



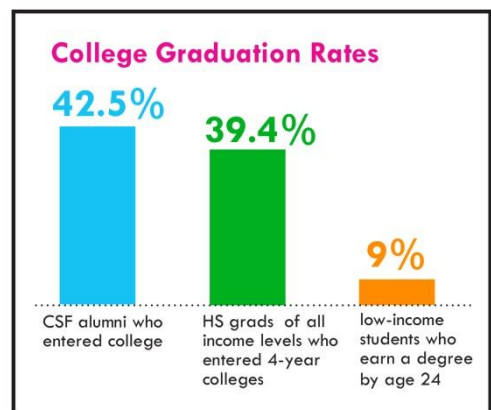
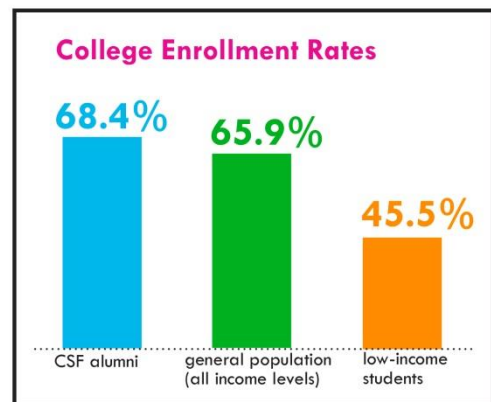
Children's Scholarship Fund

2016 COLLEGE PERSISTENCE STUDY ON CSF ALUMNI FROM NEW YORK AND OMAHA

Dr. Eric Bettinger and a team from Stanford University recently analyzed college enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates of a sample of more than 5,000 Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) alumni who received scholarships from CSF New York and CSF of Omaha during the period from 1999 to 2010 and were old enough to have graduated from high school. Despite coming from socio-economic backgrounds associated with much lower rates of college enrollment and graduation, CSF alumni enroll and persist in college and earn degrees at rates similar to or higher than the general population and much higher than low-income students generally, according to the study.

Key findings

- **College enrollment:** The overall college attendance rate for CSF alumni in New York and Omaha is an impressive 68.4 percent (New York: 63.5 percent, Omaha: 79.5 percent). Nationally, college going rates are between 60 and 70 percent for all students regardless of income or geographic locale; most recently in 2013, the rate was 65.9 percent.¹ In contrast, the enrollment rate for low-income recent high school graduates was 45.5 percent in 2013.²
- **College persistence:** CSF alumni showed comparatively low drop-out rates after the first semester (4-9 percent) and after the first year of college (7-23 percent). Most dropout behavior occurs in the first year of students' collegiate careers. The national average for attrition after the first year of college is 29 percent,³ six points higher than the highest rate for CSF cohorts.
- **College graduation:** Out of all CSF alumni who entered college, 42.5 percent earned a degree. According to a 2015 study by University of Pennsylvania and the Pell Institute, only nine percent of Americans in the lowest economic bracket earn degrees by age 24 overall.⁴



More specifically, 72.5 percent of CSF alumni who started studying full-time at a four-year college directly after high school graduation in 2007 earned a degree. Also, 47.3 percent of CSF alumni who started studying full-time at a two-year college graduated. In comparison, the Department of Education reports that for 2007 high school graduates, 39.4 percent of all students entering four-year colleges full-time graduated within six years and 29.8 percent of students entering two-year colleges full-time graduated within six years.⁵

¹ http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_302.20.asp,

² <https://higheredtoday.org/2015/11/25/where-have-all-the-low-income-students-gone/>

³ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_326.30.asp/

⁴ http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_45_Year_Trend_Report.pdf

⁵ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_326.10.asp

- **Eighth grade scholarship effect:** The study found that alumni who used a CSF scholarship in eighth grade were 16 percent more likely to attend college than those who stopped using their scholarship before eighth grade.
- **Timing of college enrollment:** Because students are more likely to graduate college if they enroll directly after high school graduation rather than delaying matriculation, it is encouraging to note that 51.7 percent of CSF alumni started college immediately after high school. The average for New York alumni was 46.8 percent, while the Omaha average was 62.9 percent.
- **College types:** The study finds CSF alumni enroll at four-year institutions at a higher rate (50.2 percent) than two-year institutions (35.3 percent). Colleges with the most CSF New York alumni include: CUNY four-year and two-year colleges (Manhattan, Bronx, New York Tech, John Jay, and Queensborough, etc.), St. John's University, Mercy College, and SUNY-Albany. Colleges most popular with CSF Omaha alumni include: University of Nebraska-Omaha, Metropolitan Community College, Northeast Community College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Wayne State University, and Creighton University.
- **Summer melt:** Nationally, about 15 percent of graduating high school seniors who declare plans to attend college do not actually enroll in the fall. CSF's "summer melt" rates for 2013, 2014, and 2015 were 14 percent, 18 percent, and 13 percent respectively, suggesting many students need additional supports in order to matriculate. It is notable that the CSF alumni summer melt rate is close to and in some years below the national average, despite CSF scholarship recipients coming from lower-income backgrounds.

Lessons Learned Moving Forward

In applying the findings of this study to help ensure our Scholars continue to succeed, CSF plans to:

- **Maintain our focus on helping scholarship recipients remain in private schools through eighth grade:** CSF currently works to ensure our recipients continue to receive a scholarship through eighth grade. The study confirms the importance of this continued investment, finding that using a CSF scholarship to attend private school in eighth grade makes a student 16 percent more likely to enroll in college.
- **Encourage college-going CSF alumni to enroll full-time in four-year colleges directly after high school:** Graduation rates were higher for CSF alumni who enrolled in four-year colleges full-time directly after high school. Other studies also show low-income and first-generation college students are more likely to persist and graduate if they attend more selective colleges, suggesting recipients would benefit from receiving college prep resources and financial aid guidance that emphasize the benefits of going to four-year colleges over two-year colleges and studying full-time rather than part-time or delaying college enrollment. CSF will explore opportunities to provide these resources and guidance, partnering with other organizations whenever possible.
- **Provide continued supports and encouragement immediately after high school graduation to help ensure college-going CSF alumni actually enroll that fall:** CSF will explore opportunities to provide additional supports during the summer after high school graduation to encourage students to actually attend college in the fall, helping to combat "summer melt" rates.
- **Remain in contact with CSF scholarship alumni after eighth grade, encouraging their continued investment in their education:** Dr. Bettinger recommends maintaining contact with alumni after eighth grade with an emphasis on what the students have gained from their CSF scholarship so they experience "loss aversion," i.e. they don't want to lose the investment already made in them and are encouraged to take advantage of subsequent opportunities that come their way. CSF is launching an alumni network focused on building an ongoing relationship with our Scholars after they graduate, providing opportunities to reinforce this message and remind them of the importance of education.