveland High School for Digital Arts | 39 John Marshall High School-3 Schools | 64 St. Ignatius High School |
| 16 Cleveland School of the Arts | 40 Lakewood High School | 65 St. Joseph Academy |
| 17 Cloverleaf High School | 41 Lincoln-West High School-2 Schools | 66 Thomas Jefferson International Newcomers Academy |
| 18 Collinwood High School | 42 Longfellow Middle School | 67 Trinity High School |
| 19 Columbia High School | 43 Lorain County JVS | 68 University of Akron Resource Center |
| 20 Davis Aerospace & Maritime High School | 44 Lorain High School | 69 Valley Forge High School |
| 21 Design Lab Early College | 45 Magnificat High School | 70 Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School |
| 22 East Technical High School | 46 Max S. Hayes High School | 71 Wadsworth High School |
| 23 Elyria High School | 47 Mayfield High School | 72 Warrensville Heights High School |
| 24 Euclid High School | 48 MC2STEM-10th Grade | 73 Warrensville Heights Middle School |
| | 49 MC2STEM-11th and 12th Grades | 74 Wellington High School |
| | | 75 Wickliffe High School |

Please call 216.241.5587 for a community location near you.

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