



FY 2025
ANNUAL REPORT

Stronger Colleges, Vibrant Communities
Driving Change That Matters

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

Raising Our Sights: Moving Beyond Completion to Community Vibrancy

A Letter From Dr. Karen A. Stout

President and CEO of Achieving the Dream

Amidst the demographic, economic, and policy challenges the U.S. higher education system faces, Achieving the Dream and our more than 300 Network colleges are raising our sights for student success. This past year, we introduced a new strategic framework to not only increase retention and graduation rates but to bolster graduates' earning power and expand — as well as demonstrate — our institutions' contributions to the communities they serve.

Field tested by 15 leading ATD Network colleges,¹ ATD's Community Vibrancy Framework is addressing some of the unmet challenges of the student success movement — expanding access into and through

higher education while lowering costs, creating greater social and economic mobility for more learners and their families, and helping communities flourish across a broad range of measures.

The framework is based on the belief that student success requires that institutions continue to look “inside-out” by deeply understanding students and how transforming institutions supports their success. This has been at the core of ATD work over the last two decades, and it has resulted in important improvements, with ATD Network colleges showing higher graduation and persistence rates than their peers. At the same time, the framework asks institutions to look “outside-in”— understanding who is missing from our campuses and how community context influences and informs the work we do to support student success. As we begin our third decade of work, we will be supporting colleges as they take on this dual approach to student success even as we continue to test, assess, and strengthen longstanding student success reform efforts.

Specifically, we are helping institutions increase their capacity to work “inside-out” by customizing supports for underserved student groups, such as student parents, adult learners, and Native American students, and through a new effort to help students confront institutional barriers to student success. We also are helping colleges explore how institutional processes and programs can advance and accelerate student success by

¹ Connecting Access and Credential Attainment to Economic Mobility and Community Vibrancy: Fifteen Colleges Test ATD's New Transformational Framework.
<https://achievingthedream.org/lessons-learned-from-atds-community-vibrancy-cohort/>

changing the structure of our academic terms or by introducing more effective dual-enrollment programming.

To encourage colleges to look “outside-in,” we have been helping them explore how local context and the needs of the communities they serve can inform transformation efforts and lead to powerful results for the community. For example, we are helping rural colleges, which are central institutions serving growing needs of large numbers of communities across the nation, become workforce development hubs. And we are supporting efforts to address talent development needs in health care, business, information technology, and other fields that help colleges continue to create more opportunities for economic mobility.

We believe the new Community Vibrancy Framework will help institutions, funders, and partners work together to increase our college’s sustainability by demonstrating institutional relevance and the value of institutions to people’s lives and the wellbeing of the community. The framework will serve as the backbone of ATD’s approach to innovation, coaching, and service delivery.

Underpinning all of this work is ATD’s continued commitment to ensuring that the decisions and directions driving institutional transformation are empowered by data. That approach has expanded through the Community Vibrancy Framework, which uses new sources of government, nonprofit agency, and private-sector data to understand who institutions are not reaching, how they can better support the sustainability and economic wellbeing of the communities they serve, and who they can partner with to transform both the college and the community.

Finally, this last fiscal year saw the continued growth and influence of artificial intelligence (AI) at our institutions, in the lives of the students we serve, and in the world of work for which

we are preparing students to enter. To help colleges use AI to enhance teaching, learning, and student supports and to ensure AI is being used ethically and inclusively to promote equitable student success, we launched the ATD *AI for All* Task Force, composed of distinguished ATD Network presidents, AI experts, and national business and industry leaders. The task force developed a framework of eight key areas of action that address the implications of AI for our institutions and outline strategies developed for ATD Network colleges and others to systematically address how they can become AI-ready and AI-agile. Those strategies² will inform ATD’s work across our service areas, coaching, and professional learning offerings going forward. To further draw attention to meeting institutional needs, ATD also led a four-part AI Workshop Series during the year.

None of these efforts would be possible without the commitment and contributions of the colleges in the ATD Network and the amazing leaders of those institutions. We are excited to have nine new colleges join the Network this year, and we continue to work with hundreds of community colleges and open-access institutions beyond our Network. The expansion of our reach and the momentum of community vibrancy reflect the dedication of our dynamic and determined partner organizations and funders who are helping us redefine what is possible and systematically address knowledge and implementation gaps in our reform efforts.

We are committed to continuing to serve community colleges and other open-access institutions that play a vital role in lifting up students, families, and communities and help our nation continue to strive to be a more equitable and just society.

Sincerely,



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Creating the AI-Enabled Community College: A Road Map for Using Generative AI To Accelerate Student Success.
<https://achievingthedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/ATD-AI-Task-Force-Report-Final-7-21-25.pdf>

ATD Board of Directors

ATD is pleased to announce the addition of two esteemed colleagues to our Board of Directors: Dr. Marcia Ballinger, president of Lorain County Community College, and Dr. Shanna Jackson, president of Nashville State Community College.

- Gregory D. Williams, Ed.D. — President, Odessa College; Chair of the Board
- Suzanne Walsh, J.D. — President, City University of Seattle; Vice Chair of the Board
- Larry Kubal — Partner, Labrador Ventures; Treasurer of the Board
- Mike Flores, Ph.D. — Chancellor, Alamo Colleges District; Secretary of the Board
- Marcia Ballinger, Ph.D., President, Lorain County Community College
- Nickolas Certo — Former Vice President and Manager, University Banking
- Shanna Jackson, Ed.D., President, Nashville State Community College
- Alex Johnson, Ph.D. — President Emeritus, Cuyahoga Community College
- Mary Alice McCarthy, Ph.D. — Founder and Senior Director, Center on Education and Skills, New America
- Nicole Melander, Ph.D. — Vice President, Talent & Development in Human Resources, Anthology Inc.
- John O'Brien, Ph.D. — President and CEO, EDUCAUSE
- Monte Randall, Ed.D. — President, College of the Muscogee Nation
- Ricardo D. Torres — Former President and CEO, National Student Clearinghouse
- Karen A. Stout, Ed.D. — President and CEO, Achieving the Dream; Ex-Officio Member of the Board
- Leah Myer Austin — Former Senior Vice President, Lumina Foundation for Education; Director Emerita
- Pam Y. Eddinger, Ph.D. — President and CEO, Bunker Hill Community College, Director Emerita
- Marc S. Herzog — Former Chancellor, Connecticut Community College System; Director Emeritus
- Eduardo J. Padrón, Ph.D. — President Emeritus, Miami Dade College; Director Emeritus
- Robert G. Templin Jr., Ed.D. — President Emeritus, Northern Virginia Community College; Director Emeritus
- Louis Testoni — Former Managing Partner, Lake Erie Market of PricewaterhouseCoopers; Director Emeritus



Top Two Factors

Influencing Colleges to Choose ATD Services:

67%

Reputation

64%

Quality of Service

The ATD Way

OUR VISION

ATD will help our Network colleges catalyze equitable and economically vibrant communities through institutional transformation that advances community colleges as profoundly accessible hubs of learning, credentialing, and economic mobility that eliminate inequities in educational and workforce outcomes.

OUR MISSION

To lead and support a national network of community colleges to achieve sustainable institutional transformation through sharing knowledge, innovative solutions, and effective practices and policies leading to improved outcomes for all students.

OUR APPROACH

Achieving the Dream works alongside community colleges to drive lasting institutional change by strengthening foundational capacities, such as leadership, high-quality teaching and learning, and effective data use, while building intentional strategies for supporting students holistically and deepening K-12 and industry partnerships. This work expands social and economic opportunity for students and strengthens the communities they serve.

Our approach is grounded in three interlocking strategies: delivering tailored support through coaching and services, facilitating peer learning through our national Network, and advancing innovation across the student success field. All of this work is informed by a deep commitment to using data to understand student experiences and outcomes — and by a growing recognition that community context, economic opportunity, and institutional transformation are inextricably linked. ATD's new Community Vibrancy Framework reflects this more expansive view of student success, guiding colleges as they align internal change efforts with external forces that shape student outcomes — all with the ultimate goal of enhancing community prosperity.

Spotlight on Coaching

Coaching was ranked by ATD Colleges as the top benefit of Network participation

ATD coaches serve as the primary connection between our organization and the colleges we support. Drawing on deep expertise in areas such as data, teaching and learning, student supports, and leadership, they deliver highly tailored support that advances whole college transformation and strengthens capacity to drive lasting student and community success.

"Achieving the Dream coaches have been absolutely phenomenal. ... we would not have been able to do the work that we've done over the past several years without their support..."

— ATD Network college

108

ATD coaches in the field

8,000+

**Hours of Coaching
Provided**

182

**Community
Colleges
Served**

Integrated Support for Institutional Transformation

ATD supports colleges in making comprehensive, aligned changes that reach across departments, divisions, and systems. Our coaches help institutions take a student-centered view in everything they do — from building academic pathways to improving advising to shaping inclusive learning environments. We believe that change at this scale must be built on strong foundations, so our services help colleges develop core capacities in areas like leadership, strategy, and culture.



A key resource in this work is our Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT), which helps colleges evaluate their strengths and areas for growth across seven essential capacity areas. In 2024, we introduced ICAT 2.0, an updated version of the framework that reflects the evolving needs of institutions and the field. The new model places student and community centeredness at its core and highlights the interconnected nature of institutional capacities needed to drive transformational change.

The Power of the Network

Our ATD Network colleges gain access not only to expert guidance from ATD but also to one another. We cultivate spaces where practitioners can exchange ideas, challenge assumptions, and build community. From national events like DREAM to smaller summits and learning communities, we foster shared learning and accelerate progress by connecting those who are doing the work.

Innovation That Moves the Field Forward

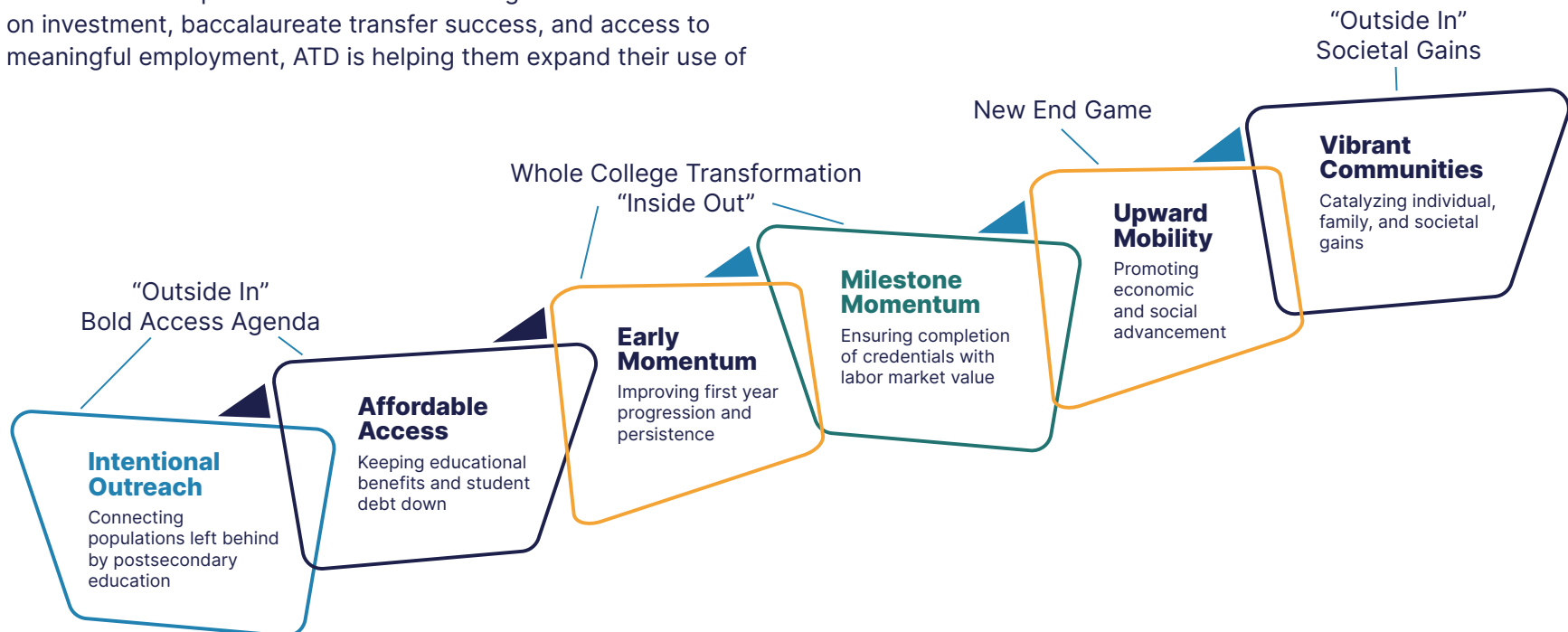
We partner with colleges across the country to pilot new approaches and gather insights that inform both our practice and the field more broadly. By testing ideas in real-world contexts and evaluating what works, we help identify promising solutions to today's most urgent challenges. For example, ATD's *AI for All* Task Force brought together leaders from across the Network to examine the opportunities and implications of artificial intelligence in higher education. Their work laid the foundation for an early FY 2026 report that highlights strategies for using AI equitably and responsibly to strengthen teaching, learning, and student support. We share these and other insights through convenings, publications, and practical tools, enabling institutions to adapt and build on what we've learned.

Introducing the ATD Community Vibrancy Framework: A Broader Lens on Student and Community Success

ATD's work has always been fueled by data and focused on students — but our vision has evolved to recognize the broader context in which colleges and students operate. Our new Community Vibrancy Framework reflects this understanding. It helps colleges take both an “inside-out” view — focusing on how institutional transformation drives student outcomes — and an “outside-in” view — exploring how labor market needs, local economies, and community well-being shape those outcomes.

As institutions explore new metrics such as graduates' return on investment, baccalaureate transfer success, and access to meaningful employment, ATD is helping them expand their use of

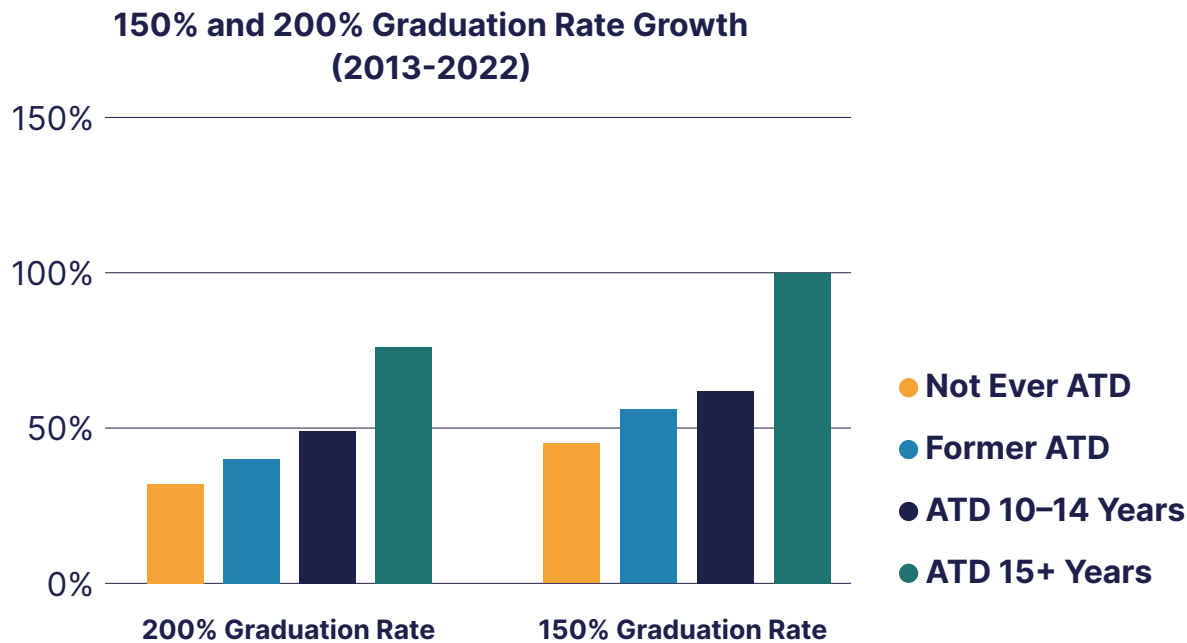
data to reflect both educational and economic progress. With this framework, we emphasize that student success and community prosperity are deeply interconnected — and that colleges have a vital role to play in ensuring both. A report and a companion series of case studies (see page 32) highlights insights from fifteen colleges in ATD's inaugural Community Vibrancy Cohort that tested the framework to strengthen social and economic mobility and align programs with community needs.



Evidence of Transformation: ATD by the Numbers

Each year, Achieving the Dream measures progress not only through stories of institutional transformation but also through tangible evidence of impact across our Network. While we're proud of the progress reflected among ATD Network colleges, we recognize that many factors influence institutional change. These results should be viewed as an indication of positive, collective progress rather than a direct measure of causation.

Graduation Rates: ATD Colleges Demonstrate Significant Growth



ATD colleges with long-term participation show the greatest increases in both 150%* and 200%* graduation rates, suggesting that extended engagement may build institutional capacity for student completion.

*150% refers to one and a half times the normal time to complete a given program, and 200% refers to twice the normal time to complete a given program. (Example: For a two-year associate degree, a 150% graduation rate refers to the rate at which students completed the program within three years, and a 200% graduation rate refers to the rate at which students completed the program within four years.)

Data sources:

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>
- Achieving the Dream. (2025). *Salesforce institutional engagement, tenure, and exit records* [Internal data]. ATD Salesforce CRM.

95%

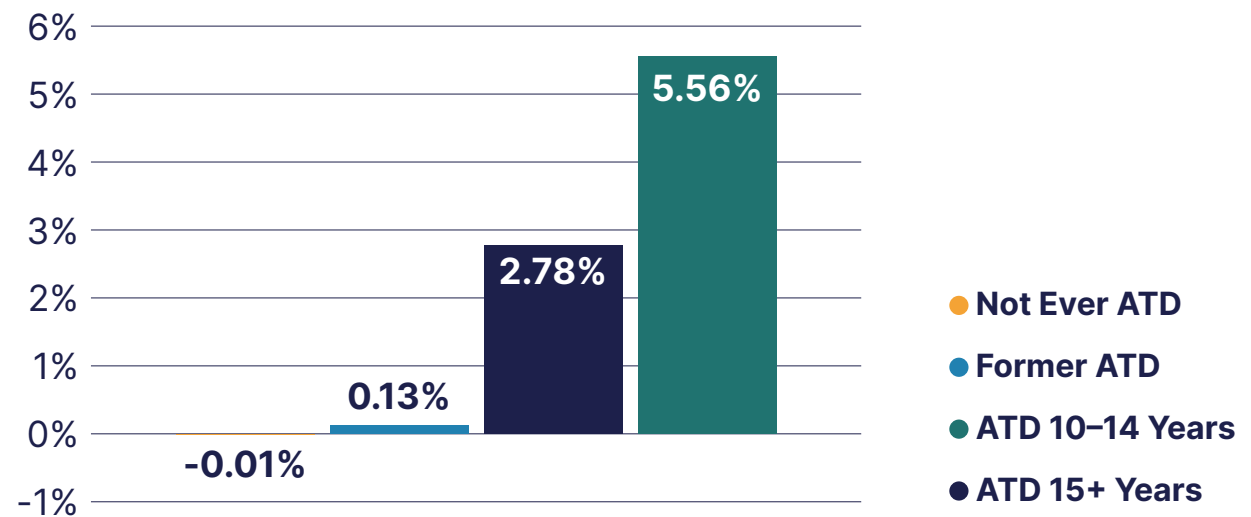
of Network colleges said ATD impacted their student success accomplishments

91%

of Network colleges report being “very” or “extremely” likely to recommend ATD to other institutions

ATD Colleges Lead in Part-Time Retention Growth

Part-Time Retention Growth Rates (2013-2022) 10+ Years vs Former vs Not-Ever ATD Colleges



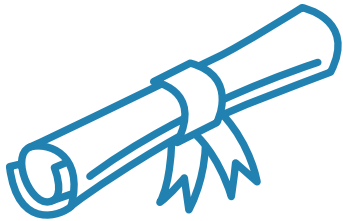
- Part-time student retention is a leading indicator of student success, signaling whether colleges are effectively supporting learners who often face the greatest barriers to completion.
- With two-thirds of community college students, including the majority of adult learners, attending part-time, improving retention for these students is essential for advancing economic mobility and meeting workforce needs.
- ATD Network colleges are leading the field, strengthening advising, flexible scheduling, and holistic supports that help part-time students stay enrolled and achieve their goals.

ATD Network Colleges: Credentials Conferred



BACHELOR'S DEGREE COMPLETION

- Fastest-growing credential: +357% growth
- Reflects expansion of applied baccalaureate programs and improved transfer pathways
- Still represents a smaller share of total completions



ASSOCIATE DEGREES

- Most frequently awarded credential
- Account for more than 65% of completions
- Increased by 19%: 134,587 (2013) → 160,178 (2022)



CERTIFICATES

Critical for workforce preparation and career advancement

- 1–2-year certificates: +36.6% increase
- Short-term (<1 year): Steady growth, 53,000+ completions in 2022

Data sources:

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>
- Achieving the Dream. (2025). *Salesforce institutional engagement, tenure, and exit records* [Internal data]. ATD Salesforce CRM.





The Reach and Diversity of Our Network

With participation from nearly a quarter of all U.S. community colleges, Achieving the Dream's reach extends across a broad and diverse landscape of institutions, reflecting colleges of every size, setting, and student population.

2,740,098

ATD Network college students served

30%

**of Network students
are enrolled full-time**

70%

**of Network students
are enrolled part-time**

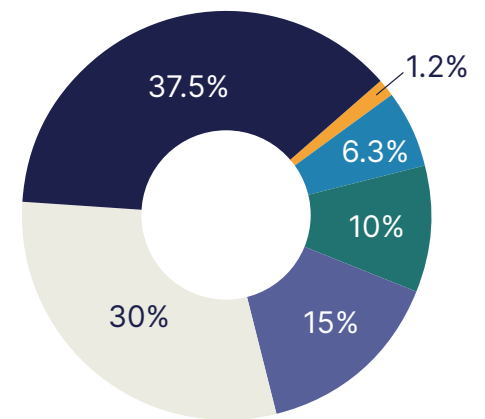
59%

**of Network students
are women**

50%

**of first-time, full-time
Network students are
Pell Grant recipients**

**Network college student
demographics**



- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- African American
- Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Other

Data sources:

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>
- Achieving the Dream. (2025). *Salesforce institutional engagement, tenure, and exit records* [Internal data]. ATD Salesforce CRM.



24%

of all community colleges have participated in Foundations of Transformation

Colleges served by ATD based on institution size and geography



ATD serves...

100%

of Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions

25%

of Hispanic-Serving Institutions

37%

of Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)

17%

of Historically Black Colleges

93%

of Tribal Colleges

21%

of Predominantly Black Institutions



Meet Our Newest Network Colleges

ATD continues to welcome new colleges into its Network each year. In 2025, nine new colleges across six states joined as Network colleges and attended our annual Kickoff Institute, held this year in Charlotte, North Carolina. The 2025 cohort includes a consortium of four State University of New York (SUNY) institutions.

- Community College of Rhode Island
- Jefferson Community College (New York)
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (Michigan)
- North Country Community College (New York)
- Ocean County College (New Jersey)
- Rappahannock Community College (Virginia)
- Roxbury Community College (Massachusetts)
- SUNY Broome Community College (New York)
- Tompkins Cortland Community College (New York)

Recognizing Excellence

ATD celebrates the exceptional work of our Network colleges with three tiers of distinction.



39

**Colleges hold
Leader College
status**



8

**Colleges hold
Leadership
College of
Distinction
status**



24

**Colleges to
date have been
named
Leah Meyer
Austin (LMA)
Award winners**

In 2025, 23 colleges earned Leader College or Leader College of Distinction status, including three colleges that earned Leader College of Distinction for the first time and 10 colleges that were newly named Leader Colleges.

The Leah Meyer Austin Award — the highest honor in the Network to which a college can aspire — was awarded to two colleges.





2025 Leah Meyer Austin Award Winners

CHATTANOOGA STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Since joining the ATD Network in 2016, ChattState has consistently demonstrated strong leadership, strategic alignment, and a deep, campus-wide investment in student-centered reform.



The college earned Leader College status in 2019, received Leader College of Distinction status in 2023, and, in 2025, was named a Leah Meyer Austin Award co-winner.

Under the leadership of President Dr. Rebecca Ashford, the college launched Vision 2027, a bold strategic plan aimed at ensuring that 5,000 students of all races and income levels earn credentials leading to family-sustaining wages. This plan, grounded in five core pillars — program innovation, holistic supports, inclusive culture, teaching excellence, and financial stewardship — has unified the campus and guided dramatic progress.

Key Results:

- Gateway course completion rates rose significantly between fall 2020 and fall 2023:
 - English: Up 17.2 percentage points
 - Math: Up 11 percentage points
- Credit completion rates jumped 11.8 percentage points from fall 2020 to fall 2023 cohorts
- Fall-to-fall persistence increased 7.1 percentage points between the 2019 and 2022 cohorts
- Transfer and baccalaureate completion rates grew 8.2 percentage points for the fall 2015 to fall 2018 cohort

ChattState's transformation is a testament to visionary leadership, data-informed decision-making, and a campus culture where every individual plays a role in advancing student success.



SOUTHWESTERN

AN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A member of the ATD Network since 2012, Southwestern has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to student success and community impact. The institution earned Leader College status in 2015, held it through 2021, regained the distinction in 2023, and was named a Leah Meyer Austin Award co-winner in 2025.

Serving a remote, rural region on Oregon's southern coast, Southwestern has long been the sole higher education option for many of its students. Under the courageous and consistent leadership of President Dr. Patty Scott, the college has implemented bold, data-informed reforms to expand access, support adult learners, and promote economic mobility in a region grappling with the decline of once-dominant industries.

Southwestern's transformative journey is fueled by a deep culture of care, a spirit of persistence, and a commitment to meeting students where they are — whether they are first-generation learners, working adults, or part-time students seeking to reskill for a changing workforce.

Key Results:

- Part-time learner completion rate more than doubled from 2017 to 2020, narrowing the gap with full-time learners by 3.2 percentage points



- Adult learner completion rate increased 12.3 percentage points, reducing the equity gap with traditional-aged learners by 6.7 percentage points
- Overall four-year completion rate rose from 29% to 35.6% between the 2017 and 2020 cohorts
- Transfer and bachelor's completion rate increased by 3.7 percentage points, despite geographic barriers

Southwestern exemplifies how rural colleges can drive transformational change through strategic vision, inclusive practices, and a relentless focus on student success.

This year's grant-funded work demonstrates how **ATD's Community Vibrancy Framework** comes to life on our campuses and in our communities. Through relationships with national funders, partners, and institutions across the country, ATD supported colleges in improving student success, expanding pathways to economic mobility, and creating the conditions where students and communities can thrive.

Building Institutional Capacity To Meet Parenting Students' Needs

Achieving the Dream recognizes that parenting students — who make up approximately 25% of community college learners — face unique challenges and opportunities. By supporting these students, colleges not only promote academic and career success but also create lasting benefits for their children and communities.

Through the ECMC Foundation's grant, **Moving From Data to Action — Scaling Support for Student Parents**, ATD has continued to support four colleges that completed ATD's Student Parent Opportunity Assessment in 2023. In 2024 and into 2025, ATD coaches have been working closely with these institutions to design, implement, and assess strategies that respond to the unmet needs identified in the assessment process. These efforts focus on aligning student parent supports with institutional goals and creating sustainable solutions that address barriers, such as access to child care, flexible course scheduling, and financial stability.

At the same time, a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, **Support to Advance Student Parent Practices**, has allowed ATD to launch a second cohort of four additional colleges currently undergoing the Student Parent Opportunity Assessment. Coaching support for this group focuses on helping colleges identify parenting students more effectively and addresses critical issues, including

child care access, priority class registration, Title

IX compliance, and campus policies related to minors. The colleges are developing tailored action plans, equipping them to make the case for systemic change to internal and external stakeholders.



Expanding Educational Access and Social Mobility for Adult Learners

With funding from Ascendium Education Group, ATD's initiative **From Opening Doors to Ushering In: Strategic Enrollment Management for Adult Learners** supported five ATD Network colleges in developing strategic enrollment management (SEM) plans focused on removing barriers and expanding educational opportunities for underserved adult learners in their communities. In FY 2025, the participating colleges began implementing their tailored SEM plans, advancing their efforts to better understand and meet the needs of adult learners. ATD has drawn on lessons from the initiative to develop new research-based tools for the field, which will be made publicly available in FY 2026.

In FY 2025, Achieving the Dream partnered with Jobs for the Future (JFF) on the **Improving Economic Mobility for Adult Learners** initiative — designed to develop and implement strategies that support adult learners onto and through pathways to social and economic mobility. Drawing on the work of nine colleges in Michigan, New Jersey, and Virginia, the

initiative — funded by Ascendium Education Group, The Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation, and ECMC Foundation — surfaced promising practices in advising, career guidance, credit for prior learning, and student supports.

In January 2025, ATD and JFF co-hosted a national webinar to highlight insights from participating colleges and adult learners, offering practical strategies for institutions and states. ATD also laid the groundwork for an Adult Learner Toolkit — based on the initiative's research and college experiences — to be released in FY 2026.



79%

of Network colleges focused on reengaging adults with some college but no degree.

78%

of Network colleges focused on recruiting adults who traditionally haven't pursued postsecondary education.

93%

of TCUs are served by ATD.

91%

of TCUs reported that their student success accomplishments in the past year were directly impacted by ATD.

96%

of TCU respondents were “extremely” or “very” likely to recommend ATD.

TOP TWO FACTORS Cited by TCUs for Joining ATD:

1. ATD's Quality of Service

2. ATD's Ability To Customize Support

Cultivating Capacity and Student Success at Tribal Colleges

Achieving the Dream continues its long-standing partnership with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the American Indian College Fund (AICF), and leaders from Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) nationwide to strengthen student success and institutional capacity. Since 2017, ATD has served as a key partner in **Project Success**, an initiative led by Ascendium Education Group to improve student outcomes and financial management at TCUs.

Project Success engages 28 TCUs in building data capacity and advancing institutional priorities such as advising, strategic planning, Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) onboarding, and teaching and learning.

ATD's role focuses on helping colleges align data-driven strategies with student and community goals. In FY 2025, ATD and partners completed the data collection phase of the Project Success external evaluation, which will be shared with the field and published in a comprehensive report for TCUs and project partners.

Also in FY 2025, ATD concluded its **Serving Native American Students with Holistic Student Supports (SNASHSS) 2.0** initiative. Funded by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, SNASHSS focused on transforming the student experience through culturally grounded redesigns of holistic supports. SNASHSS colleges will work with ATD coaches to create sustainability plans that extend through Project Success, embedding practices developed through SNASHSS into institutional structures and systems.

Connecting Learning and Work for Economic Mobility

Community colleges are essential to helping students move from the classroom into stable, upwardly mobile careers. In 2025, ATD expanded its workforce initiatives with funders, colleges, and partners to tackle barriers and create equitable pathways into high-demand fields.

The **Accelerating and Diversifying Nursing Pathways** initiative, made possible by the Brave of Heart Fund, concluded in May 2025 after three years of transformative work. The initiative supported 10 community colleges in expanding and strengthening nursing programs to create stronger pathways to employment for first-generation students. Colleges launched new programs or expanded existing ones to increase capacity, broadened clinical learning environments and simulation use, and developed accelerated, competency-based curricula with enhanced credit for prior learning processes. They also revised curricula, added instructional supports, provided professional learning, and redesigned admissions and student engagement strategies to foster belonging and community. Early results show significant gains in BIPOC student enrollment and completion — particularly in high-mobility programs — and increased program capacity overall. Each college created a sustainability plan to maintain the momentum of its transformation work, and ATD plans to share lessons learned and case studies from the initiative in spring 2026.

With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, ATD's **Pre-Health Care Professional Learning Community** continued its work to strengthen health care pathways. Four colleges are addressing barriers such as rigid curricula, limited mentorship, affordability challenges, and lack of awareness of career options. Teams meet regularly to share strategies, showcase progress, and learn from one another, and they presented their expertise

at DREAM 2025. Extended funding through 2026 will sustain the work and support the launch of a new public resource hub.

ATD's **Community College to Career** project, funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, is helping four Texas colleges strengthen business and IT pathways. Building on Texas House Bill 8, colleges are expanding competency-based education, embedding AI, developing industry-recognized microcredentials, and deepening employer engagement. Through a cohort model that emphasizes peer learning and professional development, colleges are sharing strategies and building capacity to scale measures that work to advance pathways into high-wage, high-demand careers.

Through the **Prosperity for Ohio** project, Achieving the Dream and partners developed a prototype dashboard linking education and workforce outcomes to help community colleges understand how programs translate into employment and earnings. Built with two Ohio community colleges, the dashboard allows users to disaggregate data to guide students' career choices, inform program design, and demonstrate the value of higher education. Funded by a grant from the Coleridge Initiative's Democratizing Our Data Challenge through Ascendium Education Group, the project addresses a critical need for connected, actionable data, strengthens evidence-based decision-making, and supports economic mobility for students. Following positive pilot feedback, ATD and partners are now working to scale the dashboard statewide and sharing resources to help other states develop similar tools.

Gateway to College

Achieving the Dream continues to champion Gateway to College, a national network of 25 early college programs hosted by community colleges in partnership with K–12 school districts across 13 states. Designed to reconnect young people who have disengaged from traditional education pathways, these programs offer a second chance at academic and personal success. ATD provides tailored support to each site, offering tools like data-informed insights and customized dashboards that help local leaders track progress and drive improvement.

FY 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

3

programs honored for exceeding graduation benchmark

8

programs honored with the Gateway to College Program Excellence Award for exceeding all four benchmarks

9

programs had three-year graduation rates between 70% and 100%

Shaping the Future of Dual Enrollment

Achieving the Dream deepened its leadership in dual enrollment policy through its role on the steering committee of the College in High School Alliance (CHSA). In 2025, CHSA launched the Next Phase of

Dual Enrollment Policy cohort, supported by the ECMC Foundation, Joyce Foundation, and Strada Education Foundation. ATD is providing coaching to three of the seven participating state teams — Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon — helping them set statewide visions for dual enrollment, expand access for rural and underserved students, and strengthen the intentionality of dual enrollment experiences. State teams convened in person at DREAM 2025 and continue to meet through monthly coaching sessions and quarterly virtual cohort gatherings. Across all three states, ATD provides strategic planning, facilitation, and on-the-ground stakeholder engagement to help build stronger, more equitable dual enrollment systems.

In Oregon, ATD is also integrating this work with a series of regional convenings focused on sustaining Career Connected Learning navigational supports across the state's 17 community colleges, supported by the Ford Family Foundation.



Strengthening Rural Community Colleges as Workforce Development Hubs

Rural community colleges play a critical role in driving economic mobility and opportunity in geographically isolated areas, often serving as central hubs for education, workforce development, and community engagement. Yet, these institutions face persistent challenges, including limited resources, declining enrollment, and restricted access to technology.

Launched in 2020, ATD's **Building Resiliency in Rural Communities for the Future of Work** initiative supported seven rural colleges, through coaching, tools, and peer learning opportunities, in strengthening institutional capacity, fostering a culture of evidence, advancing equitable student success, aligning programs with workforce needs, and preparing students for careers in the digital economy. In 2024, additional funding from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies enabled ATD to work with the colleges on communication plans and sustainability plans, and it supported an external evaluation report by Education Northwest to capture lessons learned across the cohort and highlight best practices.



37%

of colleges served by
ATD are rural.

Advancing Student Success by Scaling Shortened Academic Terms

Research shows that shortened terms can lead to higher course completion rates, increased persistence, and faster credential attainment. Yet, adopting these models at scale requires careful planning and strong alignment with student success strategies. Through targeted coaching, professional development, peer learning, and data support, ATD is helping colleges embed and sustain these structures for long-term impact.



ATD has long been a champion of shortened academic terms, highlighting their potential to support student momentum and improve outcomes, particularly for today's students juggling multiple responsibilities. Its widely used guide, *Preparing for Shortened Academic Terms*, has helped institutions navigate early-stage planning for this transformational shift, which promises to better meet the needs of today's students and build a stronger foundation for long-term student success.

In FY 2025, ATD deepened its commitment to this work by hosting Redesign for Results: Leveraging Shortened Terms for Student Success, a virtual workshop designed for faculty, advisors, and instructional designers. The session explored evidence-based strategies, peer dialogue, and institution-specific implementation planning.

Building on this momentum, ATD launched **Scaling Shortened Academic Terms** — a national initiative to support 16 colleges across four states as they scale the implementation of shorter academic terms, such as eight-week semesters or quarters. Funded by Ascendium Education Group, the initiative will help colleges expand their impact through intensive coaching, cross-state learning, and data-informed decision-making. The work will undergo a comprehensive evaluation by the Community College Research Center.

Supporting Disproportionately Impacted Learners

In FY 2025, with the support of ECMC Foundation, Achieving the Dream launched the **Alliance for Community College Learner Success**, a two-year initiative that will support four colleges and one college system in improving outcomes for disproportionately impacted learners — students whose educational outcomes are significantly affected by institutional barriers.

Through structured coaching, peer learning, and technical assistance, participating institutions will analyze disaggregated data, engage in professional learning, and develop action plans focused on teaching and learning, holistic supports, and strategic

leadership. The Alliance will build on ATD's proven approach to helping colleges design sustainable, student-centered practices that remove barriers to success.

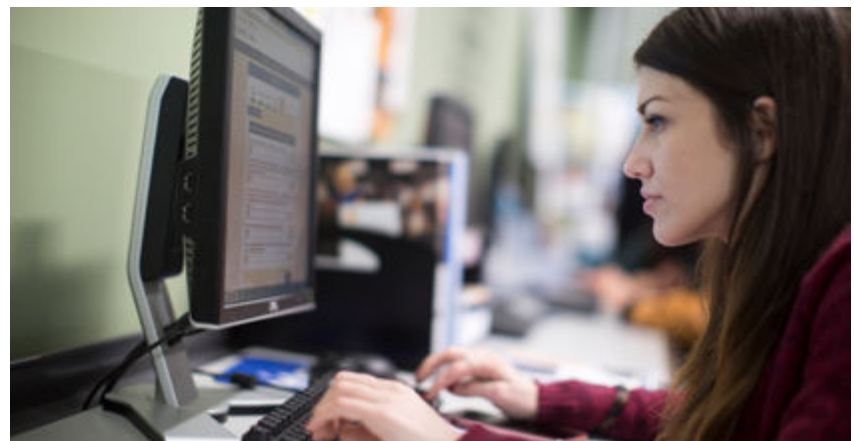
As the work unfolds, participating colleges will contribute insights and strategies that can inform student success efforts across the ATD Network and beyond. This initiative represents an important step toward helping more colleges transform the way they serve students most affected by structural challenges in higher education.

Empowering Colleges With New Data Tools

In FY 2025, ATD enhanced its support for colleges through new tools and resources for the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP), a powerful data system developed by the National Student Clearinghouse that helps institutions analyze student success by providing detailed, interactive dashboards and comprehensive student-level data. Building on existing training, ATD redesigned a Data Discovery & Decision Support Course to help college teams explore their data more effectively and make equity-focused decisions.

The organization also created a new data literacy course and new data explorer tools, including the Momentum Data Explorer and Student Journey Explorer, which offer deeper, cohort-based insights beyond the standard dashboards. Alongside specialty guides and a webinar series on advanced data files, these resources were designed to empower colleges to identify performance gaps, measure impact, and scale effective strategies.

Supported by the Gates Foundation, these freely available tools, scheduled to launch in FY 2026, will strengthen the PDP's role as a transformational resource, advancing ATD's mission to promote data-informed institutional transformation.

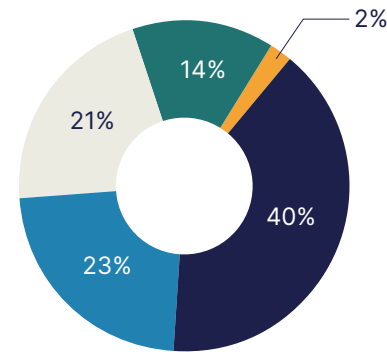


Professional Learning Events

Achieving the Dream serves as a vital source of professional learning for the field. Over the past year, ATD offered a wide range of learning events that are highly responsive to emerging needs and trends in higher education.

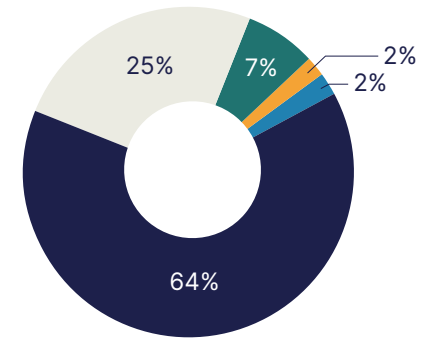
Our flagship convening, DREAM, and our yearly Data & Analytics Summit — which, in 2024, explored the intersection of AI, data, socio-economic mobility, and labor market relevance — remained important annual touchpoints for practitioners working to transform student outcomes and community well-being. ATD's learning events reached professionals from hundreds of institutions across the country and abroad, offering actionable insights and strategies aligned with our mission to support community colleges as accessible hubs of learning, credentialing, social mobility, and community prosperity.

2025 DREAM Participants by College Role



- Faculty
- Staff
- President/Chancellor/CEO
- Dean/Director/AVP
- Cabinet Member

2025 DREAM Participants by College Function



- Academic Affairs
- Student Services
- Institutional Research
- Continuing Education
- Information Technology

2024

Sept. 25–27: 2024 Data & Analytics Summit: Charting a New Data Frontier: AI Innovation and Next-Generation Metrics

Sept. 16: AI Workshop Series: Ensuring Inclusive Learning Experiences

Oct. 11: Redesign for Results: Leveraging Shortened Terms for Student Success

Sept. 30: Joining the ATD Network: Transforming Colleges, Transforming Communities

Nov. 4: Developing Emergent AI Practices To Prepare Students for a Transformed World and Workplace

Oct. 21: Centering the Student Experience in Holistic Supports and Academic Advising

Nov. 20: AI Workshop Series: Strengthening College and Career Exploration in Dual Enrollment

390 Colleges from 50 states attended ATD professional learning events, including DREAM 2025, summits, institutes, and webinars.

175 Organizations, including nonprofit partners, research organizations, K-12 school districts, funders, and sponsors, attended ATD professional learning events in 2025.

2025

Jan. 22: Advancing Economic Mobility for Adult Learners: Lessons From the Field

Jan. 13: AI Workshop Series: Enhancing Student Supports

Feb. 18–21: DREAM 2025

Feb. 18: 2025 Equity Institute; Building Vibrant, Diverse, Civically Engaged, and Equitable Communities

April 8: Community Vibrancy Webinar Series Part One: Transforming Community Colleges Through the Community Vibrancy Framework

March 31: Learning From Community Champions: A Discussion With the 2025 Leah Meyer Austin Award Winners

April 30: AI Workshop Series: Enhancing Teaching and Learning

April 22: Community Vibrancy Webinar Series Part Two: Using Community Vibrancy To Cultivate Abundance in Mind, Practice, and Mobility

June 25–27: Kickoff Institute

May 28: Building a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan That Opens Doors and Increases Student Outcomes

May 12: Preparing for Collective Impact: Using ATD's Updated Institutional Capacity Framework To Cultivate Community Vibrancy

Meet the 2025 DREAM Scholars

Achieving the Dream's DREAM Scholars program celebrates outstanding community college students who exemplify resilience, leadership, and a deep commitment to their communities. Each scholar receives a scholarship and participates in a year-long learning experience designed to build leadership, critical thinking, and professional skills. The signature moment of the experience is attending DREAM, ATD's annual convening, where scholars share their stories and insights with the broader student success community and recite their original poems. At DREAM 2025, these poems were crafted under the guidance of award-winning poet Denice Frohman in her inaugural year as ATD's poet in residence. By elevating DREAM Scholars' voices, ATD seeks to inspire not only fellow students but also educators, institutional leaders, and advocates working to advance equity and achievement in higher education.



Sonny Alaniz
Odessa
College (Texas)



Destinee Britto
Tallahassee State
College (Florida)



Heidi Counelis
Gateway to College
Program at Mott
Community College
(Michigan)



Bradley Gawie
Central University
of Technology, Free
State (South Africa)

“This program embodies values that I hold close to my heart: leadership, service, resilience, and the drive to make a positive impact.”

— Destinee Britto



Warren Miller
College of Menominee
Nation (Wisconsin)



Isaac Njoroge
Community College
of Baltimore
County (Maryland)



Diego Perez Lopez
San Jacinto
College (Texas)



Rashiadah Weaver
Cuyahoga Community
College (Ohio)

New Publications

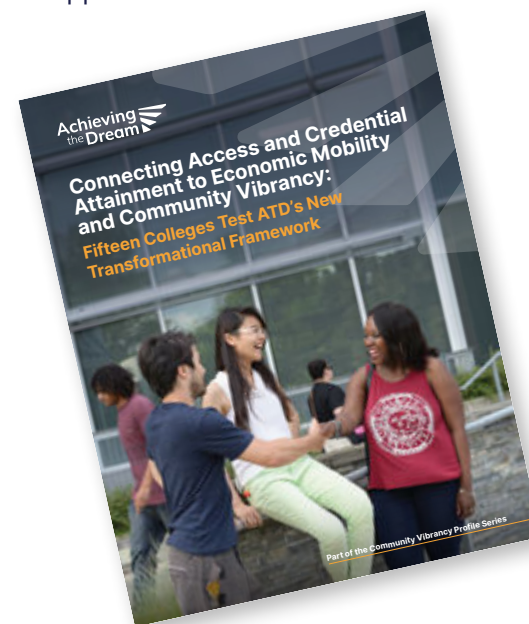
In addition to offering timely, relevant professional learning events, ATD serves as a trusted source of practitioner-focused knowledge in the higher education field, sharing research, insights, and tools through guides, case studies, and other resources. New publications in 2025 include the following:

Knowing Our Students Supplemental Guides

Three supplemental guides — on parenting students, justice-impacted students, and adult learners — were created as companion pieces to *Knowing Our Students: Understanding and Designing for Success*, a foundational guide, created in partnership with the Advising Success Network that was first released in 2021 and subsequently updated. While the guide offers practical strategies, expert insights, and real-world examples to help colleges better understand and support their students, the supplemental guides deepen and expand that work by focusing on specific groups of learners who are often underserved by existing systems.

Community Vibrancy Profile Series

This series consists of an overview report (*Connecting Access and Credential Attainment to Economic Mobility and Community Vibrancy: Fifteen Colleges Test ATD's New Transformational Framework*) and 15 individual college profiles. It explores the ways in which the colleges in ATD's inaugural Community Vibrancy Cohort tested the Community Vibrancy Framework and associated curriculum to deepen understanding of their local communities, strengthen social and economic mobility, and align programs with workforce needs and opportunities.



AI Workshop Series

In FY 2025, ATD introduced a four-part AI Workshop Series to help colleges understand and apply artificial intelligence in ways that promote equity and student success. Through interactive virtual sessions, participants explored how AI can enhance teaching, learning, and student supports while also discovering strategies to recognize and mitigate bias, ensure accessibility, and create inclusive learning environments. The series provided practical tools and frameworks that empower educators to use emerging technologies responsibly and effectively in service of all students.

270+

Registrants

100+

Colleges Represented

Philanthropic Partners

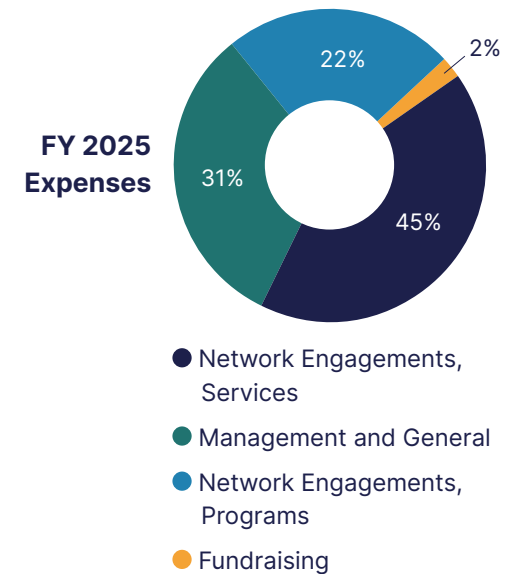
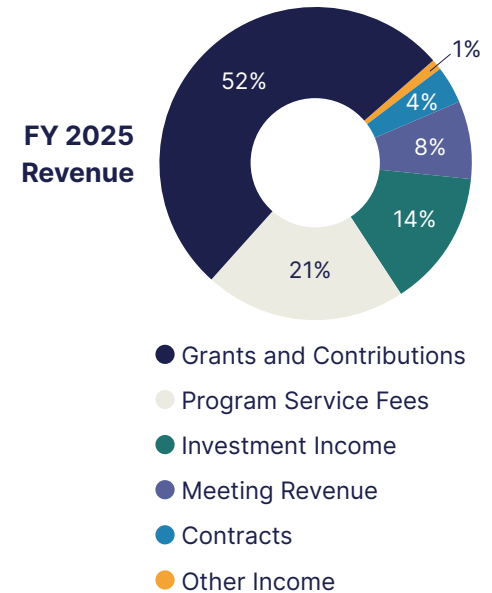
- **Ascendium Education Group**
- **Barr Foundation**
- **Brave of Heart Fund**
- **Carnegie Corporation of New York**
- **Coleridge Initiative**
- **Crimsonbridge Foundation**
- **Cullen Foundation**
- **ECMC Foundation**
- **Gates Foundation**
- **Lumina Foundation**
- **Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies**
- **Michael & Susan Dell Foundation**
- **The Annie E. Casey Foundation**
- **The Ford Family Foundation**
- **The Kresge Foundation**
- **The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**

FY 2025 Audited Financial Information

ACCOUNT	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	2025 Total
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Grants and contributions*	\$ 647,641	\$ 11,995,441	\$ 12,643,082
Program service fees	5,264,251		5,264,251
Contracts	877,296		877,296
Meeting Revenue	1,980,036		1,980,036
Other income	337,270		337,270
Non-operating revenue	0		0
Investment income	3,313,046		3,313,046
TOTAL REVENUE			24,414,981
EXPENSES			
Program services	13,729,847		13,729,847
Management & General	6,638,544		6,638,544
Fundraising	382,726		382,726
TOTAL EXPENSES			20,751,117
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS			\$ 3,663,864

*Grants include multi-year grants for work to be completed in FY26 and beyond.

The 2021 MacKenzie Scott \$20M gift continues to provide support for underresourced colleges to join the Network and for general operations generated as a result of careful stewardship through a long term investment fund.





LEARN MORE ABOUT ACHIEVING THE DREAM, INC.

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Or contact us at info@AchievingtheDream.org or (240) 450-0075

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