

FINISH Strong – Spring 2021

Strategies CBOs Can Implement Now to Increase Postsecondary Enrollment (A Compilation of NCAN and NCAN Member Resources)

We are all familiar with the many barriers facing our nation's students as they attempt to transition from high school to college. Those barriers are larger now due to the effects of COVID-19 on student lives and on educational systems. Simultaneously, college access programs have also been hit hard. Leaders at these community-based organizations (CBOs) have had to move quickly to create new strategies, revise existing models on virtual platforms, and find additional financial sources to get young people from low-income backgrounds and first-generation students ready for college.

Community-based organizations are the heartbeat of NCAN and the nucleus of the college access and success movement. Staff members are committed and passionate about urging, informing, and inspiring students to pursue their postsecondary goals. Expanding access and success programs to support more students in innovative ways can be a heavy lift for CBOs in the best of times, and now the delivery and timing of various programming elements are quickly shifting as COVID-19 exacerbates existing equity gaps.

For example, a key postsecondary enrollment indicator and core component of every college access program is Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, and in most instances, CBOs press hard in the fall for students and families to submit the form. Unfortunately, the class of 2021 is struggling to keep up with completing the FAFSA. As of April 16, FAFSA completion for the class of 2021 showed a [year-over-year decline of -6.4%](#) from 2020. This comes on top of the drops already seen from 2019 to 2020.

It is imperative that CBO leaders recognize the urgency of addressing these declines and strengthen efforts now to smooth postsecondary pathways for 2021 graduates. Students who are college-ready but postpone enrollment are embarking on a tenuous path. [Research shows](#) students who delay enrollment are 64% less likely than their "on-time" peers to complete a bachelor's degree and 18% less likely to complete any college credential. CBOs need to continue, or even expand, FAFSA completion efforts in the spring.

NCAN has compiled some tried-and-true tactics and new strategies for CBOs to engage in right now to help increase postsecondary enrollment for the class of 2021. We must learn from what happened to students in 2020 and make our best efforts to step up for students in 2021 to prevent even further erosion of college-going rates.

These practices have been highlighted in [NCAN publications](#) and can be reproduced and modified to fit the needs of CBOs and communities across the country. For CBOs working to support the class of 2021, efforts such as these can be the difference in whether a student ultimately enrolls in college.

We have divided the practices into six areas to **FINISH** Strong:

FAFSA: Push a targeted FAFSA completion effort.

Innovate: Utilize technology for efficient outreach.

National Student Clearinghouse data: Implement this integral tool to help predict gaps and needs.

Involve Parents and Peers: Build relationships with key partners to student engagement.

Summer Melt: Execute strategies to increase student commitment.

Hope and **H**elp: Bolster resilience and help with connections to campus resources.



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1. FAFSA Completion

First-generation students face numerous challenges, with finances at the top of the list. Even before the pandemic, students struggled to cover all the costs associated with college (tuition, fees, books, transportation, living expenses, etc.). With many students working to support their families, especially during the pandemic, the financial hurdles are even more complex and significant. FAFSA completion is crucial to overcoming obstacles.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion increases the odds that a student will pursue postsecondary education. According to [one study](#), 92% of high school seniors who completed the FAFSA enrolled by the November following graduation, versus 51% who did not complete a FAFSA. Unfortunately, NCAN's research shows that in many states, students from the highest-poverty communities are the least likely to complete a FAFSA.

FAFSA completion numbers are significantly down for the high school class of 2021, and organizations are responding by ramping up their efforts to assist students. As the end of the school year draws closer, it will be a race against the clock to increase FAFSA completion numbers before students graduate and potentially become more difficult to contact. Here are some examples of the work that community-based organizations across the country are doing to increase FAFSA completion rates:

- The [CollegeBound Foundation](#) in Baltimore works closely with their area FAFSA Tracker and leverages that data to implement a variety of targeted and broad-based programming. Their advisers worked directly with teachers – particularly English teachers – across the city to offer virtual group advising sessions to students. CollegeBound staff conduct Zoom "FAFSA Blitz" sessions to help several students at a time. Additionally, their advisers are conducting individual virtual advising sessions each day.
- [College Now Greater Cleveland](#) is a national leader in using a variety of channels to reach students and parents. Their resource center hosts virtual office hours for all ages to complete the FAFSA, school advisers reach out individually by text, email, and phone to ensure financial aid questions are answered, and the organization extensively utilizes social media on Instagram and Facebook. This spring, College Now quickly retrofitted a bus to become a mobile FAFSA clinic, driving directly into neighborhoods to complete FAFSAs with students and parents, and to work through verification questions. In addition, College Now has been hosting private FAFSA parties at a local movie theater, inviting students to see a popular or first-run movie and to complete a FAFSA. As an incentive to attend the event, College Now raffles off a private movie party for a student to use with family and friends.
- [Education is Freedom](#) (EIF) in Dallas offers virtual office hours, online workshops, public FAFSA webinars, and email communication to help students complete their FAFSA. In addition, EIF hosts virtual "EIF Talks" every Tuesday evening to answer all kinds of FAFSA and college access questions. The organization also presents the popular "EIF Master Class series" each Wednesday evening to reach as many parents and students as possible in a virtual format on lengthy topics surrounding financial aid, career pathways, and college access.
- The college access organization [Be A Leader Foundation](#) in Arizona, in partnership with College Success Arizona, has hosted several successful FAFSA drive-in events. This strategy was originally pioneered by Get2College, a program of the Woodward Hines Education Foundation in Mississippi. The drive-in events are marketed on social media in English and Spanish and also promoted on the Spanish language television affiliate. Essentially, families drive up to an outdoor location, remain in their cars, and are assisted by a socially distant staff member. These drive-in FAFSA sessions are similar to pre-pandemic ones, albeit a little bit more high-tech – complete with tablets, mobile hotspots, and generators.

Read More:

- [NCAN FAFSA Resource Library](#)
- [NCAN's Form Your Future FAFSA Tracker](#)
- [NCAN's "4 for the Fall" Guide](#)

2. Innovate with Technology

CBOs in many communities are moving ahead with inventive strategies that integrate technology solutions into access and success advising. The use of a variety of technology tools is not intended to replace the core strategies of many community organizations that count on trained staff and volunteers to connect with and inspire young people to pursue postsecondary education. The concept of using human intervention strategies and support is still the first priority for making a difference in student success. However, technology should be explored as an additional delivery method for conveying valuable college and financial aid information.

There are many good virtual advising resources. NCAN recommends that the best all-in-one guide for virtual advising is the [College Advising Corps'](#) new [Virtual Advising Guide](#). The College Advising Corps (CAC) is one of NCAN's largest and most nationally well-known members. Their new guide "is not only applicable to college advising, but can be used to share content with students virtually for numerous purposes including but not limited to: college access support, community-based organizations, K-12, or higher education." The guide covers a broad range of topics, like:

- Data tracking and management.
- Technology tools and platforms (including texting and phone, virtual meetings, scheduling and organization, email and newsletters, and social media).
- Working with students and families.
- Outreach, communication, and engagement strategies.
- College advising topics.

A tool rapidly gaining in popularity with CBO programs and higher education institutions is the use of **chatbots** to reach students on their cell phones. In Arizona, this technology has taken the form of "[Benji](#)," an automated chatbot powered by [AdmitHub](#) that helps connect students and families with FAFSA completion assistance. Beyond the two-way communication between users and the chatbot, Benji can also be used for one-way "nudges" to students and families about important dates, deadlines, and events. Chatbots like Benji have several key advantages:

- They never have to sleep and are around 24/7 to answer questions.
- They can simultaneously handle essentially limitless requests for information.
- They triage questions by answering those in their knowledge banks (which are preloaded with hundreds of answers to frequently asked questions) and then connecting users with a human adviser for requests they can't answer. This reduces the number of staff needed to serve a much larger pool of students.
- Adding answers to new questions is simple, which means that chatbots are never stumped for long.
- Responses can come in a variety of languages.

- Finally, signing up with a chatbot is as easy as texting it, and this is a format with which many students and families are comfortable.

For **texting**, consider contracting with a message delivery service like [Signal Vine](#). Signal Vine states that college access advisers can use texting in many ways to keep students engaged and on track. One of these ways is to remind students that the summer between high school and college is not a usual summer. They may have several “last steps” to complete to attend their college or university of choice. Students should check their emails more frequently to make sure they don’t miss important communications from their future college or university. Even texting students to remind them that assistance is just one text away can help students continue along their path to postsecondary education.

[Find the Fit](#) is a resource NCAN has shared with members before. It is an evidence-based college advising toolkit with resources aimed at students, parents, and advisers. The group also has deep expertise in incorporating text messaging. When sending texts to students, they focus on just one enrollment objective per text and include links for actions. If you’re looking for text messaging templates, Find the Fit has a series of customizable text messages for students.

[Iowa College Aid](#) launched the Virtual Coach Texting Program that supports high school students, college students, and their parents. By using a combination of programmed texts and responses with individual assistance, they send tips and nudges to complete college tasks, and then engage students in conversation and building relationships. Their approach allows Iowa College Aid to assist students with specific questions and offer college advice, while also being a trusted ally.

[uAspire](#) has been at the forefront of the field in effectively using text messaging for virtual advising. uAspire staff advisers regularly check in with students to help guide them along critical college milestones. Texts are specifically aligned with where the student is on the financial aid timeline. When the student responds, the adviser will answer their questions, recommend next steps, and interpret needs in that moment, which can be anything from encouragement, support, or coaching, to simply clarifying a term. For instance, advisers and students navigate college websites together over text to review financial aid offers (sometimes called award letters); and advisers coach students through calling colleges to ask specific questions about their tuition bill. Along the way, students not only leverage financial aid and minimize debt, but they are also empowered with the skills and knowledge to do it themselves.

Read More:

- [CAC Virtual Advising Guide](#)
- [5 Virtual Advising Tips From the NCAN Community](#)

3. National Student Clearinghouse Data

NCAN focuses on a clear message about the advantages of using NSC data to drive your program strategy. In a recent report and blog, NCAN Director of Data and Evaluation, Bill DeBaun, stated that the [National Student Clearinghouse](#) (NSC) is the most valuable resource the education field has for tracking students' postsecondary access and completion outcomes. The NSC includes enrollment data for more than 3,700 public and private postsecondary institutions that cover 99% of enrolled students nationally. NSC's Student Tracker matches lists of high school graduates against enrollments in the Clearinghouse's vast database and returns all of the matches, allowing college access practitioners to observe actual enrollment, persistence, retention, transfer, and completion rates.

Although senior surveys are a good measure of postsecondary intent, far too many districts, schools, and CBOs rely on them as a proxy for students' actual postsecondary enrollments. Unfortunately, students' plans often change after high school graduation, and these soft figures often represent gross inflations of real-world outcomes. This is another reason to rely more regularly on NSC enrollment data.

NCAN has noted that [according to the NSC](#), the class of 2020's enrollment losses far outpaced the class of 2019 across all high school categories:

- Low-income high schools (which have 50+% students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) were down 10.7% for the class of 2020, more than 13 times the decline from the previous year.
- High-poverty high schools (which have 75+% students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch) saw declines of 11.4%, more than seven times the previous year's decrease.
- High-minority high schools (where 40+% of students are Black or Hispanic) saw enrollment declines of 9.4% in 2020 compared to -0.9% in 2019 (a tenfold increase).

Comparing across high school categories in 2020, enrollment declines were 2.3 times steeper for low-income high schools compared to higher-income schools. Most NCAN member programs focus their efforts on assisting students attending low-income high schools, thus these outcomes from the NSC data sets should be particularly alarming and spur CBOs to act immediately.

Here are some examples of groups using NSC data:

- Catalina Cifuentes, executive director of college and career readiness for the [Riverside County Office of Education](#), has built a robust training and collaborative model with her team to support school counselors as professionals in the college access field, and as partners with CBOs. On a recent webinar, she suggested that CBOs reach out to include all school personnel in the effort to increase postsecondary attainment and to make a point to utilize NSC StudentTracker data to "educate the educators." Cifuentes has presented NSC data at the student level to Riverside County teachers to demonstrate the actual college-going rates for the students who were in their classrooms. The college enrollment data is often new and surprising to teachers instructing in college prep courses, as many are under the impression that all or most of their students go on to enroll in college, when the data shows a different picture. Cifuentes says that the overall message is that financial literacy and financial limitations are the biggest barriers to college-going for most students, not necessarily academic preparedness.

- CBOs should take note of the Robert and Janice McNair Educational Foundation, recently highlighted in an [NSC blog](#), on how they have utilized NSC StudentTracker data to understand more about the students they support. Executive Director Monica Lee stated: “StudentTracker provided a very clear picture about all our graduates’ postsecondary pursuits and success. We can see the effect of our programming, long-term, for our students. StudentTracker narrowed down which students were and were not successful, where those students attended college, and where we needed to target our services. It has really given our organization an evaluation piece that we were missing. Because of StudentTracker, I got approval and funding from our founders to start the GPS 4 Success program, which stands for Go, Persist and Succeed. The program provides high school graduates with a coach who assists students with college applications, financial aid, career exploration and other challenges during college. StudentTracker showed that we needed the program, who needed the program, and tracked students throughout college.”
- [Ready to Rise Tacoma](#), a program of the community-based organization Degrees of Change, works with two- and four-year public colleges in Washington, using a cohort-based model to help students successfully achieve their goals. Ready to Rise (RTR) has developed a data-sharing agreement to help implement clear agreements with partner colleges. RTR regularly incorporates NSC data into their analysis of student success, looking at students’ progress toward completing degrees, and identifying students who have transferred, dropped to part-time, or stopped out.

Overall, CBOs using NSC data to assist in understanding student enrollment and persistence can be more strategic and impactful in program design and delivery, especially when looking to identify students who may need intervention support. Unfortunately, we see from the most recent data sets that first-generation students, students from low-income backgrounds, and students of color experienced the steepest declines in college enrollment in 2020. Students in the class of 2021 need rapid and targeted support to combat this slide.

Read More:

- [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center: Full High School Benchmarks Report](#)
- [NCAN's Form Your Future FAFSA Tracker](#)
- [NCAN's "Scaling Success Services" Series](#)

4. Involve Parents and Peers

Effects from the COVID-19 pandemic have made it even more difficult to engage students to complete the college access, financial aid, and enrollment processes. CBOs and advisers are mostly limited to virtual interactions, and because school environments have been compromised by safety guidelines, students are rarely interacting with teachers or counselors in a significant way. Sports and activities have been restricted too. Who is left available to reach students? Parents. Peers. Using the power and clout of family and peer influence is another method to deploy for attracting 2021 seniors to come forward and connect more directly with CBO services.

First, one of the keys to increasing postsecondary enrollment and completion is engaging parents and family members. The attitudes and beliefs of these adults can create or extinguish a communitywide college-going culture. Especially during the spring and summer, parents can be valuable contacts and allies for engaging students to follow through and complete enrollment in a credential or degree program.

[Chicago GEAR UP](#) has spent 21 years motivating students and boosting college-going rates while engaging parents in a parent-as-partner model. Many parents of students served by NCAN CBO members do not have a postsecondary degree or credential and are therefore unfamiliar with the steps of the college and financial aid application processes.

NCAN hosted a webinar in which presenters from Chicago GEAR UP highlighted experience-based strategies on how best to involve parents in their children's postsecondary pursuits. Here are the major takeaways:

- **Address key topics.** Make sure parents understand:
 - A postsecondary education is a long-term investment with many positive impacts on the individual student, his/her family, and the community.
 - How to prepare to financially and emotionally support their student throughout their postsecondary career.
 - The importance of completing the FAFSA and the relationship between FAFSA completion and postsecondary enrollment.

Parents and other adult family members are an integral part of a child's life, and having them engaged and informed about the college and career readiness processes will make it significantly easier to move forward. Chicago GEAR UP has these tips for college access practitioners to build relationships with families:

- **Acknowledge parents' expertise and experience.** Although not all parents understand the college application and financial aid processes, they do have experiences and knowledge to share. Find a way to identify, recognize, and value their input.
- **Communicate constantly.** Keep parents informed via text, emails, and/or phone calls, depending on the preferred method of communication. This shows parents they have support and will help them keep their child on track.
- **Understand your community.** Translate printed information into the language(s) spoken by local parents. Schedule events during the evening and on the weekends. If the event is in-person, provide transportation or vouchers. Offer child care and food.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** This will help engender trust and strengthen relationships.

In addition to parents, CBOs may want to develop a strategy to lean on peers to help motivate their fellow students. Here are a few great examples:

- The organization [PeerForward](#) is a national nonprofit leader in programming that leverages student influence. CBOs can learn from the excellent practices behind their peer-to-peer model, designed to activate high school youth to motivate and influence other high school students to increase college-going behavior. PeerForward states that their independent research shows the best predictor of four-year college enrollment for students of color from low-income backgrounds is whether they have friends who plan on going to college. PeerForward uses Youth Activation to build college counseling capacity and includes student voice and creativity as solutions for postsecondary guidance and counseling.



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- College access programs may have limited resources to hire additional college advisers for the program staff. However, college access programs can supplement their efforts by engaging program alumni college students to mentor high school students. The [Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation](#) shows that near-peer mentoring by alumni is a sustaining, community-based model, as alumni have a similar background as their mentees. This near-peer mentoring model also develops the leadership and social-emotional skills of both mentees and alumni.
- In 2018-19, Broward County Public Schools in Florida started to leverage their existing relationship with PeerForward. Thinking about how to build capacity with college and career advising, Ralph Aiello, director of school counseling, stated: “When you look around those school campuses, 95% of the people on those campuses are students, [so] we should leverage their strengths and altruism to influence the needs of their peers.” The district recognized that students tend to listen to each other far more than they listen to adults. Broward County Public

Schools created a program, [BRACE Cadets](#), to focus exclusively on college access activities. Once selected, these peer-mentor cadets go through a multiday training that covers college and career information, Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program, a FAFSA 101 module, college applications, and more. In addition, BRACE Cadets focus on posting and answering questions on Instagram, Twitter, and other social media platforms. Aiello concludes that getting students involved with this effort has been critical. Aiello and his team "have been beating this drum for a decade now, but as soon as a student or child says the same thing, everyone starts listening. ... Their voice amplifies far greater than ours."

It may not be feasible for a CBO to lift up a whole new parent or peer program this year, but understanding that students often listen to their parents or other students is crucial. Brainstorm a few strategies this spring to get started on involving more parents and/or student voices into your outreach as a practical place to start.

Find a few parents of current or former program participants and create an informal focus group to best understand their role in supporting college access activities. Gather a group of the most involved student participants in your current activities and dream up some ways they can get busy on social media and texting their peers. They can use a short and standard curriculum of encouraging messages and links to help with the FAFSA and college access enrollment questions. Surrounding vulnerable, disengaged, or reluctant students with a system of comfort and support may lead more of them to choose college enrollment as their best option.

Read More:

- [Tips for Engaging Parents](#)
- [NCAN Report: "The Data That Matter and the Plans That Work"](#)

5. Stop Summer Melt

NCAN's working definition of summer melt is "the phenomenon of college-intending students who have applied to, been accepted by, and made a deposit to a college or university, but fail to matriculate to that college (or any other) in the fall following their high school graduation." NCAN recently published a comprehensive blog post titled "[Stopping Summer Melt Starts in the Spring](#)", which compiled a wealth of valuable items on the topic.

Every year, an estimated [10-40% of high school students](#) with every intention of enrolling in college the following fall never actually do so. Students most underrepresented on college campuses, e.g., students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and first-generation students, are the most susceptible to challenges of this "summer melt."

Financial aid is often one of seniors' biggest hurdles. If there are gaps in a college's sticker price and a financial aid package, students often don't know how to close that gap. Another hurdle occurs when a student is selected for FAFSA verification and needs to provide additional documents. The office of Federal Student Aid estimates that [7.2% of students](#) selected for FAFSA verification do not receive subsidized federal aid as a result.

Tips and techniques used by a variety of CBOs and schools to combat summer melt include:

- Collecting senior surveys (also called exit surveys) earlier in high school so the resulting data can be used to identify students for advising and support.
- Proactively scheduling postsecondary advising sessions prior to graduation.
- Helping students review financial aid award offers, determine and understand grant and loan aid projections for all four years, and assess affordable options prior to high school graduation.
- Hosting summer drop-in hours at school or in students' neighborhoods.
- Advocating to institutions and financial aid offices on students' behalf and forming lasting partnerships with the institutions.
- Alerting students now about your organization's summer outreach plans.
- Using a local area code for texting interventions.

NCAN member organization [Get2College](#) in Mississippi, a program of the Woodward Hines Educational Foundation, responded to the pandemic and making a summer melt plan by using what they call "old school" tactics, in addition to virtual methods. Get2College describes three old school methods they put to use:

- **Snail mail:** With limited or no internet access at home for many students, Get2College relied on the postal service for information delivery. The organization obtained names and mailing addresses from ACT of many Mississippi seniors. They designed and mailed postcards to students reminding them to complete their FAFSA. As a result of the postcard mailing campaign, Mississippi saw an increase of 3.8%.
- **Phone calls:** The Get2College team executed a phone campaign to reach seniors who had visited a Get2College center or event. They wanted to make sure that the seniors had completed the FAFSA and if not, help them to do so. Frequently, students who had already completed their FAFSA had other questions about college, financial aid, and the verification process.
- **Printed fliers:** Using federal FAFSA completion data to identify select high schools with low completion rates, Get2College printed a FAFSA completion reminder to be handed to seniors when they picked up their caps and gowns. From this small effort, they had several students from these high schools contact Get2College for FAFSA completion assistance.

In Riverside, California, text messaging and email are used for communicating with students about college enrollment, but the tactic of working the phones has been deployed there too. Catalina Cifuentes, executive director of college and career readiness for the Riverside County Office of Education, states that a number of schools conduct end-of-the-year assessments, but there is time now in the spring and summer to contact students and ask simple questions, not make assumptions. Asking questions such as "what do you need to be successful to enroll in college in the fall?" turns up a variety of issues that can be dealt with in spring or summer. Most often, Cifuentes states that students respond with financial issues that need less than \$500 to solve, or other issues with technology that can be readily addressed.

Other takeaways from the summer melt blog include:

- **Measure and understand summer melt.** With an understanding of how many students intend to go to college, compare that information against data available through the National Student Clearinghouse. NSC’s StudentTracker service helps organizations determine how many students actually enroll in college the following fall.
- **If many of your students are going to the same colleges, consider creating transition “cheat-sheets.”** The Puget Sound College and Career Network created a number of wonderful checklists for their students’ popular college choices. They include simple one-page summaries of tasks, deadlines, and “good to know” information – complete with links and contact information.
- **If your CBO has the resources to hire summer employees, this high-impact approach allows for personalized advising.** For the class of 2021 in particular, it is a great way to reach students who started their college-going process later in the year. This is especially impactful if your organization has access to the information necessary to contact students over the summer.
- **Research suggests that a texting campaign is a cost-effective way to stay in contact with students.** The aim of texting should be to inform students about college-related tasks that they might not be aware of, remind them of deadlines, and help them complete such tasks before enrolling.

For the class of 2021, we cannot overstate the importance of summer melt interventions. [New data about the class of 2020](#) tells us that low-income high school enrollment numbers were down more than 13 times from the previous year. Similarly, high-minority high schools saw enrollment decline more than tenfold. Use the [Summer Melt Toolkit](#) and lay out your interventions as soon as possible.

Read More:

- [Summer Melt Toolkit](#)
- [Stopping Summer Melt Starts in the Spring](#)

6. Help and Hope

In addition to academic preparation and robust financial aid, other necessary components for first-generation students and students of color to effectively access and enroll in college are more personal – self-confidence, adaptability, and persistence. CBO programs are designed to play a large role in bolstering students’ self-esteem and determination. By carefully filling in student knowledge and providing access to resources and caring, expert adults, organizations can help ensure enrollment and completion.

NCAN member [College Crusade of Rhode Island](#) has a mission to prepare and inspire young people to become the first in their families to attend and complete college. In addition to comprehensive college access and success advising, College Crusade works to equip students with skills and confidence to troubleshoot and self-advocate. In a 2020 [Boston Globe article](#), College Crusade Chief Program Officer Dana Ginestet talked about their worries for young people in their program: “...student morale is a major concern. From a psychological and risk-taking perspective, our students need to feel optimistic about

their chances for success when they decide to embark on a college journey. When students feel hopeful about the future, they are more willing to look at issues from a long-term perspective. The pandemic has really dampened our students' optimism, and we are working closely with them to bolster resilience and help them refocus on long-term goals."

Trusted staff members and volunteers who provide help with targeted resources and instill a sense of hope for the future are key to your efforts to reach out to students in spring and summer. This will motivate students to follow through on college enrollment.

To assist CBOs, NCAN collected a list of helpful resources to better assist students with their transition to higher education. Called the "[6 Campus Supports Your Students Need to Know About](#)," it tells us some of the important support systems available on many college and university campuses:

- **Counseling and Mental Health Services:** Health has been a major topic of discussion over the last couple of years. COVID-19 has only emphasized the need for mental health and counseling services on college campuses, as more students have vocalized their challenges navigating the stress of academia amid a pandemic. On-campus counseling services provide a safe space for students to share confidential information, while also finding ways to successfully navigate the stressful situations they encounter throughout their time on campus.
- **Academic Advisers:** One of the cornerstones to a student's collegiate success is the relationship they have with their academic advisers. Most colleges have dedicated staff members to help first-year students design their schedules. These faculty normally check in with students once a semester to ensure the students are on track to graduate.
- **Writing Center:** Essay writing is something many college students do on a weekly basis. Even so, every first-year student could use help improving their writing skills. Most colleges offer writing centers or studios on campus. Writing centers allow students to submit rough drafts of their assignments for critique and reflection before turning in their final drafts.
- **Financial Aid Office:** Instruct students to seek out the location of the financial aid office. Some first-year students will find themselves in the financial aid office during the first week of school ensuring their dues are cleared for the semester. Financial aid advisers can also provide information about scholarship and grant opportunities, federal work-study jobs, and more.
- **Diversity/Multicultural Affairs Office or Center:** Diversity and inclusion programs have become more common on college campuses. These offices specialize in celebrating racial, gender, sexual orientation, and other types of diversity on campus. The staff at these spaces also provide emotional support, judgment-free zones, and a place to discuss topics that are sometimes seen as taboo in today's society. Encouraging your students to connect with these offices can help them navigate the new environment.
- **Professors:** College professors may be much more hands-off than a student's high school teachers were. This difference in teaching style can lead to academic challenges for your student if they aren't prepared for the change. Be sure to emphasize with your student that professors can be your biggest asset, not only in the classroom but also in the future. The first

step to achieving a strong relationship with a professor is to visit them during office hours. This allows the student to ask questions about course material and express any concerns they have about adjusting to college studies.

Read More:

- [6 Campus Supports Your Students Need to Know About](#)

As we stated at the beginning of this guide, it is imperative that CBO leaders recognize the urgency of addressing the declines we've seen in the class of 2020 data, and redouble efforts now to facilitate a successful fall enrollment process for 2021 graduates. We hope these resources provide some useful techniques and ideas as you continue working to inspire, motivate, and support young people pursuing credentials and college degrees.