
AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides Impact Evaluation

Submitted to

Bridget McFadden
Director, AmeriCorps at College Now Greater Cleveland
bmcfadden@collegenowgc.org



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By:
Tania Jarosewich, PhD



Hinckley, OH 44233
Tania@CenseoGroup.com

Douglas Clay, PhD



Table of Contents

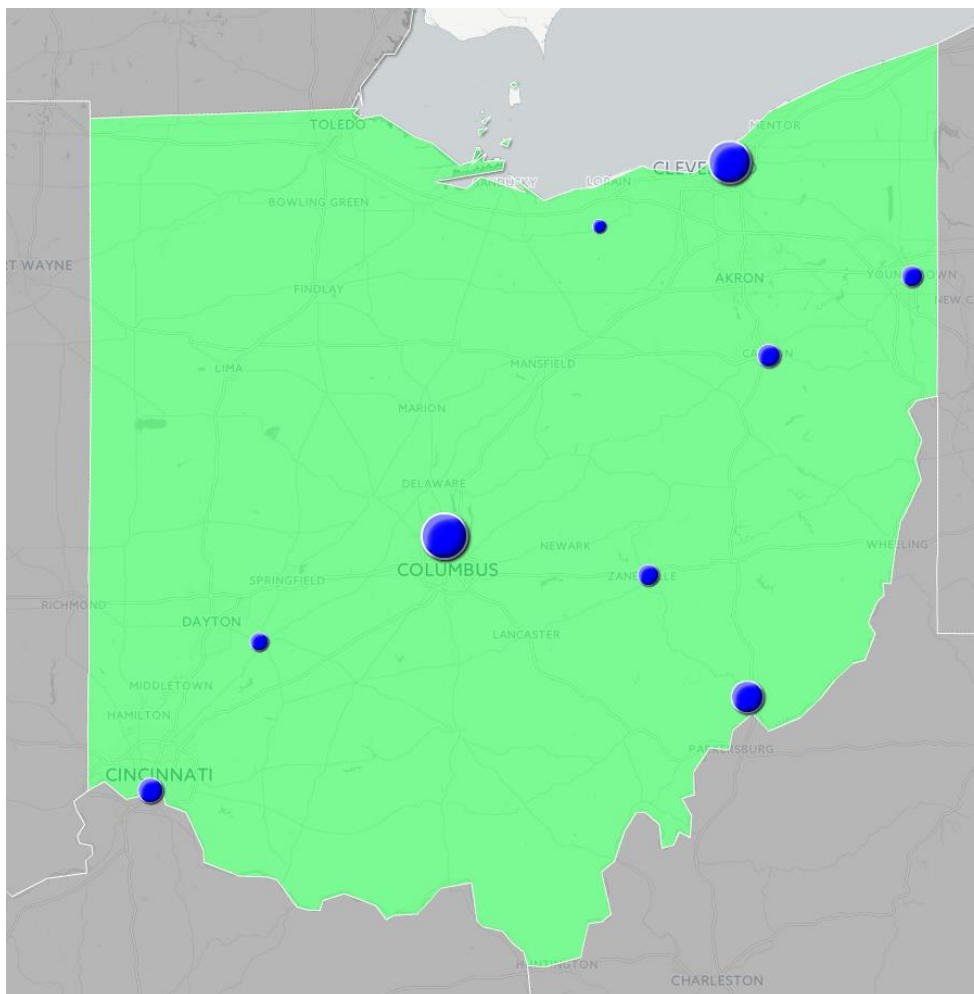
Introduction	1
Figure 1. Nine AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Sites.....	1
Evaluation Questions	2
Research Design.....	2
Comparison Districts	2
Table 1. AmeriCorps Sites and Comparison School Districts	3
Publicly-Available, School-Level, College Access and Completion Data	4
Program Descriptions.....	5
Student Survey.....	6
Data Analysis.....	6
Limitations	6
Timeline.....	6
Figure 2. Project Timeline	7
Results.....	7
Program Descriptions.....	7
Table 2. Descriptions of Service in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Sites.....	7
Outcome Measures.....	9
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Measures	10
Figure 3. Graduation, FAFSA, and College Enrollment Rates in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Sites.....	10
Figure 4. Graduation Rates in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide and Comparison Sites.....	11
Figure 5. FAFSA Completion Rates in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide and Comparison Sites	12
Figure 6. College Enrollment Rates in AmeriCorps College Guide and Comparison Sites	13
Statistically Significant Outcomes	14
Conclusion.....	14
Figure 7. AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Impact on FAFSA Completion and College Enrollment	14
Recommendations	15
Appendix A – AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides Logic Model	17
Appendix B – Data Tables	19

Introduction

AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency that supports national service in six areas, one of which is education. College Now Greater Cleveland manages and coordinates the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides program, which began in 2009 with 14 Ohio College Guides serving in three college access programs. During the 2015-2016 school year, 70 Ohio College Guides served in nine communities across the state (Figure 1).

The program serves schools with low graduation and low college-going rates, as well as with many students who are low-income, minority, or first-in their family to attend college. Ohio College Guides deliver college awareness and access programs, and counsel students in grades 6 through 12 to prepare for and navigate the college application process.¹ This report summarizes outcomes of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Program on completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form.

Figure 1. Nine AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Sites



¹ <https://ohiocollegeguides.wordpress.com/program-overview/>

Evaluation Questions

The AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides logic model (see Appendix A) identifies activities and expected outcomes in the three areas in which College Guides serve: early awareness (grades 6 through 10), access (grades 11 and 12), and persistence/completion of postsecondary degrees. This evaluation focuses on the access category of service.

The short-term goal of the access category is that a minimum of 7,000 served students complete at least one identified milestone along the path to postsecondary education. Examples of milestones include FAFSA, college entrance exam, attending a college fair, and conducting a college visit. The medium-term access outcome is that a minimum of 3,500 students complete at least two milestones, and the long-term outcome is that at least 2,100 served students enroll in a postsecondary institution after high school graduation.

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the impact of AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides on FAFSA completion. Completing a FAFSA is a critical milestone for students, particularly low-income students, to gain access to grants and loans to help pay college tuition. Historically, a large percentage of students in the AmeriCorps sites do not complete this step. The key evaluation question was: *Are students served by AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides more likely to complete the FAFSA?* The evaluation plan also included a second question – *are students served by AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides more likely to enroll in college after graduating high school than students in comparison schools?*

Research Design

The plan for the evaluation was to use a quasi-experimental design to compare the outcomes of students receiving AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide services (AmeriCorps sites) with outcomes of a matched group of students from similar districts who did not have the support of AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides (comparison schools). Since the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide program does not randomize participation or deny services to students, both of which are required for an experimental research design, the quasi-experimental matched pairs design was the most rigorous available. The student matching process would statistically control for differences in demographics and academic preparation and allow the evaluation team to make conclusions about the impact of services.

Comparison Districts

The evaluation team, in collaboration with College Now staff, selected a set of school districts to invite as comparison schools. The team used a tool on the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) website² to identify a set of similar districts (see Table 1) based on average daily membership (ADM), poverty as a percentage of ADM, percent of population with a college degree, and percent minority students.

² http://webapp2.ode.state.oh.us/similar_districts/Similar_Districts.asp

Table 1. AmeriCorps Sites and Comparison School Districts

AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Site	N*	Comparison District	N
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative	998	Dayton Public Schools and Toledo Public Schools**	2,219
College Now Greater Cleveland	2,402		
I Know I Can (Columbus)	2,692		
Mahoning Valley College Access Program (Youngstown)	663	Painesville, Mansfield	351
Connect to Success / Washington State Community College	1,564	Mt Vernon, Vermilion, Indian Creek, Gallia, Franklin	965
Ninde Scholars Program (Oberlin)	92	Liberty, Finneytown	208
Scholarship Central (Zanesville)	673	Lakeside, Sandusky, Sidney City, Whitehall	916
Stark Education Partnership	813	Fitch, Mansfield	541
Greene County College Success Partnership	450	Woodridge, Fitch	544

Note:

*students in graduating class

**DPS and TPS, the only “Big 8” districts that did not receive college access services from College Now Greater Cleveland, are comparisons for Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, College Now and I Know I Can.

The evaluation team anticipated obtaining FAFSA information from the Ohio FAFSA Completion Initiative, which was mandated in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Education’s FAFSA Completion Initiative. This initiative directed state agencies to create systems to share limited student-specific information with school districts and college access providers to support targeted assistance for FAFSA completion³. To address this initiative’s goals, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) partnered with the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network (MCOECN) and Battelle for Kids (BTK) to create a secure web portal through which to share FAFSA completion information. When the portal was completed in summer 2016, it became clear that in Ohio, as in 16 of the 39 states that created data sharing systems, only school districts could access data.⁴⁵ College access networks could only obtain student-level FAFSA completion data from school districts, not directly from the portal.

To solicit the participation of comparison school districts, AmeriCorps program staff contacted multiple staff in each potential comparison school district (e.g., superintendent, assessment and accountability

³ <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/secletter/140307.html>

⁴ <https://www.ohio-k12.help/fafsa/>

⁵ www.collegeaccess.org/FAFSACompletionInitiative

staff, district data managers, counselors) by email and telephone to introduce the project. The team prepared a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), identified the data that would be requested, and created timelines for providing data (e.g., on May 1, submit name/DOB of each 12th grade student). AmeriCorps staff created a list of services that they could provide to comparison schools in the school year following the completion of the evaluation (e.g., National Clearinghouse data analysis, FAFSA workshops) to support college access efforts in the comparison schools.

Concurrently, the evaluation team explored the possibility of collecting de-identified student-level FAFSA completion and college enrollment data directly from ODE. In order to obtain student demographic information; ACT participation and scores; and for the graduating class of 2015, not for earlier graduating classes, post-secondary enrollment data, the evaluation team would need the cooperation of school districts to obtain student identifiers (SSIDs).

Publically-Available, School-Level, College Access and Completion Data

Only one Ohio school district responded to the invitation by the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides to participate as a comparison school. However, the small school district did not have the capacity to provide the necessary data, and data from only one district was insufficient for a comprehensive comparison group. Further, not all of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites had data-sharing MOUs in place with their partner school districts to be able to obtain student-level data from the FAFSA Initiative Completion portal. Since student-level FAFSA completion rates for project and comparison schools could not be obtained from the Ohio FAFSA Completion Initiative Project, school districts, or ODE, as a solution the team identified publically available datasets that would provide school-level data for analysis for AmeriCorps sites and those schools selected for comparison.

FAFSA Completion. FAFSA completion numbers were obtained from a public dataset available from the website of the Federal Student Aid office of the United States Department of Education⁶. This dataset identifies the number of FAFSA forms submitted and completed by first-time filing applicants no older than 18 who would receive their high school diploma by the start of the school year in which they were applying for aid. The spreadsheet for each state or territory identifies the number of completed FAFSAs by name and city of the high school.

School FAFSA Completion Rate. The evaluation team downloaded a dataset from the ODE that identified the number of twelfth-grade students in each high school. The evaluation team divided the number of completed FAFSAs in each school from the federal data, by the number of twelfth-graders in each school from the ODE data. This calculation of the percentage of students in each high school who completed the FAFSA allows for comparison across schools.

Graduation Rate. Although there is no expectation that AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides will impact high school graduation rates, this variable is included in the analysis because it is a necessary precursor to college enrollment and provides information about schools' college-going culture. This data was obtained from the ODE.

⁶ <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/student/application-volume/fafsa-completion-high-school>

ACT Completion and Scores. Beginning with the 2013-2014 state school report cards, ODE began to report data about student performance on a set of *Prepared for Success*^{7,8} measures, behaviors that lead to postsecondary college enrollment. One of these indicators is ACT participation and another average ACT test score, both of which school districts report to the ODE through the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The percentage of students in the graduation cohort who took the assessment is calculated as the number of students who took the ACT divided by the number of students in that graduation cohort. The ODE also provides an average ACT score for each high school. AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides advise and help support student participation in ACT, therefore completion rates are included as an indicator of short-term AmeriCorps Ohio Guide outcomes.

ACT Remediation Free Scores. Another measure in the *Prepared for Success* category is the percentage of students who earned a score on the ACT that the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) has identified as indicating readiness for college-level coursework. The calculation on the school Report Card is the number of students in the graduation cohort who scored remediation-free on all components of the ACT divided by the number of students in that graduation cohort. Students who earned remediation free scores in all subjects across multiple administrations are considered remediation free even if they do not earn the required score within the same administration. Although there is no expectation that AmeriCorps Ohio Guides have a significant impact on ACT scores, the remediation free rate is considered an intervening variable for college enrollment and indicates the general level of preparation for college level classes in a high school.

Students Enrolling in Two-and Four-Year Colleges. The 2016 ODE School Report Card contains a new measure that reflects the percentage of students by high school and district who were enrolled in a two-or four-year college for at least 60 days within two years of high school graduation. This information is gathered through the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center⁹. The service of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides contributes to this outcome, which is also influenced by many other intervening variables, and is the ultimate long-term goal identified in the program logic model.

Program Descriptions

In collaboration with College Now staff, the evaluation team collected information from each AmeriCorps site about the services that AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides offer - the schools in which they serve, the percentage of high school seniors served, and how students are chosen for services. AmeriCorps sites reported the information during the 2015-2016 school year and reviewed and updated the information in fall 2016. Since comparison schools did not agree to participate, the evaluation team has only data from the AmeriCorps sites.

⁷ <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Prepared-for-Success-Component>

⁸ <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Prepared-for-Success-Measure/Technical-Documentation-Prep-for-Success.pdf.aspx>

⁹ <http://nscresearchcenter.org/>

Student Survey

Since comparison schools did not agree to participate in the evaluation, the survey component of the evaluation was not implemented. While a student survey simply from AmeriCorps sites may have provided interesting feedback, the lack of comparison data would not allow us to make concrete judgments about outcomes. Therefore, AmeriCorps stakeholders and the evaluation team chose instead to focus on securing outcome evaluation data.

Data Analysis

The evaluation team calculated average rates for each variable for each AmeriCorps site and comparison high school: FAFSA completion, graduation rate, percent of students taking the ACT, mean ACT score, percent of students scoring above the remediation measure (e.g., ready for college-level courses), and percent of the 2013 graduating class who enrolled in college within two years of graduation.

The evaluation team conducted regression analysis to explain variance in FAFSA completion and college enrollment rates.

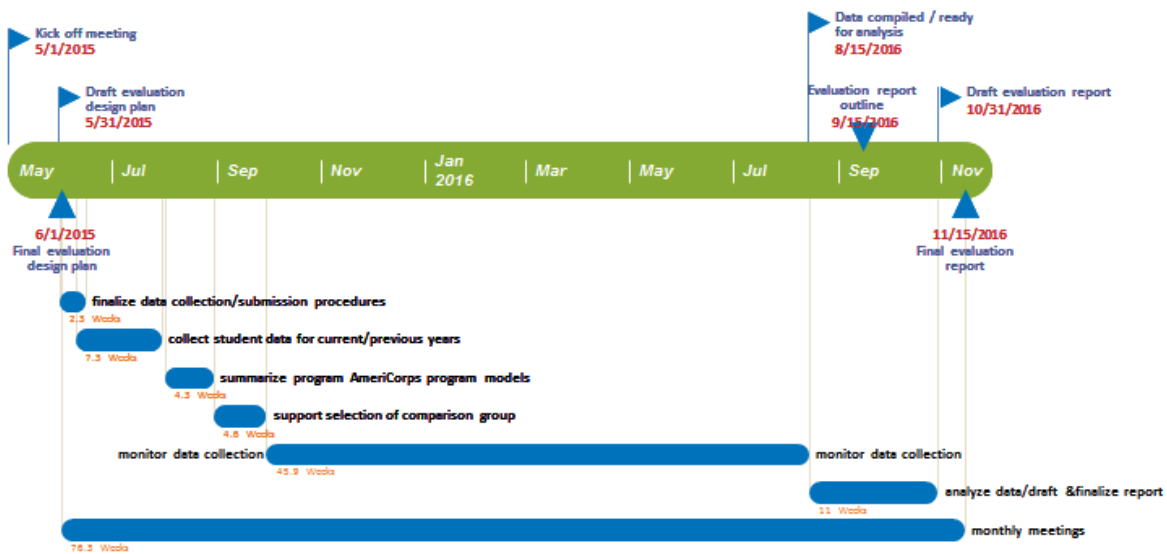
Limitations

1. Lack of student-level information hampered evaluators in conducting statistical analyses that could identify specific influences and outcomes of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide program. For example, the FAFSA completion rate is calculated for the entire school, not only for students who worked with an AmeriCorps College Guide to complete the application. Including students who did not receive direct services likely underestimates the impact of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides.
2. Because no comparison schools agreed to participate in the evaluation, the evaluation team was unable to collect information about the types of college access services available for students in these schools. It is likely that school counselors and other service providers assist students in these schools with FAFSA completion and college access activities. However, we do not know the extent of these services. Not accounting for this variable in the analysis likely underestimates the impact of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides.

Timeline

Figure 2 shows the timeline for evaluation activities. The project began May 2015 and extended through November 2016. The evaluation team met with College Now staff throughout the project to discuss progress of engaging comparison schools, review evaluation processes, and modify plans to take advantage of available data optimally.

Figure 2. Project Timeline



Results

Program Descriptions

Table 2 lists the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites, the number of College Guides at each site who served students in grade 12, the estimated number of grade 12 students served by Ohio College Guides, and the types of services provided. Of the 70 Ohio College Guides, 53 contributed some time to grade 12 students. Dividing the amount of time spent in these activities by the 1,700 hours required of fulltime members, the Guides devoted 39 Member Service Years (MSY) to this category of service.

Table 2. Descriptions of Service in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Sites

Cincinnati Youth Collaborative

- 9 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
- 382 grade 12 students served

Services: 18% of school in the district served using one-on-one advising, parent and student group sessions, classroom presentations, workshops, email, phone calls, and text message goal setting, to assist self-selected students with college and career information; college applications (e.g., research and essay-writing); planning, fundraising for, and chaperoning college visits; financial aid process; standardized test preparation (e.g., registration, tutoring); scholarship applications; and tutoring and mentoring.

Cincinnati Arts and Technology Center is not included in analysis because it is not a public school.

College Now Greater Cleveland

- 24 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
- 2,316 grade 12 students served

Services: 78% of CMSD schools (28 of 36) served through college visits, electronic communication, group advising/presentations, one-on-one advising, phone advising, special events, workshops for social service referral, Naviance, academic advising, graduation requirements, tutoring and homework help, career exploration, career search and selection, major search and selection, workplace / military / armed forces visits and job shadowing, internship /enrichment /after-school activities, resume assistance, job application, financial aid overview and consultation, College Now Scholarship application, scholarship and loan search and application assistance, college aid award letter assistance, FAFSA /SAR assistance, CSS Profile assistance, postsecondary application and essay assistance, postsecondary admissions, college fair and college rep visit, enrollment assistance, housing assistance, postsecondary admissions – general, postsecondary search, ACT overview, postsecondary entrance exams, ACT / PSAT / SAT registration, overview, registration, scores, prep.

Promise Academy is not included in the analysis because it is a charter school, not a public school.

I Know I Can (Columbus)

- 6 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
- 2,565 grade 12 students served

Services: 100% of Columbus City School students served through classroom presentations, workshops, and one-one advising for self-selected students. Services include college/career road mapping, parent engagement workshops, Naviance lessons, ACT/SAT waivers and registration, college application assistance, IKIC Grant/Save Smart applications, FAFSA nights, FASFA one-on-one support, scholarship searches, and financial literacy assistance.

Services also provided at Columbus Downtown HS, Columbus Global Academy (vocational, credit recovery) and Columbus Scioto 6-12 School. Data for these schools was not available.

Mahoning Valley College Access Program (Youngstown)

- 2 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
- 438 grade 12 students served

Services: college application, FAFSA, and ACT preparation

Connect to Success/Washington State Community College

- 1 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide
- 307 grade 12 students served

Services: emails, phone calls, presentations, workshops, and one-on-one advising to provide access, retention and college credit plus services to self-selected students. Services provided at the community college and high schools.

Services also provided at Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT), Ohio Virtual Academy, home school, Washington County Career Center. These data are not included because there was no indication of how services provided and Career Center data are reported by students' home school.

Ninde Scholars Program (Oberlin)

- 1 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide
- 92 grade 12 students served

Services: emails, phone calls, presentations, workshops, one-on-one advising for college application, FAFSA, ACT preparation, scholarships, college tours, career and job support in 50% of Oberlin City Schools.

Scholarship Central (Zanesville)

- 4 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
- 118 grade 12 students served

Services: access, financial aid, FAFSA, scholarship, and retention assistance to self-selected students at the school at resource center.

Services also provided at Mid-East Ohio Vocational School Zanesville Campus (90% of 338 students) and Buffalo Campus (95% of 109 students). These data are not included in analysis because data are reported by students' home school.

-
- **Stark Education Partnership**
 - 3 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
 - 468 grade 12 students served

Services: email, phone calls, presentations, workshops, and one-on-one advising to support college application, FAFSA, dual enrollment, and career exploration to self-selected students

Greene County College Success Partnership

- 2 AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
- 462 grade 12 students served

Services: presentations, one on one and group meetings for college application, FAFSA information and sign up, scholarship information, ACT/SAT registration and information to self-selected students.

Services also provided at Greene County Career Center (100% -232 students). Data not included in analysis because data are reported for students' home school not the career center.

Outcome Measures

The AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides, which provided 39 MSY, served approximately 6,000 grade 12 students across the state of Ohio – that is, on average, each MSY supported about 150 students with FAFSA completion, scholarship applications, college visits, financial aid discussions, and the other services identified by each site. These ratios were different among sites, but overall Ohio College Guide services were spread among a large number of students.

Descriptive statistics for the outcome measures are summarized in Table 3. The rates of success on all of the indicators under study in this evaluation for AmeriCorps and comparison sites are included in Appendix B.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Measures

	AmeriCorps Sites (N=79 sites)	Comparison Sites (N=29 sites)	Total (N=108 sites)
	Mean (Std Deviation)		
FAFSA rate	52% (0.17)	45% (0.14)	50% (0.16)
ACT Participation	60% (0.17)	49% (0.18)	57% (0.18)
ACT scores	18.3 (2.81)	19.6 (2.67)	18.6 (2.81)
% Remediation Free	11% (0.11)	15% (0.14)	12% (0.12)
Graduation rate	79% (0.14)	80% (0.13)	79% (0.14)
College enrollment	49% (0.18)	50% (0.14)	49% (0.17)

The high school graduation, FAFSA completion, and college enrollment rates in the nine AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites are shown in Figure 3. Overall, high school graduation rates were higher than were FAFSA completion and college enrollment. The rates of FAFSA completion and college enrollment were generally similar within a site, with variability among sites.

Figure 3. Graduation, FAFSA, and College Enrollment Rates in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Sites

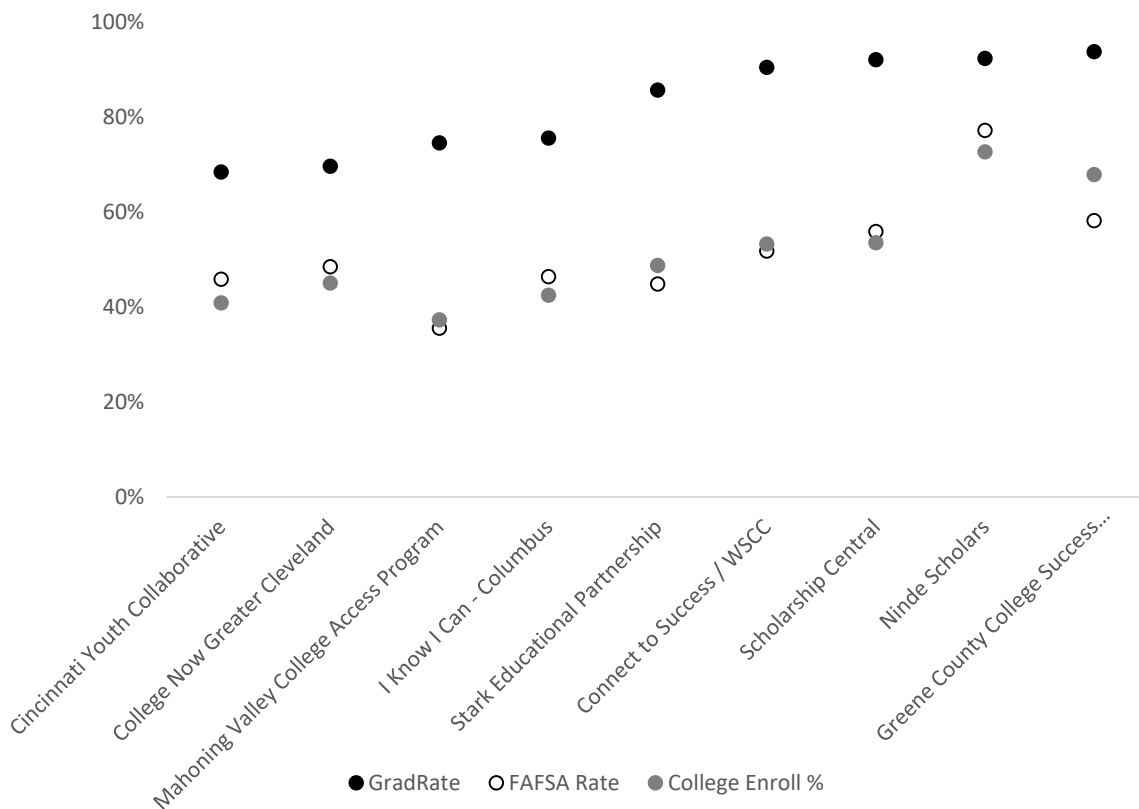
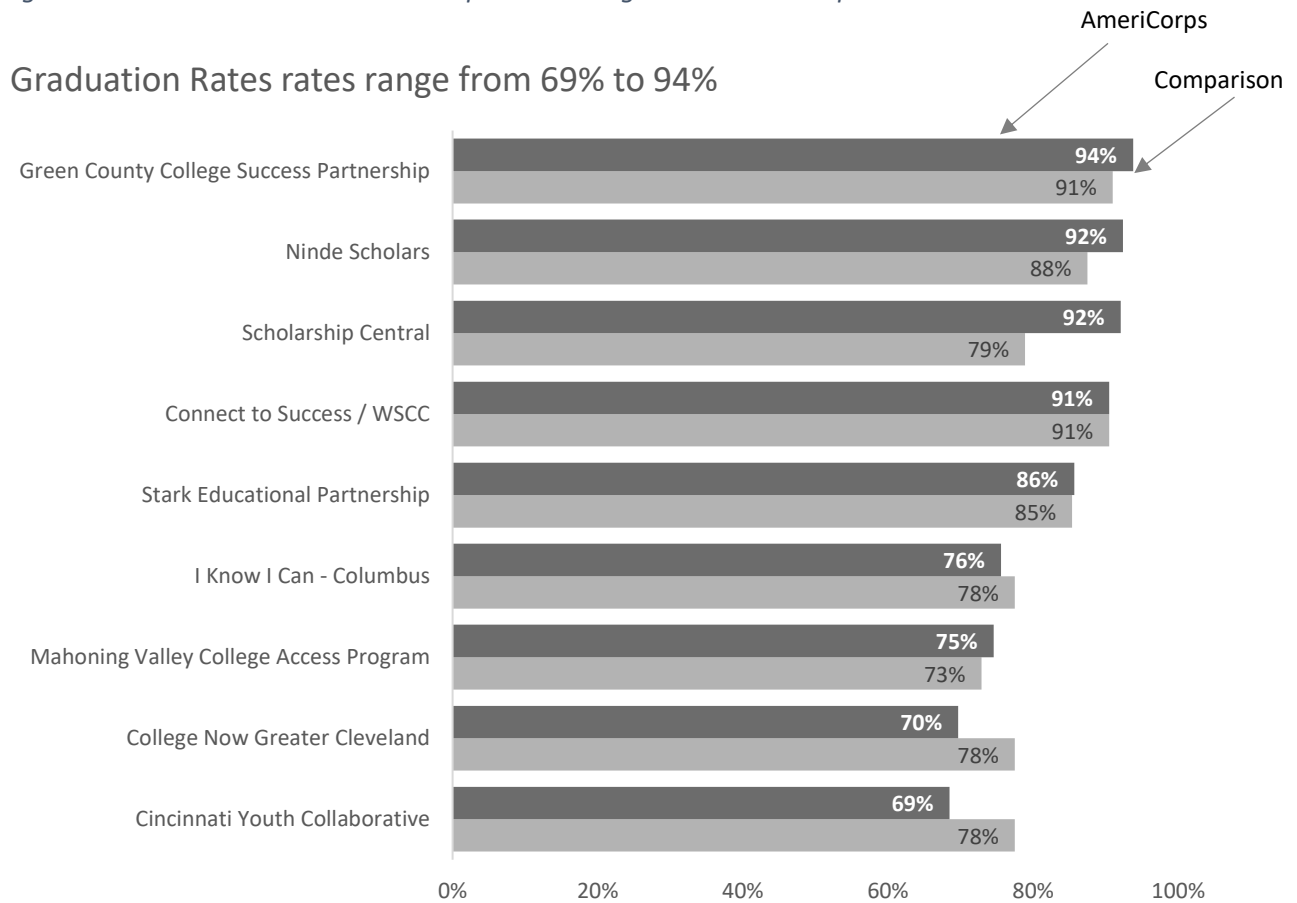


Figure 4 shows the overall graduation rates at each AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide site and the comparison group for that site. The graduation rates varied among the sites, with schools that Greene County served showing an average graduation rate of 94%, and schools that Cincinnati Youth Collaborate served an average graduation rate of 69%, the lowest of all sites. High school graduation is a critical, necessary precursor to college enrollment and has a significant impact on students' employability, lifetime earnings^{10,11}, health¹², and use of public assistance¹³.

Figure 4. Graduation Rates in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide and Comparison Sites



¹⁰ Mellville, Keith. (2006). The School Dropout Crisis. Retrieved from http://www.pew-partnership.org/pdf/dropout_overview.pdf.

¹¹ <http://education.seattlepi.com/effects-high-school-students-not-finishing-high-school-3118.html>

¹² Muennig, Peter. (October, 2000). Health Returns to Education Interventions Retrieved from devweb.tc.columbia.edu/manager/.../Files/81_Muennig_paper.ed.pdf.

¹³ Rumberger, Russell W., (January 24, 2012). America cannot afford a stiff price of a dropout nation. Retrieved from <http://toped.svefoundation.org/2012/01/24/america-cannot-afford-the-stiff-price-of-a-dropout-nation/>

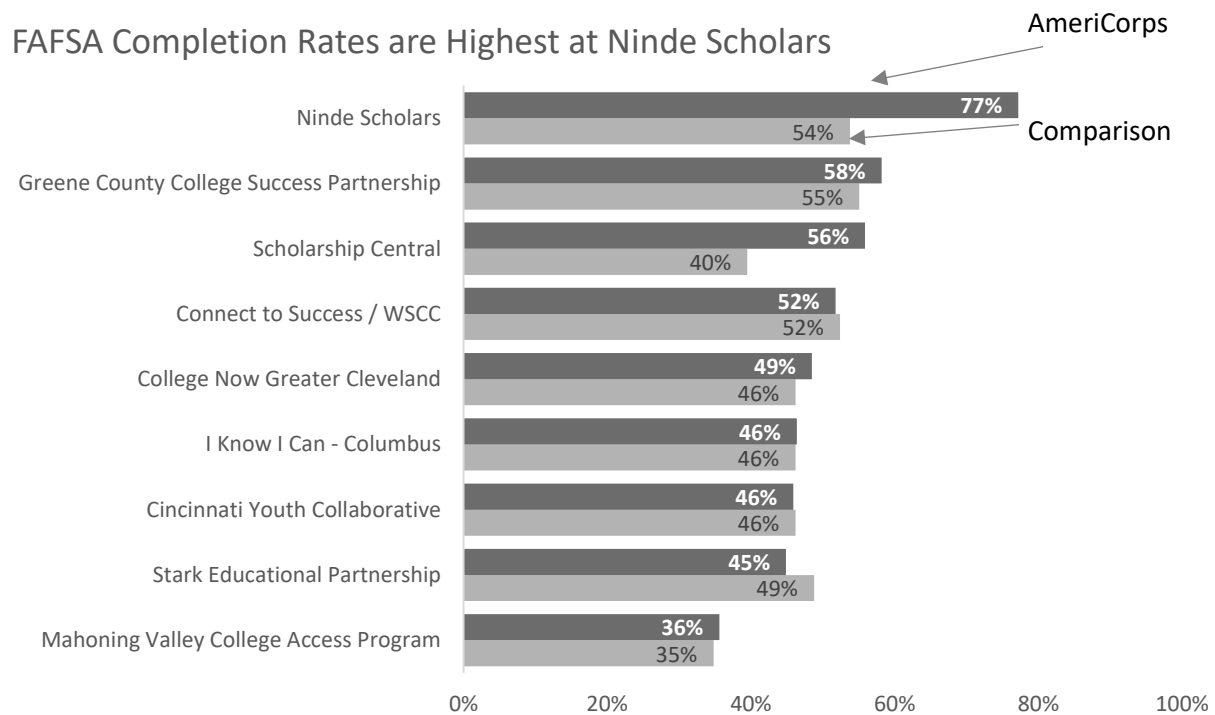
Another important variable in college enrollment, particularly for low-income students, is completing the FAFSA to access financial aid^{14,15}. Since students who do not graduate do not have the option to attend a postsecondary institution, it is not surprising that FAFSA completion rates are lower than graduation rates in the nine AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites (see Figure 5). Students who do not graduate high school, have no need to complete a FAFSA.

Among the nine AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites, FAFSA completion rates were highest at Ninde Scholars, with 77% of students at this site completing FAFSA forms. Ninde is the smallest site – serving under 100 students – and one that has a strong connection with Oberlin University, which is located in the community.

FAFSA completion at the other sites hovered around 45%-55%, with students in the Mahoning Valley having the lowest rate at 36%. For the most part, the rates in the comparison schools were similar to those at the AmeriCorps sites except at Ninde Scholars and Scholarship Central, at which the FAFSA completion rates were higher at the AmeriCorps site.

It is likely that Ohio College Guides need to use different strategies and face greater systemic challenges in schools with very low graduation and FAFSA participation rates. The culture in these schools, which includes the support of peers, parents, teachers, as well as other variables such as overall academic success, presents increased challenges.

Figure 5. FAFSA Completion Rates in AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide and Comparison Sites



¹⁴ <http://publications.nasfaa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=jsfa>

¹⁵ <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/JCA-FAFSA-Article-Jan-2016-Summer-Melt.pdf>

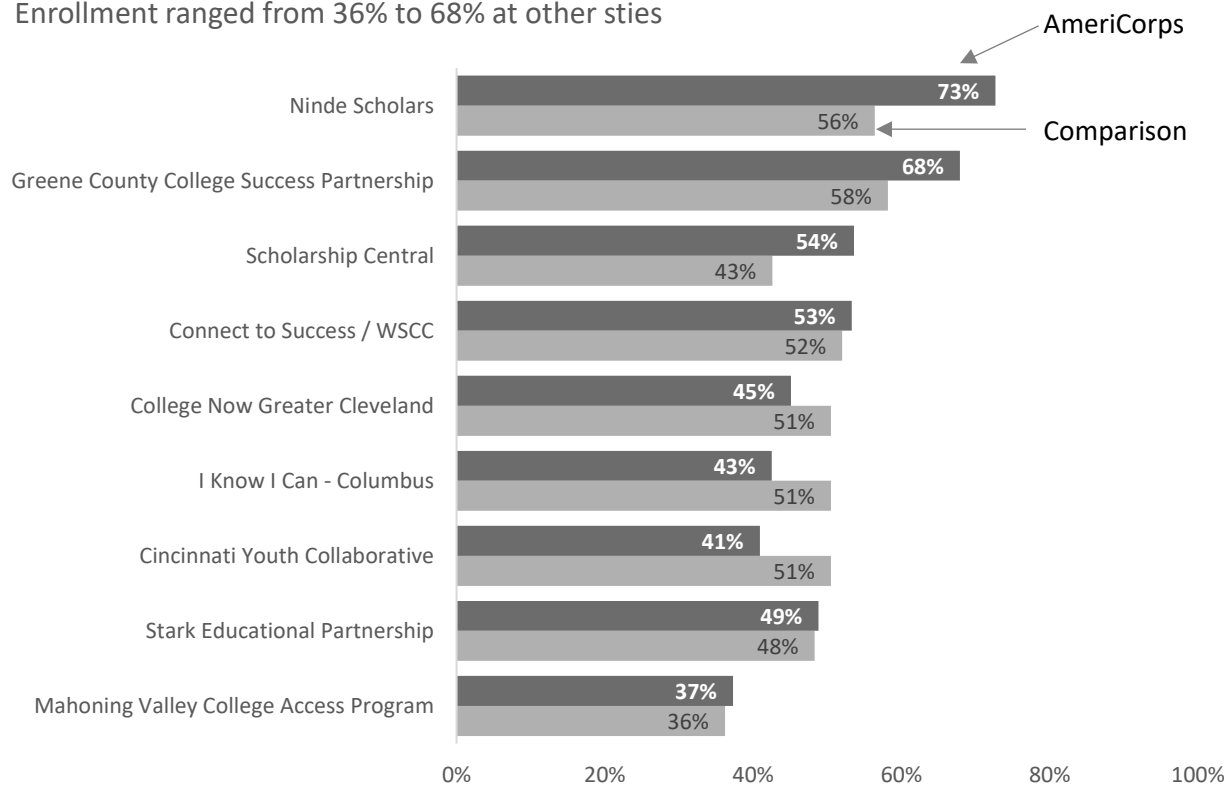
Nationally, in 2014, 74% of students who graduated from higher income, low minority, suburban schools enrolled in college immediately after high school graduation¹⁶. In schools in which over 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, which is generally the population served by AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides, college enrollment rates are lower. In 2014 an average 58% of students from these schools enrolled in college after high school graduation¹⁷.

Among the nine AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites, the highest college enrollment rate (see Figure 6) were at Ninde Scholars and Greene County, both of which had the highest graduation and FAFSA completion rates. The rates of college enrollment in these sites was higher than the national average for low-income students. College enrollment rates at Scholarship Central and Connect to Success were similar to the national rate for low-income students. Rates at the other sites were lower than the national average.

Figure 6. College Enrollment Rates in AmeriCorps College Guide and Comparison Sites

College Enrollment was highest at Ninde Scholars

Enrollment ranged from 36% to 68% at other sites



¹⁶ <https://nscresearchcenter.org/hsbenchmarks2015/>

¹⁷ <https://nscresearchcenter.org/hsbenchmarks2015/>

Statistically Significant Outcomes

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to compare the presence of an AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide and the other variables of interest on FAFSA completion. The presence of an AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide as well as the overall school graduation rates were statistically significantly related to FAFSA completion [F(6, 101) = 16.98, p = 0.00]. These two variables together accounted for 71% of the variance in FAFSA completion.

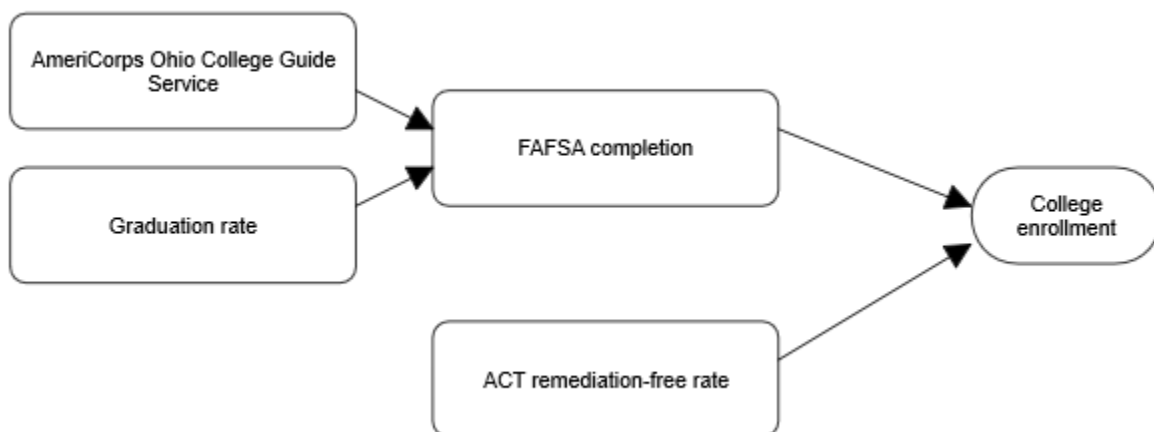
A second multiple regression analysis was conducted to measure the impact of the variables on college enrollment. In this case, only the FAFSA completion rate and remediation free ACT scores were statistically significantly related to enrollment [F(3, 104) = 93.34, p=.000]. That is, the percentage of students who completed the FAFSA and the percentage who scored remediation-free on the ACT were both significant predictors of college enrollment, accounting for 85% of the overall variance in this outcome measure.

Conclusion

In the 2015-2016 school year, fifty-three AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides provided services to support FAFSA completion, college application completion, college visits, and other activities related to postsecondary enrollment in nine sites across Ohio. These 53 college guides, 39 MSY, offered services to over 6,000 students in 79 schools. The percentage of grade 12 students served and the way in which AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides provided serves varied among schools.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the presence of an AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide had a significant positive impact on FAFSA completion, as did the overall high school graduation rate. The presence of AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides was indirectly related to postsecondary enrollment. AmeriCorps College Guides supported FAFSA completion, which, in addition to the rate of remediation-free ACT scores impacted college enrollment.

Figure 7. AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide Impact on FAFSA Completion and College Enrollment



These results are based on the 2015-2016 cohort of AmeriCorps College Guides. Each cohort serves for 11 months, and each year a new team is trained and deployed to the schools. Therefore, results could vary from year to year due to the relatively short-term of service.

This evaluation supports the assertion that in addition to information about the FAFSA, assistance in completing the application is an effective means of increasing FAFSA completion rates^{18,19}. In schools with high graduation rates, having the support of an AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide resulted in higher FAFSA completion rates. Through this support, AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides support college enrollment the fall after high school graduation.

The analysis likely underestimated the effects of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides on FAFSA completion and college enrollment because of the level of data available to the evaluation team. Analysis of student-level data (e.g., GPA, individual ACT, number of AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide guidance sessions), would have given the evaluation team the opportunity to apply a stronger research design that could have examined more fine-grained differences between the AmeriCorps and comparison sites, for example, using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) or other methods to analyze contributions of specific variables for specific students.

Recommendations

The evaluation team offers the following recommendations to support more rigorous evaluation in subsequent grant-funded efforts.

1. AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide sites are encouraged to have in place a data-sharing MOU with each school district in which they work to support more rigorous, student-level outcome analyses. A number of the current sites have these documents in place, but historically, data sharing agreements take a good deal of discussion and assurances to ensure data quality and secure delivery and storage.
2. Begin now to build relationships with school districts that could provide comparison data to show impact of the efforts of the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides. The team could apply the methods planned for the current evaluation – having ready sample MOUs, offering services after the completion of the study, and having clear data collection and analysis plans.
3. Fully account for potential costs of securing student-level data, which is complicated and can be costly. At the start of this current evaluation, the team counted on access to student-level FAFSA completion data from the Ohio FAFSA Completion project. When the site was completed, mid-evaluation, and it became clear that the data would be unavailable, the team was challenged to find alternate sources of data that would allow for the desired type and level of analyses.

¹⁸ <http://publications.nasfaa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1586&context=jsfa>

¹⁹ <http://publications.nasfaa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=jsfa>

4. The team is encouraged to pursue other types of evidence to show the impact. For example, case studies within one or more sites could help investigate the mechanism by which AmeriCorps College Guides impact FAFSA completion and college enrollment.

The team also recommends that the College Now team review possible additional, direct interventions to increase the direct impact of AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides on college enrollment. For example, addressing *summer melt*, that is the lack of enrollment in college of students who graduated on time, were accepted to college, and applied for financial aid. Research suggests that simple, low-cost interventions consist of individualized telephone or text messages to reach out to students during the summer after high school and throughout the first year of college can substantially impact enrollment and persistence.²⁰ Additional consideration should be given to mechanisms to involve parents, who are an essential element of the FAFSA completion process and attendance in a postsecondary institution in the fall after graduation.

²⁰ <http://publications.nasfaa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1586&context=jsfa>

Appendix A – AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides Logic Model

College Now Greater Cleveland AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides Logic Model Appendix A

Project Resources		Core Project Components		Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation		Evidence of Change	
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	OUTCOMES	
What we invest (# and type of AmeriCorps Members)	What we do	Direct products from program activities	Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions	Changes in behavior or action that result from participants' new knowledge	Meaningful changes, often in their condition or status in life		
<p>Early Awareness: Target population is low-income, potential first-generation college students in grades 6 - 10</p>							
48 full-time AmeriCorps Members - at least one from each of the 9 participating host sites - will devote a total of 39,270 direct service hours to these interventions (or the equivalent of 23 MSY)	Deliver Curriculum on: 1) College Exploration; 2) Career Exploration (i.e. interest inventory, career day); and 3) Financial Education Workshops (i.e. cost of college, importance of saving, correlation between income and education)	Number of unique students participating in one-on-one and group activities; Goal is serve 8,000 unique students; The duration of the interventions will be from September through May and the dosage per student will be an average of 4 advising activities; Outputs and outcomes measured using a common database and tracking tool across all sites.	Increase in knowledge of career and college opportunities; College Guides aim for 50% of students served - or 4,000 - to show an increase in their knowledge of career and college opportunities; Tracking tool is a pre-post test that will be utilized at all participating host sites.	Belief that a postsecondary education is a real possibility; recognition of college-going terminology; College Guides aim for 50% of students served - or 4,000 - to cite belief that they can achieve a postsecondary education; Tracking tool is a pre-post test that will be utilized at all participating host sites.	Postsecondary Enrollment		
<p>Access: Target population is low-income, potential first-generation college students in grades 11-12</p>							
48 full-time AmeriCorps Members at least one from each of the 9 participating host sites-will devote a total of 60,690 direct service hours to these interventions (or an equivalent of 36 MSY)	Delivery of Financial Planning & College Planning Interventions and Services	Number of unique students participating in one-on-one and group activities; Goal is serve 12,500 unique students; The duration of the interventions will be from September through May and the dosage per student will be an average of 4 advising activities; Outputs and outcomes measured using a common database and tracking tool across all sites.	Interest in further pursuing a path toward a postsecondary education evidenced by participating in one advising activity and meeting one milestone within one of the following areas: 1) Financial Planning (i.e. FAFSA forecaster, completion of FAFSA); 2) College Planning (i.e. entrance exam registration, college visit, attending a college fair) Measured using common data tracking tool. The College Guides aim for 7,000 students served to complete at least one milestone on their path to a postsecondary education.	The College Guides aim for 3,500 students served to complete at least two milestones on the path to a postsecondary education (i.e. application, FAFSA, entrance exam); Measured using common data tracking tool.	The College Guides goal is for at least 2,100 of students served to enroll in a postsecondary institution immediately following their high school graduation. The most accurate way to measure this is using the National Student Clearinghouse. Because this program ends in June and colleges do not post enrollment data until November, we will use student self-reported enrollment numbers to allow a report out during the grant timeframe. Clearinghouse data will be collected when it is available to compare to self-reported data.		

**College Now Greater Cleveland
AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides
Logic Model
Appendix A**

Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
Persistence & Completion: Target population is students perviously served by College Guide sites and needy adults in the service communities					
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
21 full-time AmeriCorps Members at least one from each of the nine participating host sites-will devote a total of 17,800, direct service hours to these interventions(equivalent to 11 MSY)	1) Delivery of Transition Services(i.e. Mentoring, First Term Success Course, Summer bridge/transition, orientation activities); 2) Delivery of services to remove financial barriers to persistence (i.e. FAFSA/FAFSA Renewal, SAR Interpretation, Verification, Scholarship Renewal)	Number of unique students participating in one-on-one and group activities; Goal is serve 3,000 unique students; The duration of the interventions will be from September through May and the dosage per student will be an average of 3 advising activities; Outputs and outcomes measured using a common database and tracking tool across all sites.	The College Guides goal is for 1,200 students served to complete one Transition Service(i.e. participation in bridge program, FAFSA renewal, verification, SAR interpretation, college orientation activity); Measured using common data tracking tool.	The College Guides goal is for 1,800 student served to persist from year 1 to year 2 of their postsecondary program or to complete their postsecondary program. Note: This will not be reported during the applicable grant year because measurement of persistence is delayed by one year. For example, a first year student's persistence can't be measured until the fall of his/her sophomore year. This data will be measured using the National Student Clearinghouse and will be used in our long-term program evaluation.	The College Guides goal is for 1,200 students served to continue persistence beyond year 2 or complete their postsecondary program. Continued persistence or completion of postsecondary program will be measured through National Student Clearinghouse. This outcome will not be reported during the applicable grant period but will be analyzed in our long-term program evaluation.

Appendix B – Data Tables

		% Complete	Graduation	% Took	ACT	% ACT / SAT	% Enrolled College
		FAF	Rat	ACT	Mean	Remediation Free	w/in 2 Years of Grad
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative							
Cincinnati	Aiken High School	37.5%	53.8%	47.6%	15	3.6%	35.8%
Cincinnati	Gilbert A. Dater High School	46.9%	69.5%	67.5%	18	10.1%	35.3%
Cincinnati	Hughes STEM High School	52.4%	74.5%	68.6%	16	3.8%	41.3%
Cincinnati	James N. Gamble Montessori High School	55.8%	76.7%	80.5%	18	6.1%	55.8%
Cincinnati	Oyler School	30.0%	45.7%	33.8%	17	3.4%	21.4%
Cincinnati	Riverview East Academy	31.4%	66.7%	47.0%	16	3.4%	29.3%
Cincinnati	Shroder Paideia High School	60.2%	79.5%	76.2%	17	4.6%	60.9%
Cincinnati	Withrow University High School	50.2%	80.0%	62.5%	16	3.9%	51.2%
Cincinnati	Woodward Career Technical High School	37.9%	54.2%	41.1%	15	0.6%	29.0%
	<i>District Totals</i>	45.9%	<i>68.5%</i>	<i>58.7%</i>	<i>16.3</i>	<i>4.2%</i>	40.9%
College Now Cleveland							
Cleveland	Cleveland Early College High	100.0%	100.0%	55.7%	23	27.8%	93.0%
Cleveland	Cleveland School of Architecture & Design	79.7%	100.0%	86.6%	19	12.7%	78.8%
Cleveland	Cleveland School of Science & Medicine	88.5%	100.0%	93.6%	22	35.1%	88.2%
Cleveland	Cleveland School Of The Arts High School	82.8%	100.0%	99.5%	19	14.8%	82.6%
Cleveland	Collinwood High School	45.9%	62.4%	61.7%	15	1.7%	39.4%
Cleveland	Design Lab @ Health Careers	63.6%	75.0%	75.3%	15	1.2%	66.7%
Cleveland	East Technical High School	37.9%	60.3%	52.8%	14	0.4%	23.9%
Cleveland	Garrett Morgan Schl Of Science School	50.6%	80.0%	75.6%	17	5.2%	34.3%
Cleveland	Ginn Academy	57.4%	94.4%	92.7%	15	1.0%	57.1%
Cleveland	Glenville High School	37.3%	61.4%	56.3%	15	1.7%	36.1%
Cleveland	James Ford Rhodes High School	42.4%	67.5%	67.6%	17	6.2%	43.5%
Cleveland	Jane Addams Business Careers High School	41.5%	69.8%	76.1%	15	0.9%	50.7%
Cleveland	John Adams High School	44.5%	65.5%	66.5%	15	1.2%	33.3%
Cleveland	John F Kennedy High School	33.8%	66.9%	66.4%	15	0.3%	35.1%
Cleveland	John Marshall High School	43.4%	67.3%	62.2%	16	3.8%	37.6%
Cleveland	Lincoln-West High School	34.3%	54.9%	49.2%	15	0.9%	27.5%
Cleveland	Max S Hayes High School	21.7%	56.5%	64.5%	15	0.9%	37.7%
Cleveland	MC^2 STEM High School	82.1%	92.3%	85.4%	18	10.9%	68.1%
Cleveland	New Technology HS@East Tech	57.1%	57.1%	75.5%	15	0.0%	26.3%
Cleveland	New Technology West	55.3%	72.3%	76.3%	17	5.2%	56.0%
Cleveland	SuccessTech Academy School	35.6%	62.2%	72.9%	15	2.1%	48.9%
Cleveland	Washington Park	48.3%	65.5%	65.4%	14	3.8%	38.0%
Cleveland	Whitney Young School	91.7%	100.0%	98.3%	22	37.3%	88.1%
	<i>District Totals</i>	48.5%	<i>70.8%</i>	<i>68.2%</i>	<i>16.2</i>	<i>5.5%</i>	45.1%
I Know I Can - Columbus							
Columbus	Beechcroft High School	46.8%	77.8%	46.8%	16	1.9%	47.9%
Columbus	Briggs High School	29.0%	63.7%	36.8%	17	3.7%	26.3%
Columbus	Centennial High School	63.2%	92.2%	72.1%	21	25.5%	69.4%
Columbus	Columbus Africentric Early College	63.1%	72.3%	65.3%	17	6.6%	45.2%
Columbus	Columbus Alternative High School	76.7%	94.0%	86.5%	23	43.4%	66.9%
Columbus	Columbus North International School	50.5%	84.2%	56.4%	18	7.6%	0.0%

		% Complete	Graduation	% Took	ACT	% ACT / SAT	% Enrolled College
		FAF	Rat	ACT	Mean	Remediation Free	w/in 2 Years of Grad
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative							
Columbus	East High School	41.4%	65.5%	37.6%	16	1.1%	42.5%
Columbus	Eastmoor Academy	65.4%	92.9%	79.9%	18	7.8%	60.1%
Columbus	Fort Hayes Arts and Academic HS	61.0%	87.9%	70.7%	18	5.4%	55.1%
Columbus	Independence High School	39.2%	68.0%	52.3%	16	1.5%	36.1%
Columbus	Linden-Mckinley STEM Academy	24.8%	50.5%	39.7%	15	1.5%	27.0%
Columbus	Marion-Franklin High School	38.8%	72.7%	49.6%	16	3.1%	27.8%
Columbus	Mifflin High School	38.0%	69.3%	39.6%	16	1.8%	43.0%
Columbus	Northland High School	50.2%	79.2%	54.6%	18	6.9%	50.6%
Columbus	South High School	45.7%	69.1%	46.8%	16	1.4%	29.8%
Columbus	Walnut Ridge High School	37.7%	70.5%	48.9%	16	1.9%	38.4%
Columbus	West High School	25.0%	56.5%	28.0%	17	2.6%	24.9%
Columbus	Whetstone High School	43.2%	79.1%	46.7%	21	14.8%	42.5%
	<i>District Totals</i>	46.4%	75.6%	53.1%	17.7	8.4%	42.5%
Mahoning Valley College Access Program							
Warren	Warren G Harding High School	41.7%	74.6%	51.5%	19	8.9%	39.9%
Youngstown	Chaney Campus VPA & STEM	55.9%	95.6%	75.0%	16	3.7%	44.2%
Youngstown	East High School	21.8%	69.0%	21.8%	16	0.2%	31.9%
	<i>Project Totals</i>	35.6%	74.6%	42.6%	17.6	5.1%	37.3%
Connect to Success / WSCC							
Belpre	Belpre High School	52.9%	89.7%	49.1%	21	16.6%	54.7%
Caldwell	Caldwell High School	58.3%	95.0%	59.4%	22	19.5%	57.4%
East Guernsey	Buckeye Trail High School	41.0%	91.4%	44.1%	22	16.4%	58.0%
Eastern	Eastern High School	47.3%	94.5%	54.5%	21	19.6%	74.6%
Federal Hocking	Federal Hocking High School	59.7%	89.6%	31.6%	20	4.5%	55.4%
Fort Frye	Fort Frye High School	42.9%	92.3%	46.5%	22	16.3%	49.4%
Marietta	Marietta High School	50.6%	87.0%	47.9%	22	21.5%	54.9%
Meigs	Meigs High School	43.7%	85.7%	34.0%	20	8.8%	46.0%
Morgan	Morgan High School	46.5%	88.4%	37.7%	21	13.4%	40.6%
Noble	Shenandoah High School	53.8%	92.3%	53.6%	20	14.6%	47.1%
Rolling Hills	Meadowbrook High School	38.4%	89.0%	45.0%	20	10.7%	40.1%
Southern	Southern High School	64.3%	91.1%	40.2%	19	6.5%	64.3%
Switzerland of Ohio	Monroe Central High School	97.5%	82.5%	66.7%	21	25.0%	80.9%
Switzerland of Ohio	River High School	89.5%	81.6%	59.7%	22	19.4%	66.7%
Warren	Warren High School	57.1%	95.6%	62.5%	22	27.5%	57.1%
Wolf Creek	Waterford High School	57.4%	92.6%	52.3%	21	20.7%	55.1%
	<i>Project Totals</i>	51.8%	90.0%	48.0%	21.1	16.8%	53.3%
Ninde Scholars							
Oberlin	Oberlin High School	77.2%	92.4%	62.7%	23	24.9%	72.7%
	<i>District Totals</i>	77.2%	92.4%	62.7%	23	24.9%	72.7%
Scholarship Central							
East Muskingum	John Glenn High School	58.7%	95.3%	67.7%	23	31.0%	63.0%
West Muskingum	West Muskingum High School	57.6%	94.4%	61.5%	22	26.1%	55.5%

		% Complete FAF	Graduation Rat	% Took ACT	ACT Mean	% ACT / SAT Remediation Free	% Enrolled College w/in 2 Years of Grad
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative							
Franklin	Philo High School	54.4%	94.1%	62.5%	21	25.1%	48.3%
Zanesville	Zanesville High School	54.1%	87.3%	60.4%	20	15.3%	50.2%
	<i>Project Totals</i>	55.9%	92.1%	62.8%	21.3	23.3%	53.6%
Stark Educational Partnership							
Alliance	Alliance High School	33.0%	83.0%	50.9%	19	10.9%	40.0%
Canton	McKinley High School	50.3%	86.2%	56.8%	19	12.8%	49.7%
Massillon	Washington High School	46.7%	87.0%	60.3%	20	16.7%	53.6%
	<i>Project Totals</i>	44.9%	85.7%	56.6%	19.4	13.7%	48.8%
Green County College Success Partnership							
Bellbrook-Sugar creek	Bellbrook High School	66.0%	98.0%	81.5%	25	56.1%	80.5%
Fairborn	Fairborn High School	52.2%	90.5%	54.3%	21	20.4%	58.1%
	<i>Project Totals</i>	58.2%	93.8%	66.2%	22.8	36.0%	67.9%
	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP TOTALS	51.7%	79.3%	59.6%	18.3	11.0%	49.0%
COMPARISON GROUP SCHOOLS							
Comparison Group for Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus							
Dayton	Belmont High School	26.0%	56.5%	40.6%	16	4.3%	32.2%
Dayton	David H. Ponitz Career Technology Center	65.5%	86.8%	63.1%	16	4.2%	68.1%
Dayton	Dunbar Early College High School	51.9%	74.8%	51.1%	15	0.9%	47.3%
Dayton	Meadowdale High School	37.5%	55.9%	30.9%	16	1.7%	33.8%
Dayton	Stivers School For The Arts	78.8%	91.2%	71.1%	20	21.5%	73.8%
Dayton	Thurgood Marshall High School	59.2%	73.9%	45.1%	16	2.4%	53.3%
	<i>District Totals</i>	53.6%	73.8%	50.9%	16.5	5.6%	52.2%
Toledo	Bowsher High School	44.4%	74.3%	45.0%	20	10.1%	48.5%
Toledo	Jesup W. Scott High School	22.0%	62.2%	33.2%	16	1.7%	41.9%
Toledo	Rogers High School	35.4%	76.4%	37.2%	17	3.0%	43.8%
Toledo	Start High School	42.9%	76.5%	44.9%	20	12.3%	43.8%
Toledo	Toledo Early College High School	31.8%	97.7%	96.2%	24	63.3%	84.2%
Toledo	Toledo Technology Academy High School	56.0%	92.0%	52.5%	22	24.6%	65.7%
Toledo	Waite High School	25.3%	58.4%	29.8%	18	3.6%	33.8%
Toledo	Woodward High School	23.5%	57.4%	25.3%	16	1.0%	27.3%
	<i>District Totals</i>	35.5%	71.0%	40.4%	18.7	9.0%	43.3%
Comparison Group for MVCAP							
Painesville	Harvey High School	31.6%	71.1%	18.8%	18	3.3%	32.8%
	<i>District Totals</i>	31.6%	71.1%	18.8%	18	3.3%	32.8%
Comparison Group for Connect to Success							
Mount Vernon	Mount Vernon High School	48.7%	87.8%	57.7%	24	34.3%	47.5%
Vermilion	Vermilion High School	57.6%	92.7%	52.5%	23	25.9%	53.1%
Indian Creek	Indian Creek High School	54.3%	85.5%	40.7%	22	18.3%	59.2%
Gallipolis	Gallia Academy High School	54.8%	92.4%	66.0%	22	31.4%	57.0%
Franklin	Franklin High School	49.2%	95.2%	48.4%	21	14.6%	46.6%

		% Complete	Graduation	% Took	ACT	% ACT / SAT	% Enrolled College
		FAF	Rat	ACT	Mean	Remediation Free	w/in 2 Years of Grad
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative							
	<i>Group Totals</i>	52.4%	90.5%	53.2%	22.6	25.6%	52.0%
Comparison Group for Oberlin							
Liberty	Liberty High School	56.4%	92.1%	73.1%	20	18.5%	56.8%
Finneytown	Finneytown Secondary Campus	51.4%	83.2%	73.7%	21	29.0%	56.0%
	<i>Group Totals</i>	53.8%	87.5%	73.4%	20.5	23.9%	56.4%
Comparison Group for Scholarship Central							
Ashtabula	Lakeside High School	36.2%	77.4%	42.4%	21	13.1%	40.5%
Mansfield	Mansfield Senior High School	38.4%	75.0%	32.6%	19	7.8%	40.0%
Sandusky	Sandusky High School	40.4%	77.9%	33.4%	20	10.0%	43.2%
Sidney	Sidney High School	38.7%	82.3%	37.1%	22	17.6%	44.9%
Whitehall	Whitehall Yearling High School	47.3%	81.3%	47.1%	19	10.8%	44.8%
	<i>Group Totals</i>	39.5%	78.9%	38.5%	20.5	12.5%	42.6%
Comparison Group for Stark Educational Partnership							
Austintown	Fitch High School	53.3%	89.9%	58.9%	21	20.1%	51.9%
	<i>Group Totals</i>	53.3%	89.9%	58.9%	21	20.1%	51.9%
Comparison Group for Green County							
Woodridge	Woodridge High School	59.3%	93.4%	78.9%	22	35.6%	72.4%
	<i>District Totals</i>	59.3%	93.4%	78.9%	22	35.6%	72.4%
CONTROL GROUP TOTALS		45.4%	79.7%	49.2%	19.6	15.3%	49.8%