

# Navigating College Readiness Through Asset Mapping

## ASSET MAPPING GUIDES SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO:

- Support low-income and first-generation college students
- Align curricula
- Engage parents and families
- Tailor support to local student needs
- Monitor progress
- Begin early and target all students

*The goal of the Citi Postsecondary Success Program (CPSP) is to improve postsecondary access and success for first-generation students. CPSP's main strategy is to build local partnerships that coordinate the provision of college-access and success supports and seek system-level changes. To implement the work, CPSP partners with Local Education Funds (LEFs) in three major cities — Miami, Philadelphia and San Francisco. FHI 360 and the Public Education Network (PEN) serve as intermediaries and provide technical assistance. OMG Center for Collaborative Learning is the national evaluator. CPSP is a five-year initiative (2009–2013), funded nationally by the Citi Foundation and supported locally by matching grants.*



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## A Strategy for Improving Postsecondary Access and Success

Getting students on the path to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education requires an array of supports — from rigorous academic preparation, to the development of self-monitoring skills, to managing the college application and financial aid process. For many students and families, particularly those who are low-income or first-generation college students, these supports are fragmented, inaccessible or absent.

FHI 360's **asset mapping** approach works to overcome these barriers and ensure postsecondary access and success for all students. Asset mapping guides schools, colleges and community partners through a research-based inventory of college-readiness resources and programs in their community. Asset analysis then enables schools and communities to bridge gaps, leverage best practices, redirect existing resources and garner new resources, and create tools that support all students to achieve college admission and success.

## FHI 360's asset mapping strategy develops a local, shared definition of college readiness and a framework to:

- Coordinate academic programs and college access services and supports
- Engage community, family, civic groups, government and business
- Align K–12 curricula with postsecondary and workforce requirements
- Develop high-quality, evidence-based programs across the community
- Create a college-ready, college-bound culture embraced by youth, parents and stakeholders
- Create data-sharing systems across K–16 institutions and community-based organizations to ensure student progress and enable data-driven decision making
- Ensure that these systems to promote college access and success maintain long-term sustainability



## ASSET MAPPING CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE STUDENTS ARE COLLEGE ELIGIBLE AND:

- Are academically prepared
- Have college-bound aspirations
- Are aware of college and career options
- Have support navigating the college admissions process

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ASSET MAPPING AND CPSP, CONTACT:

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## A Process that Spurs Partnership, Alignment and Innovation

The Citi Foundation's Postsecondary Success Program (CPSP) focuses on improving postsecondary access and success in three communities: Miami, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Working in partnership with the Public Education Network and local education funds in each city, CPSP is piloting a school-based approach — in ten high schools serving 4500 students — aimed at creating a comprehensive, college access system that benefits all students. The program, which spans grades 9–12, also contributes to broader efforts at achieving systemic change.

At the beginning of CPSP, participating schools, local education funds and community partners were each at different starting points, with different definitions of what it meant for a student to be ready for college. A process was needed to create a common vision and language among the participants, so everyone involved could better understand areas where they were effective at meeting students' needs and areas that needed improvement.

In response, FHI 360, building on the work of David T. Conley and others, developed an asset mapping tool and process to help teams identify school-level college readiness services and supports. This work focused on three critical areas: academic preparation; college knowledge, including study and self-monitoring skills; and college awareness, encompassing major steps and milestones, such as knowing how to apply to college, how to manage financial aid issues and how to adjust to the college culture. Through a series of facilitated discussions, using the tool as guidance, CPSP teams identified gaps and set priorities for the individual and shared work of schools and their partners.

## A Way to Impact Students, Schools and Communities

Asset mapping gave school personnel and partner organizations a clearer view of the knowledge and abilities that help a young person make a successful transition into college. It also allowed them to identify their strengths and weaknesses in supporting students. As a result, each city has identified and is acting on different priorities as they move forward.

For example, in Miami, data feedback and asset mapping revealed gaps in math education and college readiness among students. Secondary and postsecondary educators developed a new high school math curriculum designed to better prepare students for entry-level college math courses.

In Philadelphia, the asset mapping process led to a focus on literacy. Using an Instructional Rounds model, adapted by FHI 360, professors from two- and four-year colleges work closely with educators from CPSP high schools to analyze high school performance data, review course syllabi, observe teaching and review student assignments. From here, the team provides feedback to develop strong connections between schools and colleges, making expectations for college writing more explicit.

In San Francisco, CPSP is supporting a network of community-based college-access organizations to more effectively work with high school counselors. The project is piloting a system to improve the collection and use of grade 9–12 college readiness indicators through the shared use of an online data platform.

Across these three communities, the program is influencing practices and policies that will grow beyond the target schools and the duration of the CPSP grant. The assets approach is a collaborative way to map a path forward that engages stakeholders, addresses challenges and develops practical solutions — so all students have the opportunity for postsecondary success.