NATIONAL LEAGUE of CITIES | MUNICIPAL ACTION GUIDE

By Institute for Youth, Education and Families Staff

Using and Sharing Data to Improve Postsecondary Success

THE CHALLENGE

Recognizing the increasing importance of a skilled workforce to economic development, city leaders are playing pivotal new roles in efforts to increase the proportion of residents in their communities who attain postsecondary education degrees or credentials. A wealth of evidence indicates that further education beyond high school boosts employment opportunities and earning power, and a community's economic vitality is associated with its residents' level of educational attainment. In contrast, low rates of postsecondary completion – which are under 10 percent among low-income and minority populations in many cities – are associated with weaker tax bases, increased reliance on public benefits, and diminished public safety.

As part of a growing national effort to increase college completion rates, city leaders are forming new postsecondary success partnerships with school districts, colleges, universities, workforce development agencies, and other stakeholders. Access to reliable data on postsecondary enrollment and completion is a cornerstone of these promising initiatives.

Municipal leaders have only recently begun to examine credential completion data for their communities, and in a small but growing number of cities, they are balancing discussions of high school graduation and dropout rates with a new emphasis on postsecondary attainment. To measure and sustain progress in formulating solutions, policymakers not only need to understand the overall enrollment and completion picture, but also require a range of program- and system-level data on the contribution of various factors to low completion rates. In many locales, these data prove challenging to obtain and interpret.

This municipal action guide – the third in a three-part series supported by Lumina Foundation – offers a roadmap for gathering, using and sharing data on local students' postsecondary outcomes. Municipal leaders have the opportunity to integrate and contextualize the census and economic development data that cities have long monitored with data from schools, institutions of higher education, and support service providers. With appropriate analytical capacity, city leaders can work with other partners to understand baseline measures, assess the effectiveness of programs and credentialing pathways, set goals for improvement, and establish a framework for public reporting and accountability.

POLICY OVERVIEW

Often perceived by education stakeholders as a neutral convener, city officials can bring key leaders together to identify which entities are collecting relevant data, which data are shared across various federal, state, and local data systems, and which data will be most useful in guiding a citywide plan to increase college attainment.

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City officials can draw upon a number of national and state data sources to develop shared, community-wide databases of college success indicators. Local institutions of higher education make ongoing investments in data analysis capacity, typically gathering and analyzing data through an institutional research department. Similarly, school district research or accountability offices issue assessments of student progress at the request of numerous stakeholders and produce reports to comply with state and federal requirements. Yet K-12 and postsecondary systems do not necessarily share or compare data on overlapping groups of students.

The federal government also supports efforts to track student progress at different levels of the education system. In recent years, large federal investments have helped states establish, expand, or improve statewide longitudinal data systems, which typically house data on all students in a state from grades K-12 and increasingly from preschool through college. Another federal resource, the annual American Community Survey of the U.S. Census, provides geographical information on educational attainment.

At the postsecondary level, the National Student Clearinghouse – a nonprofit organization that works with school districts and higher education institutions – serves as a vital resource for tracking semester-to-semester enrollment rates of students. More than 96 percent of higher education institutions provide current enrollment and graduation data to the Clearinghouse, and many school districts subscribe to receive information in order to learn more about the educational experiences of their graduates after they leave high school.

In addition, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which is housed and maintained at the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, draws information from all institutions participating in federal student aid programs (see sidebar). Approximately 100 school districts now participate in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Project, which enables them to determine which students have completed a FAFSA and direct more youth to this key gateway to financial aid. Beyond those school districts participating in the FAFSA Completion Pilot, the federal government has recently created an online tool that allows high schools across the country to see their students' FAFSA completion rates (http://studentaid.ed.gov/about/data-center/student/application-volume/fafsa-completion-high-school).

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATA SOURCES

Local leaders can turn to a number of places for valuable information on postsecondary enrollment and completion patterns, including the following organizations:

- **Individual postsecondary institutions** (i.e., two-year and four-year colleges and public, independent, proprietary and tribal institutions) have a long history of collecting individual student data to inform their internal management and accountability practices. Multiple organizing and governance structures also support higher education within and across states, including institutional systems, coordinating or governing bodies, and state agencies.

- **The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC),** a nonprofit organization, maintains a comprehensive electronic registry of student records that includes student enrollment, degree and loan data but does not include any course-level data. More than 3,300 colleges and hundreds of local school districts participate in the clearinghouse. NSC data enable states to track the progress of many students who pursue postsecondary education in another state.

- **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)** is a system of interrelated annual surveys of more than 6,700 research universities, state colleges and universities, private religious and liberal arts colleges, for-profit institutions, community and technical colleges, non-degree-granting institutions, and other institutions. IPEDS collects institutional-level data in seven areas: institutional characteristics, institutional prices, enrollment, student financial aid, degrees and certificates conferred, student persistence and success, and institutional human and fiscal resources. IPEDS does not currently collect student-level data, but most institutions are able to report to IPEDS by aggregating the student-level data collected and maintained at each institution.

Protecting student and family privacy constitutes a major focus of federal, state, and local education data policy. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) applies to all schools that receive funds under programs of the U.S. Department of Education. Parents retain rights to their children's education records, and these rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a postsecondary institution. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. In some cases, institutions secure this permission through a signed release form in order to permit research and data sharing.

STRATEGIES

City leaders and their partners can take a number of steps to collect and use information about student enrollment, persistence, and completion in order to understand baseline rates of postsecondary success, set goals, identify and assess existing supports for students, develop responsive action plans to strengthen those supports, and track progress. Key data strategies include:

- Identify educational institutions and other entities that are collecting important information and encourage them to share data that can inform baseline estimates and facilitate performance measurement. Taking a data-driven approach initially requires understanding which agencies already gather data on college readiness and completion, which entities have the capacity to analyze these data, and the extent to which key institutions are already sharing data with each other. Based on this knowledge, municipal leaders can play key roles in commissioning or advocating for local data analyses that help them be more strategic in their approach to postsecondary success. City officials can also advance discussions on how to remove barriers to sharing data that impede access to needed information.

- Compare data on local postsecondary success rates with information from other cities to understand the scope of the challenge and make the case for action. While identifying baseline figures helps establish a common starting point, city leaders may also want to use this information as a benchmarking tool to compare local enrollment and completion rates with those of similar cities as well as state and national averages.

- Advocate for ambitious goals and connect them to local economic development aspirations. Municipal leaders' unique ability to attract the public's attention can raise the visibility of the city's college access and success agenda. Once city leaders and their partners establish clear, measurable goals, accountability depends on reporting progress toward those goals to the public on at least an annual basis. Setting specific goals also helps city leaders and other stakeholders prioritize action steps for improving completion rates.

- Engage postsecondary institutions, research organizations, and other key players with the capacity to serve as lead data partners. Individual school districts, postsecondary institutions, city agencies, and community-based organizations often do not have the capacity to create a "data warehouse" that can link and store data shared by multiple agencies or to analyze the data in a nimble way. Universities and research organizations may be in a better position to build that capacity. In addition, independent research organizations may be perceived as neutral parties – without an institutional agenda – and this positioning may be helpful in overcoming the reluctance of local partners to share their data.

ACTION STEPS

Working in concert with local educational institutions, community-based organizations, employers, and workforce development partners, city leaders seeking to use data more effectively to improve postsecondary success rates should consider the following steps:

1. CONDUCT AN INVENTORY OF KEY DATA RESOURCES, EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL DATA CAPACITY AND FACILITATE DATA SHARING.

Because multiple local institutions may already collect and analyze important data, city leaders can first take an inventory of data resources and data sharing partnerships. It helps to know what information is available from school districts, colleges and universities, and the National Student Clearinghouse, which constitute three key sources of data. Through focus group, surveys and town hall meetings, city leaders can also gain qualitative information on the perceptions and experiences of students, parents, and other residents related to college access and success. Some key questions municipal leaders could ask as part of a data inventory include:

- Do individual school districts and postsecondary institutions currently issue regular, public reports – or have they conducted other analyses – on high school graduation rates or college enrollment, persistence, and completion? Do the reports analyze information by population groups or neighborhoods?

- Do all local school districts and postsecondary institutions already subscribe to the National Student Clearinghouse? If so, how do they currently use information they receive from the Clearinghouse?

- Have local K-12 school districts and community colleges or universities entered into data sharing agreements, and if so, what data do they share and how often? What barriers, if any, have stood in the way of sharing data?

WHAT QUESTIONS CAN CITIES ANSWER THROUGH DATA SHARING PARTNERSHIPS?

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) has identified a common set of data that capture students' progress through the education pipeline at three key transition points: high school readiness, high school success/postsecondary readiness, and postsecondary and workforce success. By linking postsecondary and workforce data systems, state and local policymakers can address policy issues such as:

- What proportion of students who have jobs are successful in attaining college degrees or credentials?

- What percentage of first-time college students leave school and enter the workforce prior to completing a credential? Do they return to college and complete their credential?

- What are the employment opportunities and training needs of the current workforce and are those needs being met?

Additionally, by linking K-12 and postsecondary data, local policymakers can begin answering other key policy questions, including:

- Is there a correlation between enrollment in specific high school courses and patterns of subsequent college access, college remediation, and college success?

- Is there a correlation between student results on high school assessments and college access, college remediation, and college success?

- How do dual credit and Advanced Placement programs affect students' college enrollment, retention, and time to degree?

- What percentage of students who go on to college are prepared for college-level courses?

DQC cautions that, "These questions are by no means comprehensive and are meant to be a starting point for conversation. [Cities] should work with key stakeholders to identify additional questions that would address their specific needs."

Source: *Adapted from the Data Quality Campaign*, www.dataqualitycampaign.org/build/issues/PS

- Do any local research organizations or university research departments regularly analyze college enrollment, persistence, and completion data? If so, for which schools and populations and how often?

- What additional data do local school districts and others obtain from the statewide longitudinal data system?

- Have any data been collected on the perceptions among students, parents, or community members regarding current rates of postsecondary completion, and access to college?

Depending upon the answers to these questions, municipal leaders may encourage educational institutions to enter into data sharing agreements, and may also want to leverage local resources that can provide data analyses. For example, citywide initiatives in Chicago, Ill., and Dayton, Ohio, have tapped the research capacity of consortia of higher education institutions to answer questions about students' educational status and progress.

2. DETERMINE BASELINE MEASURES OF POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS.

In order to better understand the status quo, municipal leaders can lead efforts to determine baseline measures of local college entrance, persistence, and completion rates. Whereas this process may sound simple, it typically requires significant discussion among data experts and institutional leaders to arrive at a common definition of the baseline – and an agreed-upon strategy for making information about those baseline figures public.

Experts in the field generally consider the following indicators to be essential starting points for understanding the overall state of a community's postsecondary educational pipeline:

- The four-year adjusted cohort high school graduation rate;

- The college enrollment rate of students within one year of high school graduation; and

- The proportion of these students who complete an associate's degree within three years or a bachelor's degree within six years of initial enrollment.

While school districts are now required to report their four-year cohort graduation rates, data on college enrollment and completion rates of local high school students are more difficult to access and typically require a partnership between school districts and the National Student Clearinghouse. Data on completion rates of all students who attend local colleges and universities should be available from the institutions themselves.

For further detail on students' progress through the educational pipeline, some local partnerships on postsecondary success have collected information on more specific indicators, such as:

- The percentage of high school students completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);

- The percentage of high school students taking college-prep courses, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment classes;

- The proportion of first-year college students placed in remedial math or English classes;

- The rate at which students successfully pass remedial courses;

- The percentage of students taking postsecondary classes full-time and part-time;

- The average cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of first-semester and second-semester students; and

- The rates at which students pass freshman math and composition courses.

Local leaders may also wish to seek out comparison data and benchmark conditions in their cities against similarly-situated cities or communities of a similar size. For example, in order to arrive at their goal of increasing the number of two-year and four-year degrees held by residents by 55,000 (40,000 bachelor's degrees and 15,000 associate's degrees)
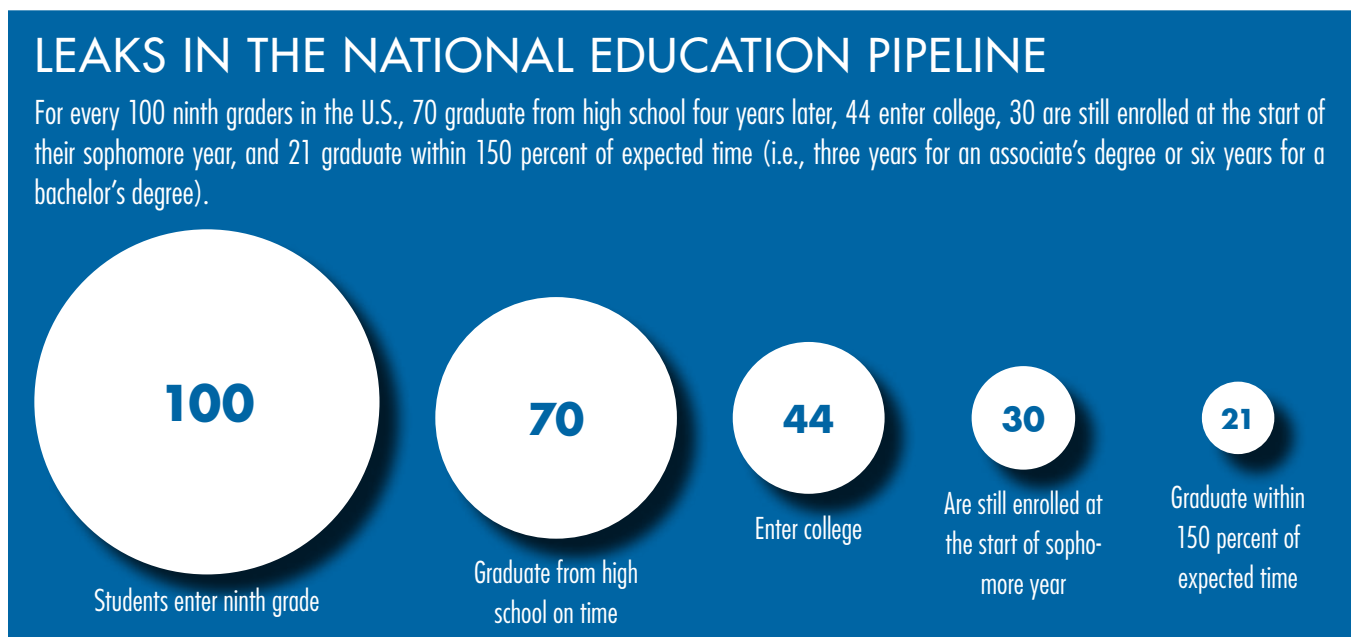
by 2020, local partners in Louisville, Ky., compared the city's rate of college completion with that of several other cities, and set a goal to achieve a leading position within this peer group. The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey highlights educational attainment rates by city across a range of ages. Local officials can also use an online tool developed by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to compare their enrollment, persistence and completion data with state and national averages (www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/?year=2008&level=nation&mode=data&state=0&submeasure=119).

3. CONDUCT A "LOSS POINT" ANALYSIS.

Developing a graphic depiction of leaks in the educational pipeline can both highlight problems and guide the development of strategies to address them (see below). It also helps city leaders identify how many young people who enter ninth grade do not complete high school; how many high school graduates do not enroll quickly in studies leading to a postsecondary credential; and how many recent enrollees in local colleges and universities continue their education for two or three semesters or more. Gathering this information may prompt city leaders to ask additional questions before deciding on concrete strategies. For instance, does the high school a young person attends seem to predict a high likelihood of future success or failure? Do black or Hispanic young people fall out of the education pipeline at higher rates? Cities such as Louisville, Ky., and San Francisco, Calif., have used "loss point" or educational pipeline analyses to guide their strategies, and have also disseminated the results of these analyses widely to convey a sense of urgency and engage new stakeholders in their postsecondary success initiatives.

City leaders can also go one step further by evaluating the effectiveness of existing interventions at certain loss points along the pipeline and bring to scale programs that have proven effective. For instance, some of these losses occur during the transition from high school graduation to the first semester of college if students are unable to take the college courses they need to stay on track toward degree completion. To address this challenge, City College of San Francisco (CCSF) launched a pilot program in 2010 to give priority registration to incoming graduates of several San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) high schools, enabling them to enroll in the classes they needed. Of more than 300 incoming SFUSD students, 98 percent who received priority registration returned for the next semester, a 23 percentage point increase from the previous year's retention rate. Given the pilot program's success, CCSF extended priority registration to all SFUSD graduates in the fall of 2011.

LEAKS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PIPELINE

For every 100 ninth graders in the U.S., 70 graduate from high school four years later, 44 enter college, 30 are still enrolled at the start of their sophomore year, and 21 graduate within 150 percent of expected time (i.e., three years for an associate's degree or six years for a bachelor's degree).

100 Students enter ninth grade

70 Graduate from high school on time

44 Enter college

30 Are still enrolled at the start of sophomore year

21 Graduate within 150 percent of expected time

IMPROVING AND ALIGNING DATA SYSTEMS

"Fragmented data systems waste resources and let young people fall through the cracks. In addition to aligning K-12 and higher education data systems, some states and localities are also developing parallel systems in early childhood, child welfare, juvenile justice, workforce development and health. A coordinated system with information about the entire pipeline, including the insulation, would ensure attention is paid to the full range of goals we have for young people as they transition to adulthood."

Source: Ready By 21®, Credentialed by 26, Issue Brief Series, *Insulating the Education Pipeline to Increase Postsecondary Success*, September 2010

4. ESTABLISH AMBITIOUS GOALS AND ISSUE PUBLIC REPORTS ON PROGRESS.

With reference to current baselines, setting and announcing citywide high school graduation as well as college enrollment, persistence, and completion goals helps draw public attention to a few key and easily understandable indicators. Given how few low-income young adults currently complete college, city leaders should consider advocating for ambitious goals, even if that means extending the deadline for goal achievement eight or 10 years into the future. Goals can represent percentage gains over the baseline or a more competitive ranking among cities in terms of postsecondary success rates. Moreover, focusing on only a few community-wide goals can build public awareness and support, even if local partners track many more indicators for internal management purposes. The Results-Based Accountability™ (www.raguide.org) framework offers three helpful criteria for choosing indicators: data power (i.e., whether the data are readily available), proxy power (i.e., whether an indicator accurately represents a desired result, such as student achievement); and communication power (i.e., can local leaders easily explain the indicator to a wide audience).

Municipal leaders can also use the communication tools and opportunities at their disposal to provide residents with regular updates about progress on local goals, with public reports issued at least every year. Mayors can use their annual state of the city address, the city website, or more targeted media outreach to publicize goals for and improvements in postsecondary completion rates and related indicators. In Philadelphia, Pa., for example, Mayor Michael Nutter launched an annual Mayor's Education Week in September 2008 that provides visibility to the citywide education goals he set upon taking office.

AVOID THE HAZARDS OF COMMUNICATING ABOUT DATA

As municipal leaders communicate about postsecondary success data, it is important to recognize that the data often represent "hot buttons" for K-12 school districts and colleges because education leaders often fear they will open the door for finger-pointing and public recriminations. For instance, several cities have found that less than 10 percent of low-income college students complete a degree on time — potentially incendiary news for much of the general public, and results that should make no one happy. In this context, it is important to use data to build a narrative that reinforces multi-sector strategies to improve student postsecondary outcomes, and that invites as many stakeholders as possible to assume shared responsibility for these outcomes. Forcefully expressing the notion that postsecondary success "is a community issue, and we're going to address it as a community" can prevent data-driven conversations from being derailed by those who seek to assign blame to a single institution. Time-tested steps for communicating about data effectively include:

- Adopt a "no surprises" policy — vet all data and the means of presentation with institutional leaders to secure their agreement prior to release;

- Present bad news as an opportunity for collective recommitment to proven strategies for improving postsecondary outcomes;

- Use data to describe how local partners will respond and justify the city's "theory of action" for enhancing college access and success; and

- Continuously emphasize collective responsibility to achieve citywide goals.

"There is no place you can go in Philadelphia where people don't know that we're trying to cut the [high school] dropout rate in half and double the college completion rate," said Mayor Nutter at a 2010 NLC convening held in Philadelphia.

RESOURCES

ACHIEVING THE DREAM

Achieving the Dream, Inc., is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Achieving the Dream assists colleges in reviewing longitudinal data on cohorts of students and disaggregates semester-by-semester student outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other student characteristics.
www.achievingthedream.org/resources/data_and_technology

ANNENBERG INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL REFORM

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) at Brown University is a national policy research and reform support organization that promotes quality education for all children, especially in urban communities. Its College Readiness Indicators System (CRIS) network is a joint project with the John Gardner Center at Stanford University to help five sites develop systems that identify and support young people to be college ready. AISR also published research on the data sharing collaboration between the New York City Department of Education and City University of New York.

- College Readiness Indicator Systems (CRIS): http://annenberginstitute.org/cris
- *Data Collaboration in New York City: The Challenges of Linking High School and Postsecondary Data:* http://annenberginstitute.org/publication/data-collaboration-new-york-city-challenges-linking-high-school-and-post-secondary-data

CEOS FOR CITIES: THE TALENT DIVIDEND

The Talent Dividend is part of CEOs for Cities' latest research on the City Dividends and is helping mobilize cities across the nation to develop new college success initiatives. In partnership with FutureWorks, CEOs for Cities launched the National Talent Dividend Network to help local officials and their community partners increase postsecondary completion rates in cities nationwide. www.ceosforcities.org/city-dividends/talent

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

Established in 2009, Complete College America is a national nonprofit that works with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations. Its website offers a comprehensive snapshot of college completion data for states and their college campuses. www.completecollege.org/state_data

DATA QUALITY CAMPAIGN

The Data Quality Campaign is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, national advocacy organization that seeks to empower education stakeholders with high-quality data and supports state policymakers and other key leaders to promote the development and effective use of statewide longitudinal data systems. The fact sheet below on *Preparing Students for Jobs* focuses on efforts to link education and workforce data. The resource on *Measuring the Education Pipeline* lists critical questions about high school success, postsecondary education and workforce readiness, and postsecondary and workforce success that longitudinal data systems can help answer.

- *Preparing Students for Jobs:* www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Hot%20Topic_Jobs.pdf

- *Measuring the Education Pipeline: Critical Data Elements Indicating Readiness, Transition, and Success:* http://dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Pipeline%2006.2011.pdf

THE JOYCE FOUNDATION

The Joyce Foundation supports the development of policies that both improve the quality of life for people in the Great Lakes region and serve as models for the rest of the country. In 2007, the foundation launched Shifting Gears, a multi-year state policy initiative to promote regional economic growth by improving the education and skills training of the workforce in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. The resources below highlight promising state approaches for using data to guide policy changes and build public will in support of those changes.

- *Using Data for Policy Change:* www.shifting-gears.org/using-data-for-policy-change/54-using-data-for-policy-change.html

- *Using Data to Build Public Support for Shifting Gears Policy Changes (written by Douglas Gould and Jennifer Hahn, July 2010):* www.shifting-gears.org/making-the-case-for-change/58-making-the-case-for-change.html

LUMINA FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION

Lumina Foundation is a private, independent foundation established in Indianapolis in August 2000 that strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access to and success in education beyond high school. Its mission is defined by Goal 2025 – to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. Using data from American Community Survey, the foundation has developed an online resource highlighting college attainment rates for the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas.

- *A Stronger National Through Higher Education: Attainment Rates for Metro Areas:* www.luminafoundation.org/state?metroareas=1

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE

More than 3,300 colleges and universities, enrolling over 96 percent of all students in public and private U.S. institutions, participate in the Clearinghouse and provide it with access to enrollment and degree information for students. School districts can partner with the Clearinghouse to learn about the postsecondary outcomes of their students.

www.studentclearinghouse.org

NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION: FEDERAL EDUCATION BUDGET PROJECT

The New America Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy institute that invests in new thinkers and new ideas to address the next generation of challenges facing the United States. Its Federal Education Budget Project provides information on federal education funding for policymakers, the media, and the public, including in-depth studies of funding, financial aid, student demographics and outcome data from school districts and postsecondary institutions.

http://febp.newamerica.net

OMG CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

OMG seeks to accelerate and deepen social impact through strategy, evaluation, and capacity-building, and has been a leader in planning and evaluating national postsecondary success initiatives. The resources below offer guidance on conducting a scan of the local postsecondary success landscape and using data to develop policy changes and programs that promote college success.

- *Conducting a Scan of Your College Access and Success System:* www.omgcenter.org/sites/default/files/OMG_CollegeAccess.pdf

- *Using Data to Drive Change: A Guide for College Access and Success Stakeholders:* www.omgcenter.org/knowledge_center/voices/data_drive_change

PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE NETWORK AND RESOURCE LIBRARY

The Pathways to College Network is an alliance of national organizations that advances college opportunity for underserved students by raising public awareness, supporting innovative research, and promoting evidence-based policies and practices across the K-12 and higher education sectors.

www.pathwaystocollege.net

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education's FAFSA Completion Project is designed to assist local educational agencies (LEAs) and secondary school administrators in determining which of their students have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the upcoming school year. The FAFSA Completion by High School tool provides information on the number of FAFSA applications submitted and completed by high school in each state. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) gathers information on enrollment, completion, financial aid and other data from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)'s Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Program provides states with grants and other resources for designing and expanding longitudinal data systems that track students from kindergarten through 12th grade, and increasingly from early learning through postsecondary education.

- FAFSA Completion Project: http://fsa4counselors.ed.gov/clcf/FAFSACompletionExpansion.html

- FAFSA Completion by High School: http://studentaid.ed.gov/about/data-center/student/application-volume/fafsa-completion-high-school

- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System: http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds

- Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Program: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds

CITY EXAMPLES

LOUISVILLE, KY. (POP. 597,337)

www.55000Degrees.org

55,000 Degrees (55K) is a collaborative effort to move Louisville into the top tier of comparable cities in terms of education achievement. By setting a goal of adding 40,000 bachelor's degrees and 15,000 associate's degrees by 2020, 55K hopes to make half of the residents in Louisville degree holders as it leverages the resources of the business community and fosters a college-going and completing culture. Among its early achievements is an online Education Data Dashboard that compiles information from numerous, widely-available sources and presents it publicly for the first time in an in-depth and interactive platform.

MESA, ARIZ. (POP. 439,041)

www.mesacountsoncollege.org

The City of Mesa is a core partner in a collaborative postsecondary success initiative called Mesa Counts on College. The initiative's Year One Data Snapshot for the first time compiled relevant school and college-level data related to postsecondary completion outcomes and highlighted recent progress on key indicators such as high school graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment patterns, and college retention and completion. Mesa Counts on College obtained data on high school dropout and graduation rates from the Mesa Public Schools (MPS) student information system, and analyzed some school district data by income level as determined by students' free- or reduced-price lunch eligibility. The National Student Clearinghouse provided information on the college enrollment, retention and completion rates of MPS graduates, regardless of where they attend college. The core Mesa Counts on College team extracted information on student retention, completion and transfers from the Mesa Community College (MCC) database, and examined differences among income groups by cross-referencing students' receipt of Pell Grants. The American Community Survey of the U.S. Census enabled local leaders to estimate the education levels of all 16- to 26-year olds residing in Mesa.

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. (POP. 8,175,133)
http://gradnyc.com

The New York City Department of Education established a formal memorandum of understanding with the City University of New York (CUNY), facilitating efforts by the Graduate NYC! initiative's data team to achieve three key accomplishments: evaluate student performance on postsecondary readiness indicators; include a college readiness measure (the College Preparatory Course Index) on progress reports that grade high schools based on improvements in their students' academic achievement; and provide "Where are they now?" reports on former K-12 students to individual schools. The data team is also building a longitudinal data warehouse to track students, enable more complex analysis, and provide data more quickly. New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott, and CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein set a goal of increasing three-year associate degree completion rates for CUNY community college students from a baseline level of 10 percent in 2006 to 25 percent in 2017.

PHILADELPHIA, PA. (POP. 1,526,006)
www.phila.gov/residents/education

Mayor Michael Nutter made "doubling the college attainment rate in 5 to 10 years" one of two key education goals during his initial campaign and underscored the importance of the goals during a major "Mayor's Education Week" address early in his first term. The Mayor's Office for Education issues periodic reports on the city's progress in achieving these goals. Key accomplishments highlighted in recent reports include a rise in the proportion of high school students who graduate within six years and an increase in the percentage of students completing the FAFSA.

RIVERSIDE, CALIF. (POP. 303,871)
www.college311.org

Extended discussions among the leaders and staff for the Riverside Completion Counts initiative led to a public announcement of ambitious college completion goals for 2020 that will be tracked through an annual "report card." The Completion Counts Executive Committee unanimously approved metrics for public accountability and college completion goals related to high school graduation, college-going rates, and graduation from two-year colleges and four-year universities. A report identifying action steps that could help Completion Counts reach its desired outcomes, entitled "Increasing Completion for Postsecondary Students," led to the creation of the Riverside Community College (RCC) two-year guarantee for Riverside students. If high school graduates from the Alvord and Riverside Unified School Districts meet certain criteria for college attendance and academic achievement and complete applications for financial aid, RCC will guarantee that they receive priority during registration and a seat in classes needed to obtain an associate's degree within two years or transfer to a four-year college.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. (POP. 805,235)
http://sfbridgetosuccess.org

San Francisco's Bridge to Success initiative established an early partnership with the John Gardner Center at Stanford University for the purpose of data sharing and analysis. The City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Unified School District and the City College of San Francisco – key partners in Bridge to Success – created data sharing agreements with the researchers at the Gardner Center, thereby enabling the partners to set public goals across the cradle-to-career educational pipeline prior to launching the initiative.