

$$\frac{6}{15} = \frac{x}{x+d}$$

$$\frac{6}{15}(x+d) = x$$

$$\frac{6}{15}x + \frac{6}{15}d = x$$

$$\frac{6}{15}d = x - \frac{6}{15}x$$

$$\frac{6}{15}d = \frac{9}{15}x$$

$$\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{6}{15}\right) = \frac{dx}{dt}\left(\frac{9}{15}\right)$$

$$\frac{\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{6}{15}\right)}{\frac{9}{15}} = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

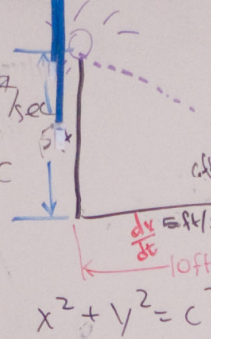
$$\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{2}{3}\right) = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

$$(5)\left(\frac{2}{3}\right) = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

$$(b) = \frac{10}{3} \text{ ft/sec} = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

$$15 \text{ ft/sec} + \frac{10}{3} \text{ ft/sec}$$

$$= 8.33 \text{ ft/sec}$$



$$\frac{d}{dt}[x^2] + \frac{d}{dt}[y^2] = \frac{d}{dt}[c^2]$$

$$2x\left(\frac{dx}{dt}\right) + 2y\left(\frac{dy}{dt}\right) = 0$$

$$-2x\left(\frac{dx}{dt}\right) = \frac{dy}{dt}$$

$$\frac{dy}{dt} = \frac{-2x\left(\frac{dx}{dt}\right)}{2y}$$

$$\frac{dy}{dt} = \frac{-x\left(\frac{dx}{dt}\right)}{y}$$

PATHWAY TO RECOVERY

IMPLEMENTING A BACK ON TRACK THROUGH COLLEGE MODEL

By Adria Steinberg and Cheryl Almeida

Revised January 2012

BACK ON TRACK

PATHWAYS THROUGH POSTSECONDARY



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Jobs for the Future identifies, develops, and promotes education and workforce strategies that expand opportunity for youth and adults who are struggling to advance in America today. In more than 200 communities across 43 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers. To assist its partners in this work, JFF offers a comprehensive range of services, tools, and resources to reengage youth who are off track to graduation or out of school and put them on a path to postsecondary success.

BACK ON TRACK

PATHWAYS THROUGH POSTSECONDARY



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Back on Track models are the next generation of alternative schools and programs, designed to prepare off-track and out-of-school youth for college and career success. Jobs for the Future has developed a *Back on Track* design that incorporates three phases: Enriched Preparation, Postsecondary Bridging, and First-year Supports. *Back on Track* schools and programs offer rich academic preparation and a clear path through college, supporting young people who have fallen off track from graduation or dropped out to reengage and achieve their postsecondary ambitions.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across the country, social entrepreneurs are refusing to give up on those who are most often written off: young people who leave high school without a diploma. At the same time, these innovators are demonstrating how dropout recovery can be part of national recovery as the country struggles to escape from recession. Trends point to continuing growth in the already large number of young adults who are most underrepresented in postsecondary education: low-income young people who too often are concentrated in low-performing, high-poverty schools that fail to graduate them or to prepare them adequately for further education or careers. Improving educational outcomes for this large and growing group is essential to economic recovery and long-term growth.

National youth-serving networks, low-income school districts, and community colleges are all on the front lines of helping disconnected youth gain the education and skills they need to contribute to a productive workforce and to rebuild our communities. This paper presents a *Back on Track Through College* model that innovators in these three sectors have begun to use to create aligned pathways through at least the first year of college. The model—which features enriched and accelerated academic preparation, postsecondary bridging, and first-year supports—is designed to create momentum toward postsecondary credits and credentials among young people who without such strategies would likely remain disconnected from both the educational and workforce systems.

Promising practices and results emerging from early implementers of this model are providing the spark that policy leaders and public and private investors can use to ignite large-scale change in programming and policies affecting this large group of young people. One such effort, the *Postsecondary Success Initiative*, was launched in 2008 as a collaboration of Jobs for the Future (JFF), YouthBuild USA, the National Youth Employment Coalition, and, as of 2011, the Corps Network with generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

and the Open Society Foundations. The first cohort of young people to go through the initiative are graduating from high school, enrolling in postsecondary education, and persisting in the first year at two to three times the rate of their peers.

Similarly, youth in district-sponsored *Back on Track* schools that focus on postsecondary readiness and provide supported bridge programming into postsecondary education are graduating at double or triple the rates of off-track students in regular high schools, and their postsecondary persistence rates are equally strong.

Significant implementation of the *Back on Track Through College* model would not only help many thousands of young people but also go a long way toward diminishing losses at key junctures along the education pipeline, reducing the subsequent drain on institutions and the economy. The entrepreneurial energy unleashed by the strategic, cross-sectorial partnerships being forged to offer *Back on Track* pathways suggests an innovative and potentially cost-effective solution to the challenges of helping low-income young people attain a meaningful credential and participate in economic recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Two years ago, Lashon Amado was a high school dropout. Today, he is a third-year student at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, well on his way to reaching his goal of a career in criminal justice. How did he get here?

In 2009, Lashon enrolled in YouthBuild Brockton, with his sights set on a GED and a paycheck. Through a partnership with Massasoit Community College, the YouthBuild program was an early implementer of a Back on Track Through College pathway that enabled him to attain more ambitious goals. While obtaining his GED, Lashon participated in classes at Massasoit. Then, with support from both YouthBuild and the college, he transitioned into a bridge program that set him on the path to completing an Associate's degree at Massasoit with a 3.8 GPA. From there, he transferred smoothly to the University of Massachusetts.

In a period of bleak economic projections, unease about the future, and growing dissatisfaction with the U.S. educational system, good news is too often overlooked. Yet it is by paying close attention to stories such as Lashon's—and to evidence-based strategies that are helping similar students beat the odds—that policymakers will find systemic solutions to help transform the lives of young people and improve the health of our nation.

Across the country, social entrepreneurs are refusing to give up on those who are most often written off—young people who leave high school without a diploma. From the boroughs of New York City to small towns in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, community-based organizations, school districts, and postsecondary institutions are piecing together what should and could be a widely recognized pathway to postsecondary success for these young adults. In effect, the innovators are demonstrating how dropout recovery can be part of national recovery, as young adults gain the education and skills to be contributing members of our workforce and an important force for rebuilding our communities.

Some of these efforts are local or regional; others are spearheaded by well-established national networks of community-based affiliates, such as YouthBuild USA, the National Youth Employment Coalition, and the Corps Network. Collectively, these efforts are demonstrating the dramatic improvement in postsecondary persistence that can be attained when the schools and/or community-based organizations (CBOs) that have helped young people complete a high school diploma or GED work in partnership with postsecondary institutions to support graduates' postsecondary attainment.

When these partnerships are deep and well-structured, the result is a smoother transition from secondary to postsecondary, a more intentional matching of students to “best bet” postsecondary programs, a more efficient delivery of academic and social supports, and a far greater likelihood that students will succeed. Through just such a pathway, young adults go from assumed membership in the “least likely to succeed” group to being well on their way to a postsecondary credential that can launch them to a productive adulthood.

This paper begins with a brief description of the economic, employment, education, and training challenges facing the nation. This provides the context within which we highlight the *Back on Track Through College*¹ model based on what is being learned on the ground by national networks, school districts, and postsecondary institutions in creating aligned pathways through a first year of postsecondary.

Finally, we look at the potential of these three sectors to spread *Back on Track* pathways. A companion paper, *Dropout Recovery Is National Recovery: How Federal Policies Can Support the Spread of Back on Track Through College Pathways*, focuses on public policies that would capitalize on the practice innovations described here and help spread the *Back on Track* model.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

THE ASPIRATION-ATTAINMENT GAP

Each year, another 1.2 million young people leave high school without a diploma (Alliance for Excellent Education 2010, 2007). While most of them aspire to complete high school, and in many cases to complete a college credential, far too few find a pathway that will help them attain those goals.

Young people who drop out may wait years to find a “second chance” opportunity, yet they persist in their search, with the result that 60 percent eventually get a high school credential, mostly through completing a GED. Many of these young people continue to a postsecondary program but far too few actually obtain a credential. After ten years, fewer than one in ten has earned a postsecondary credential (Almeida, Johnson, & Steinberg 2006).

Although these young adults are particularly forgotten and invisible, the aspiration-achievement gap they experience is only marginally worse than for millions more of their age and income group. Low-income young people understand only too well that postsecondary education has become the new high school. A recent Gallup Poll revealed that just short of 70 percent of U.S. adults believe that a postsecondary credential is essential to their economic prosperity.² And with good reason: Lifetime earnings correlate with educational attainment.

A person with an Associate’s degree can on average expect to earn \$700,000 more than a high school dropout over the course of their careers. Bachelor’s degree holders, on average, can expect to earn nearly one million dollars more than high school graduates (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah 2011).

Educational attainment also appears to be cushioning workers from the worst impacts of the current economic crisis, with unemployment hovering above 9 percent since 2009 into 2011.³ A snapshot of unemployment between August 2010 and August 2011 demonstrates that individuals with a high school diploma are two times more likely to be unemployed than those with a Bachelor’s degree and higher, and less likely to be employed than individuals with some college or an Associate’s degree.⁴

Not surprisingly, the aspirations of students have changed dramatically in recent decades, reflecting their keen understanding of new economic realities. From 1980 to 2002, the percentage of tenth graders who indicated they wanted to obtain a college degree doubled from 40 percent to 80 percent. These rising aspirations were shared across racial and ethnic groups, with the largest increases among low-income youth (Roderick 2006).

A GROWING SKILLS GAP

Labor market projections indicate that if the nation wants to regain its economic prowess, it will have to help young people realize their educational aspirations. The United States has a skills gap that is significant and growing. Nearly half of all job openings over the next decade (45 percent) are projected to require some postsecondary education and training. Another 33 percent will require a Bachelor’s degree or above (Holzer & Lerman 2009).

The fastest growing occupations are most often those associated with the highest proportion of jobs requiring postsecondary education (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl 2010). Economists have concluded that the demand for middle- and high-level skills will grow more rapidly than the supply over the next decade, both overall and within key sectors. In such a job market, even a one-year postsecondary credential will be a critical boost for a young person, especially if the career ladder from the entry-level job to more skilled and higher paid jobs in that sector is transparent.

Our country is unlikely to resolve its skill gap or rebuild its communities without addressing the large and growing population of low-income, underrepresented, and too often out-of-school young people. The number of low-income families is on the rise—they now represent the majority of public education students in the southern states, California, and New Mexico (Southern Education Foundation 2010)—and the bursting of the housing bubble has exponentially accelerated wealth inequality. The latter has disproportionately affected the financial well-being of racial and ethnic minority

communities and households, already overrepresented among the low-income population (Taylor et al. 2011).

At the same time, our school-age population is growing ever more diverse. Between 1972 and 2006, the percentage of public school students who were of racial or ethnic minorities increased from 22 to 43 percent (National Center Education Statistics 2008). Youth of color now represent the majority of public school students in two regions of the country—the West and South (Southern Education Foundation 2010). The rest of the nation will follow suit within the next decade or so.⁵

Low-income students, frequently young people of color, are typically concentrated in high-poverty schools and districts with stretched resources and an overreliance on inexperienced teachers (Balfanz et al. 2009). These schools are plagued by high failure rates and low numbers of graduates, producing many of the nation's dropouts.

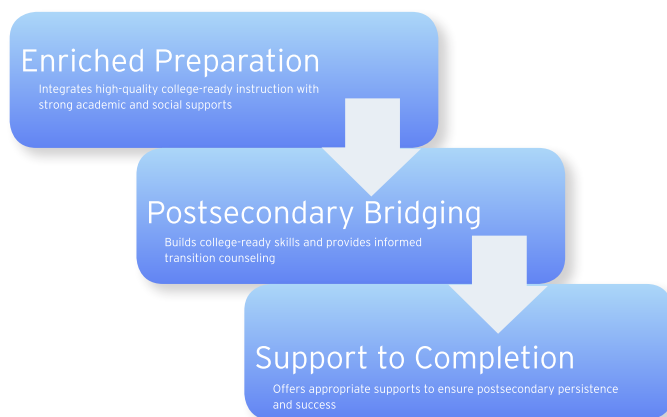
In the face of these economic and demographic realities, there is a growing recognition among educators, policymakers, and, in many localities, the public that a concentrated effort focused on this large, growing, historically neglected population is essential to the nation's economic well-being and the health of our communities. The time is ripe to look closely at small-scale efforts that are achieving promising results—and to design public and private investment strategies that will enable just this type of focused and intentional programming to succeed and grow.



TOWARD A NEW PATHWAY THROUGH POSTSECONDARY

The spread of a pathway to postsecondary credentials for low-income and disconnected youth and young adults holds the promise of changing the lives of many millions of Americans. At the same time, it can help bridge the skills gap that leaves so many employers struggling to fill middle-skill jobs. School districts, community colleges, and national networks with a history of serving low-income 16- to 26-year olds who have become disconnected from school and from work all can play a key role in spreading these pathways for our most vulnerable youth. When all three of these distinct sectors or systems are considered, the potential for scale is significant.

To help drive the growth and adoption of such a pathway by all of the relevant sectors and systems, JFF has developed a *Back on Track Through College* model that can be used in designing or enhancing both diploma-granting and GED programming. The model, which articulates three overlapping program phases and accompanying features, is designed to prepare off-track students and returning dropouts for the intensity of postsecondary academics, support their transition to postsecondary education, and ensure that they complete the critical first year of their postsecondary education:



The *Back on Track* model draws on lessons learned from the national networks of youth-serving programs, such as YouthBuild and the National Youth Employment Coalition, as well as from JFF's decade of work developing and scaling up early college high schools for low-income, first-generation college goers and from deep work on options for off-track students and former dropouts in Philadelphia; New York City; Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, Texas; and other school districts.

The challenge in developing and implementing the model was how to combine the academic acceleration and delivery efficiencies of strategic secondary-postsecondary partnerships—found in early college high schools and in college bridge programming—with the deep academic and social support, and youth leadership and development practices, found in the best YouthBuild and NYEC affiliated schools and programs. Such a model is especially important for young people who enter behind in credits and/or skills and who, because of prior school history, family, work, and other obligations, have only a short amount of time to complete a diploma or GED and move on to a postsecondary degree or credential. Through a prototyping process, JFF developed the three-phase *Back on Track* model to help guide and support schools, CBO programs, and their postsecondary partners as they create aligned pathways through the first year of college.

The end goal is for students to graduate from high school ready for college, while simultaneously building transparent and supported pathways into and through postsecondary education, whether at a two-year or a four-year college, or in an apprenticeship or training program with value in the labor market (see box, “*The Back on Track Model*,” on page 5 for examples).

THE BACK ON TRACK MODEL: EXAMPLES OF THE THREE PHASES

Programs use a number of strategies to enrich the preparation of students for postsecondary coursework.

- > **Portland YouthBuilders (PYB)**, a YouthBuild USA affiliate program, and its partner, **Portland Community College**, have collaborated to identify college-ready standards in mathematics, reading, and writing, and then modified program courses to embed these standards. Through extended instructional periods and interdisciplinary units of instruction with such high-interest themes as “social justice,” PYB faculty introduces students to literary analysis and research skills essential to success in college. In math, PYB staff members are continuing to work with the college’s faculty on mapping the curriculum to align with college preparation. The partners also track students’ progress in postsecondary bridging programs to determine whether further adjustments are needed during the enriched preparation phase of the *Back on Track* model.
- > **West Brooklyn Community High School**, a New York City Transfer School for over-aged and undercredited students, is a partnership between the NYC Department of Education and Good Shepherd Services. Three years ago, West Brooklyn initiated a College Culture Committee to focus on postsecondary awareness and planning across the school, and to assess how well its instructional strategies align with building college-ready skills and behaviors. As a result, staff saw the need for a more targeted focus on the development of high-level cognitive skills across all content areas. They developed a peer observation protocol that all teachers use to observe one another’s classes and provide feedback on the use of college-ready instructional strategies. In addition, staff plan and facilitate college and postsecondary planning activities during advisories called Community Leaders.

Through partnerships, many programs create a bridge to postsecondary for students by offering “skills for college success” courses, as well as through supported dual enrollment in developmental education, gatekeeper courses, and other courses.

- > **Improved Solutions for Urban Systems (ISUS)**, an affiliate of the National Youth Employment Coalition in Dayton Ohio, has created dropout recovery career and technical charter schools focused on in-demand careers—construction, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, and health care. Through an articulation agreement with **Sinclair Community College**, designated ISUS teachers can be certified as adjunct faculty to teach college-approved curricula leading to Associate’s degrees in health care and other selected fields. To support this postsecondary bridging, ISUS has lengthened the school day and school year. Once enrolled at Sinclair, students can also earn nationally recognized “stackable” industry credentials, Associate’s degrees, and apprenticeships.

Central to the efforts of many programs to provide first-year supports is the designation of staff at the secondary or postsecondary levels to “check in” with students regularly. The staff help students address emerging problems before they become crises and connect the youth with key academic and social supports.

- > New York City’s **College Access and Success** initiative brings together the New York City College of Technology (City Tech), Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Good Shepherd Services, and the Youth Development Institute. Each month, Cypress Hills, Good Shepherd, and City Tech staff—including the Provost, the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, academic advisors, and case managers—meet to discuss the progress of students in the program. At the meetings staff review data about student courses and performance, as well as qualitative information about students’ performance and lives. Discussions of individual students yield guidance on how to help each one, and staff members come to agreement on follow-up actions.

The collaboration across secondary and postsecondary institutions and community-based organizations is a critical feature of the *Back on Track Through College* model. Programs vary in how they implement distinct elements of each phase and the degree to which phases overlap in terms of timing, resources, and staffing, but the partners always share in the delivery of services. When designed strategically, such

partnerships are resulting in delivery efficiencies that make it possible for schools/programs and community colleges to provide low-income, underprepared students with the key services and supports they need to succeed in postsecondary education—and for less direct cost than the programs and community colleges would likely incur if they worked in isolation (see box below, “*The Quest for Efficiencies*”).

THE QUEST FOR EFFICIENCIES

By working together, community-based programs and postsecondary institutions accomplish what either partner alone would be hard-pressed to create: an efficient, seamless pathway to a postsecondary credential for low-income young people who are disconnected from school and work.

- > In Massachusetts, a partnership with **Massasoit Community College (MCC)** has enabled **YouthBuild Brockton** to add a focus on college-ready instruction, as well as to offer a supported dual enrollment class, taught by an MCC instructor. Shepherded by Mark Showan, executive director of YouthBuild Brockton, and Amanda Huggon-Mauretti, special programs coordinator at MCC, the partnership's graduates are well prepared to succeed in the postsecondary bridging program the college runs for high school and GED graduates.

MCC, like many community colleges, is enrolling a growing number of very underprepared young people who have to take developmental education courses before engaging in any college-level work. By establishing bridge programs and partnerships with organizations like YouthBuild, the college has gained a steady supply of motivated young adults who are better prepared for college, and many of them have continuing support from their sending programs. Among these supports, two YouthBuild staff check in on students regularly to help ensure they have what they need to succeed.

The scale of the bridge program and continuing support make it possible for Huggon-Mauretti to oversee the bridge programming, act as YouthBuild's liaison at the college, and serve as the academic advisor to all YouthBuild students after they complete the bridge program and enroll in the college.

Entrepreneurial school district and college leaders in areas with high dropout rates are also recognizing the value of teaming up to help former dropouts not just complete high school but also prepare for and move efficiently into postsecondary programs of study.

- > In a region of Texas with large numbers of 18- to 26-year olds who are disconnected from school and work, the **Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District** teamed up with **South Texas College** to create the **College, Career, and Technology Academy (CCTA)**, a college-connected dropout recovery school. CCTA's slogan exemplifies the goal the academy is designed to achieve: “You didn't graduate from high school? Start college today!”

For years, dropouts had shown up at South Texas College seeking to enroll and gain credentials, but entry required a high school diploma or GED. Thus, Dr. Shirley Reed, the founding president of the college, responded immediately when Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Superintendent Dr. Daniel King proposed a joint venture. Both knew a partnership was essential to creating a pathway through postsecondary for this large number of young people.

Registration for college courses, facilitated by staff from both South Texas College and CCTA, occurs when students enroll at the academy. Even while completing high school requirements, students can select from among a limited number of “mini-mesters”—shortened dual enrollment courses that include career-oriented certificate courses offered at the college. They can also take a College Success course that helps them develop study skills, explore career interests, and understand their options for high-payoff credentials. Dual enrollment courses are funded by the state, as specified in Texas legislation designed to improve college and career readiness.

SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

The spread of the *Back on Track Through College* model has begun, fueled by philanthropic and public investments in social innovation, as well as by the urge to “spread what works.” For example, the *Postsecondary Success Initiative* launched in 2008 as a collaboration of Jobs for the Future (JFF), YouthBuild USA, and the National Youth Employment Coalition, has leveraged the private and public funding to add an additional network (The Corps Network) and to grow from 15 to 34 sites across the country that are demonstrating it is possible to create momentum toward postsecondary credits and credentials among young people who are low income, mostly minority, and disconnected from both the educational and workforce systems. This work has fed a growing recognition that the challenges facing such young people are surmountable—with the right supports and programming.

Working with JFF, YouthBuild USA, NYEC, and the Corps Network are building on their long history of outreach and support for the country’s most vulnerable and neglected youth and young adults. They are helping local affiliated schools and community-based programs enrich their academic offerings, create bridges to postsecondary education, and collaborate with postsecondary partners to build supports to ensure that young people get the academic momentum they need to attain a postsecondary credential. Central to this effort are partnerships, codified in memoranda of understanding, between community colleges and local schools or programs (see *Appendix for the list of affiliate programs and their community college partners participating in the Postsecondary Success Initiative*).

Across the initiative, young people’s aspirational goals have become a reality for the first cohort of students: They are graduating from high school, enrolling in college, and persisting in the first year at two to three times the rate of their peers. The Brandeis University Center for Youth and Communities is conducting an evaluation that has already begun to yield very promising results.

For example, 71 percent of all students entering YouthBuild USA’s first cohort of *Postsecondary Success Initiative* sites earned a high school diploma or GED—even though over 90 percent of them had dropped out of previous schools and many were disconnected from both school and work. Of the graduates, 51 percent enrolled in postsecondary education and 59 percent of those persisted through their first year. Focusing on a subset of young people identified as *Postsecondary Success Initiative* students within their first cohort of sites (83 percent of these students had completed a diploma or GED), NYEC reports that 87 percent enrolled in postsecondary education, and approximately 75 percent persisted through a semester or more of postsecondary education.⁶

Ultimately, though, success in bringing the *Back on Track* model to statewide and national scale will require policies that encourage and reward strategic collaborations across secondary and postsecondary institutions and CBOs, remove barriers to collaboration, and create mutual accountability among these systems to effectively serve this population of young people (see box, “*Policies to Support the Scaling Up of Back on Track Through College Pathways*,” on page 8).

Significant spread of the *Back on Track* model would not only help many thousands of young people gain momentum into and through postsecondary. It would also go a long way toward diminishing losses at key junctures along the education pipeline and reducing the subsequent drain on institutions and the economy. Consider, for example, that dropouts spend on average at least two years in high school before they drop out (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison 2006). If the average per-pupil expenditure is \$10,297 per year (U.S. Department of Education 2011) and if the estimated 1.2 million students who drop out each year have spent two years in high school, the nation has “invested” \$24.7 billion in high schools that are not graduating these students.⁷

The skyrocketing costs of remediation in college—now estimated by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2011) at \$3.6 billion annually—are another key loss point that a *Back on Track* model could help address through a supported bridge into postsecondary education. Of the nearly 60 percent of community college students who enter underprepared and begin college by taking one or more developmental courses, fewer than one in four completes a certificate or a degree within eight years of enrolling (Bailey 2009). One reason community colleges are interested in partnering with national networks and school districts on a *Back on Track* model is the calculation of how much more cost effective it is if both sending and receiving institutions provide additional supports during the critical first year.⁸ More of such programming has the potential to dramatically improve postsecondary completion rates, currently standing at a dismal 30 percent nationally for community colleges (NCHEMS 2009).

If school districts, community colleges, and national networks of youth programs adopted key components of a *Back on Track Through College* pathway, it would set the stage for dramatically increasing the high school graduation rate (as well as the GED completion rate) of low-income disengaged youth. Just as important, it would lay the groundwork for an exponential increase in the percentage and number of young people who not only graduate but go on to earn a postsecondary credential with labor market value.

The entrepreneurial energy unleashed by successful initiatives deserves public recognition and support. The strategic, cross-sector partnerships being forged to offer a *Back on Track Through College* pathway suggest an innovative and potentially cost-effective solution to the challenges of helping low-income young people attain a meaningful credential and contribute to economic recovery.

POLICIES TO SUPPORT THE SCALING UP OF BACK ON TRACK THROUGH COLLEGE PATHWAYS

Creating the right policies and conditions for scaling up pathways that work and get disconnected youth back on track to earning college credentials is critical to our nation's economic health and recovery. Federal and national leaders and policymakers should:

- > **Invest in what works and spur innovation around successful models.** Two opportunities to do so are the reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Workforce Investment Act.
- > **Simplify eligibility, reporting, and blending of funds.** To identify and serve disconnected youth in ways that support their postsecondary attainment, it is critical to align requirements around data, reporting, eligibility, and uses of funds across federal, state, and private funding streams and programs that touch this group of young people.
- > **Promote and codify improvements to education accountability systems.** Accountability for graduation rates can spur and support districts and schools to focus on dropout prevention and recovery, and ensure that such efforts prepare young people for postsecondary success.
- > **Place a high priority on encouraging state and local partnerships.** Efforts to collectively develop, sustain, and scale up what works for disconnected youth should include incentives for employers and educational institutions to collaborate on college and career pathways, including apprenticeships for off-track and out-of-school youth.
- > **Use the bully pulpit.** Highlight programs, activities, and partnerships that show promising results in helping disconnected youth succeed in postsecondary education.

For more information, see the JFF policy brief: *Dropout Recovery Is National Recovery: How Federal Policies Can Support the Spread of Back on Track Through College Pathways*.

APPENDIX

POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS INITIATIVE SITES

	Community-based Partner	Community College Partner
YOUTHBUILD SITES		
Atlanta, GA	Metro Atlanta YouthBuild	Lincoln Community College
Austin, TX	American Youth Works	Austin Community College
Baltimore, MD	Civic Works	Baltimore City Community College
Bogalusa, LA	YouthBuild Bogalusa	Northshore Technical College
Brockton, MA	YouthBuild Brockton	Massasoit Community College
Cambridge, MA	YouthBuild Just-A-Start	Bunker Hill Community College
Columbus, OH	YouthBuild Columbus Community School	Columbus State Community College
Denver, CO	Mile High Youth Corps	Community College of Denver
Forrest Park, GA	Prevention PLUS	Atlanta Technical College and Clayton State University
Fresno, CA	YouthBuild Fresno	Fresno City College
Lennox, CA	Century Center for Economic Opportunity	El Camino College; Los Angeles Trade and Technical College
Los Angeles, CA	La Causa	UCLA
Madison, WI	Operation Fresh Start	Madison Area Technical College
McLean County, IL	YouthBuild McLean County	Atlanta Technical College
New York, NY	Abyssinian Development Corporation	City College of New York; State University of New York
Philadelphia, PA	YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School	Community College of Philadelphia
Portland, OR	Portland YouthBuilders	Portland Community College
Providence, RI	YouthBuild Providence	Community College of Rhode Island
St. Paul, MN	Guadalupe Alternative Programs	Inver Hills Community College
NATIONAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COALITION SITES		
Boston, MA	X-Cel Adult Education Services	Bunker Hill Community College
Brockton, MA	My TURN	Massasoit Community College
Dayton, OH	Improved Solutions for Urban Systems–ISUS	Sinclair Community College
Hartford, CT	Our Piece of the Pie	Capital Community College
Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles Conservation Corps	Los Angeles Trade and Technical College
New York, NY	Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services	CUNY Black Male Initiative
New York, NY	College Initiative	CUNY College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment
New York, NY	Youth Development Institute	N.Y.C. College of Technology
Portland, OR	Open Meadow	Portland Community College
San Francisco, CA	Larkin Street Youth Services	City College of San Francisco

ENDNOTES

¹ JFF uses a broad definition of “college” to include community colleges, technical colleges, four-year colleges, apprenticeships, and shorter-term career credential programs with labor market value.

² Poll from August 2011. For more information, see: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/149045/americans-college-essential-getting-good-job.aspx>

³ See: <http://www.bls.gov/cps>

⁴ See: <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/print.pl/news.release/empsit.t04.htm> Accessed October 6, 2011.

⁵ See: <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www.releases/archives/population/012496.html>

⁶ Because of the differences by which young people were tracked, the YouthBuild USA and NYEC data sets are not comparable. More than 90 percent of YouthBuild enrollees are former dropouts with an average age of 19 and average math and reading levels of sixth and seventh grade, respectively. The YouthBuild USA data, an aggregate across the seven local YouthBuild programs that comprised the first

Postsecondary Success Initiative cohort, tracks all enrolled students as they progress through the program. The NYEC data are an aggregate across eight local NYEC programs that each identified a subgroup of *Postsecondary Success Initiative* students within their broader cohort. In both cases, postsecondary education includes community colleges, technical colleges, four-year colleges, apprenticeships, and shorter-term career credential programs with labor market value.

⁷ The average per-pupil cost is for K-12 expenditures. The U.S. Department of Education does not disaggregate average per-pupil costs by school level. For more information, see: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=66>

⁸ Adelman’s 2006 research analysis using National Education Longitudinal Study data suggests that completion of at least 20 credits during the first year of college is a strong predictor of timely degree completion.

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