INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY WITH EVERY DEGREE

ANNUAL REPORT 2019
Our mission at College Visions is to empower low-income and first-generation college-bound students to realize the promise of higher education by providing advising, and resources to promote college enrollment, persistence, and graduation. College Visions advances equal access to educational opportunities in historically underserved communities.
Thanks to generous friends like you, College Visions is providing 500 young people with the support they need to succeed and they are paying back that investment! 320 CV alums are working as educators, lawyers, nurses, social workers, architects, designers, and financial analysts while they also serve our communities on non-profit boards and as volunteers. Your generosity allows young people to invest in themselves and give back in ways that make our communities stronger.

This year is one of reflection for me. My own daughter is applying to college. She’s my baby and I am not ready. But I am also so proud to see this talented young woman go out into the world. Her college journey is one filled with opportunities and choices and I am so thankful to be able to support her in this journey.

My own experience was very different and much more like the young people I work with at CV. College was a dream for me, but instead of making that dream a reality, many of the adults in my life made it seem unattainable. Our CV students share some of the same stories. I am saddened that some young people in our schools still hear what I was told back in the day "you aren’t college material, that’s not for you." I earned my degree (eventually three degrees) against the odds. It was a struggle and there were many times when I wondered if I would succeed.

At CV, we ease the path for first-generation students like myself, so we can make a difference in that young person’s life. But, we also have a bigger goal. No CV student says I just want the degree for myself. CV students say, I want to get my degree and then I want to help my young siblings, my cousins, my own children, and my community. A degree is an achievement that ripples out from an individual and improves the world we all share. Thank you for investing in CV!

Respectfully,
Nick Figueroa
Executive Director
College Visions
"CV is making the college process less stressful. My advisor has been so supportive. She has helped me plan and edit my college essay and make a list of schools with my major that give good financial aid!

“As a first-generation student, I know I need to stay really focused on my academic and career goals and getting the proper support will help me do that. I want to be the first in my family to break the cycle and earn a degree. I know that being college-bound is more than wanting to go; it requires becoming my best self.”
CV students believe that education can change their lives, but the challenges they face often seem insurmountable. From both students and research studies, we know that when parents haven’t gone to college, friends aren’t going, and the people around you don’t think you are “college material,” it’s a big leap of faith to think you can go to college and succeed.

Serving 65 students, the CAP seeks out students who have the highest need for information and support as they apply to college. The Program empowers the next generation of Rhode Island’s leaders by guiding them and their families through the college admissions process, consistently promoting financial literacy, and equipping each student with the resources they need to earn a degree.

**Beating the odds:**

100% of CAP students earn a high school diploma compared with 75% of Providence high school students.

98% of CAP students enroll in college immediately after high school graduation compared with 49% of Providence high school graduates.

100% of CV students complete the FAFSA, an essential part of college financing for low-income students compared with 69% of Providence 12th graders.
"CV played a huge part in helping me get to college and succeed and provides me with mentorship for ongoing issues and questions that I have as a first-generation college student. My CV advisor told me about an opportunity for an internship at Senator Jack Reed’s office and encouraged me to apply. I now have a paid internship, which is a huge step for a political science major and can open so many doors for me after I graduate. I am so thankful to have people who support and encourage me!

"Being a first-generation college student to me means breaking generational curses. It means being able to have a better future, which my mother risked her life for me to have. It means being able to have mobility and financial security for my whole family"
Michaelle Larracuente  
Dean of Students, Achievement First Mayoral Academy  
Northeastern University, Class of 2011  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology

What was an obstacle that you had to overcome during the college application process and how did CV help?  
“Something I found challenging was my college essay. I found it very difficult to think of a topic or to be satisfied with the ideas I was generating. Ultimately, I lacked confidence and I had a fixed mindset about my own capabilities. My CV advisor supported me to trust my voice. He provided examples of other essays and supported me through many drafts.”

What did you value about your CV experience?  
“The most amazing part of being apart of CV was the family aspect. I felt so fortunate to have not only the financial support with waivers, but the emotional support. I witnessed my peers struggling with gaining access to what I learned to be common knowledge about college in general, navigating the experience, and finding the space that felt right for your next stage in life. My CV advisor was so thoughtful about how to affirm our wildest dreams and marry them to our realities. He always reminded us that we need a clear plan with not just a goal but the strategic steps to achieve it.”

What does it mean to you to be a first-generation college graduate?  
“It means everything. My parents had always narrated their hopes and dreams for me and my siblings. I felt a tremendous amount of pressure as the oldest. I felt that if I didn’t succeed I would bring shame to my family. I also felt a pressure to not move too far for fear of not being able to support if needed. I know that I can truly be and do anything I want if I’m willing to just dare to fly! I know what I was able to do has inspired my siblings and put me in a position as a professional to compete with my peers in today’s world.”

Why do you give to CV?  
“I give because I believe in the work. It is wild how much the program has grown. More and more young people feel underwhelmed with the educational opportunities in front of them. There are so many talented young people who deserve their shot to explore their potential. CV makes that possible. I would like to see CV serve even more young people.”

What would you say to fellow donors who are giving to CV and continuing to make this resource possible for the next generation of college graduates?  
“Whether you are an alumni or a traditional donor, I say, let’s find ways to provide support and investment in multiple way!”

What motivated you to work in education? What does it mean to you to be an educator of color?  
“At first, I was convinced teaching wasn’t a good enough career. Little did I know I would become a Teacher of the Year 2019 for my district. When I look back, I suppose being the eldest of 6, having volunteered on over 19 service trips domestically and internationally made me love helping others grow and develop. I seek to support a variety of needs. There is no more leaving our brown and black students behind academically.”
Low-income and first-generation students face obstacles that impact their college decisions. They lack access to essential resources and key knowledge that would allow them to navigate a system designed without them in mind. CV provides the mentorship, information, and resources that help first-gen students succeed in college.

The CSP supports 335 students as they persist through and graduate from college. CV provides interventions such as individualized 1-on-1 advising, financial aid coaching, transfer support and access to workshops that cover topics such as networking, finding internships, employment during and after college, and adjusting to college life.

Access to resources makes the difference:

- **94%** of CV students return for the 2nd year of college compared with 67% of Providence Public Schools graduates.
- **98%** of CV students renew the FAFSA on time to ensure continued financial aid.
- **67%** of CV students graduate within 6 years compared with 21% of low-income, first-gen students nationally and 38% of low-income Rhode Island students.

With the support of generous CV donors, in FY19 we distributed $15,578 in funds to CSP students for expenses including textbooks, eyeglasses, groceries, transportation, housing deposits, and tuition.
By 2020, 71% of Rhode Island jobs will require post-secondary education, but currently only 46% of RI workers have attained that level of education. RI has the biggest post-secondary attainment gap in New England with particularly low rates for Latinx (20%), Black (31%), Native American (23%), and Southeast Asian (30%) workers. Over 15 years, CV has demonstrated that with information, resources, and support, low-income, first-generation students, most of whom are students of color, can successfully enroll in college, persist, and earn degrees. A cumulative 67% of CV students have earned a degree within 6 years of college enrollment, and in our most recent 6-year cohort, an exceptional 82% earned degrees!

CV builds strong mentorships with students and innovates to continually strengthen our program and outcomes. In the next 3 years, we will achieve the following goals:

- **75%** of CV students graduate within 6 years.
- **95%** of CV students persist to the 2nd year of college.
- **80%** of CV students attending a 2-year college, transfer to a 4-year college.
- **70%** of CV students will engage in workforce readiness training.
State leaders, business leaders, educators, families, and students all agree that education is the best path to financial stability and strong communities. In order to support more young people to achieve the goal of earning a degree, CV will grow the number of students we serve as we also expand our services to better prepare young people for college and post-college life:

- Pilot one or more new College Access Program cohorts at an expanded central site or satellite.
- Provide College Access students with workplace soft skills and College Success students with meaningful internships or work experiences.
- Reach more high school and college students by expanding the CV model through partnerships with other institutions.
- Expand CV’s community leadership as the recognized advocate for policies and practices that enable college access and success for low-income, first-generation and historically underserved students.
College Visions, in collaboration with the Providence Public schools, offered an intensive four-week college and career readiness summer program for Providence high school students in 2019. The Summer Program introduced students to the college admissions process and more in order to boost academic and interpersonal skills while preventing summer academic attrition.

Serving 100 rising 9th through 12th graders, the Summer Program was an opportunity to expand the number of students CV works with and to catch students earlier in their high school careers in order to support them to make actionable college and career plans.

"The best thing about the program was being able to get life advice from people who have already gone through it and lived it."

"The most important thing that I learned is what it's like to be in college. In the program, they taught us what's required to get into college and they motivated us to go and achieve our goals."

"The most important thing that I have learned was my resume. I felt as though I learned a lot I will be able to use that resume to apply for jobs."
In 2019, CV College Access Program Director Tina Meetran created a comprehensive, Rhode Island-specific guide to advising undocumented high school students. Many undocumented students come to the U.S. when they are young and they consider this country their home. They plan their lives here and set goals for personal growth and success, and for many students that involves college. However, undocumented students face substantial barriers to higher education due to their legal status. These barriers include but are not limited to financial limitations, lack of available scholarships for non-citizen students, and uncertainty of the future as they seek citizenship or permanent resident status.

The guide is designed to inform and support advisors, counselors, teachers, and educators about how to best advise undocumented students through the college application process. College Visions seeks to provide every student with equitable access to resources, academic support, and higher education regardless of their background and circumstances.

To read and download a free copy of the guide, visit: www.collegevisions.org/undocguide
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Foundation & Government Grants
$557,062.58

Fee for Service
$73,000.17

Events
$8,678.97

Business & Corporate Sponsors
$18,000.00

Individual Giving
$80,176.01

Interest Income
$5,977.00

Expenses: $685,677.45

Personnel
$564,842.22

Professional Development
$4,758.99

Communications
$16,586.09

Occupancy Expenses
$20,789.30

Materials & Supplies
$3,225.49

Travel
$5,656.83

Program Expenses
$28,248.66

Special Events
$7,896.42

Consultants/Contracted Services
$29,263.33

Insurance
$4,410.00
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- Ashley Rodriguez Lantigua, Holy Cross ’23

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Being a first-generation college student gives me hope for my future and the future of my family.

- Ariel Troncoso, Rhode Island College '22