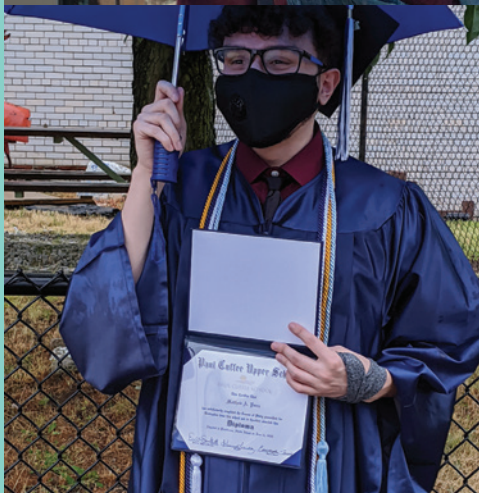




RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



OUR MISSION



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 under-served communities.

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My name is Tina Meetran and I am the Executive Director of College Visions. As a CV alum, I find myself reflecting on how I got here and what this journey has meant to me so far.

What does it mean to be a first-generation, Laotian woman in leadership?

First, it has meant learning about how the identities I hold impact my experiences. Throughout high school and college, as an Asian woman, people assumed I was wealthy and privileged. The reality was, I grew up in a Providence neighborhood with high gang activity and my parents worked multiple jobs so that our family could get by. I was told that my voice didn't matter in racial equity conversations, because despite being Laotian, I wasn't considered a person of color. I've constantly questioned my own identity and where I belonged.

Second, it has meant figuring out a lot of things on my own. My parents gave us everything they could and more. However, growing up with immigrant parents whose first language was not English was challenging since they didn't understand how U.S. systems worked. While my peers were getting SAT help and visiting colleges with their parents, I was translating for my parents at doctor appointments and filling out college forms without them.

Last, it has meant staying strong to keep moving forward. This strength has come from finding my own resilience, the love from my family, and connecting with community mentors who understood and supported me. As a first generation student, I felt that the well-being of my family rested on my shoulders. While this responsibility was - and still is - stressful at times, it has also motivated me to work hard and never give up on my goals.

At College Visions, we support students with college advising, resources, opportunities for connection, and a safe space to be themselves. Above all else, our students know that they have a family here that will support them in figuring out their college journey. No matter what challenges or lessons our students face, we remind them that we are here to help them grow and that they are not alone in this process.

As a CV alum and now ED, I want to thank all of you for being part of this family. I thank you for believing in our mission, our staff, and our students. I thank you for being part of our efforts in breaking down barriers and closing educational opportunity gaps for our first-generation, low-income community.

In Love and Community,
Tina Meetran, Executive Director
College Visions



DAVINA MWELWA

Life has changed for me in many ways during this pandemic. Senior year was supposed to be a year where we have college tours and focus on our academics to get prepared for the college application process. CV has been helping me through these hard times in many ways. The weekly meetings that I have with my advisor helps me through the college app process and CV has been hosting virtual college tours from different schools, so we'll have the information we need to make a decision.

Being a first-generation college student means being a role model and inspiration to my younger siblings and my community. Being a first-generation college student means getting a greater chance at opportunity and upswing for my whole family. In my culture when one succeeds it's the whole family and community's success.

- Davina, Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College High School '21

A YEAR OF JOY AND CHALLENGE

~ SERVING 500 STUDENTS IN 2020 ~

COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM (CAP)

After 16 years, the College Visions CAP program began looking different in March of 2020. As we all sought shelter from COVID-19, CV's normally busy office emptied out. We moved all CAP programming online offering individual advising, workshops, virtual college visits, FAFSA completion, social time, and a celebration of college choices in an online format.

CAP students faced unexpected challenges as they made final college choices. Family unemployment, increased family responsibilities, health concerns, and general uncertainty all weighed on students.

CAP advisors worked with students to make choices appropriate for their individual circumstances, and 97% of CAP students enrolled in college!

2020 COLLEGE CHOICES

Bentley University
Boston College
Brandeis University
College of the Holy Cross
Community College of Rhode Island
Curry College
Emerson College
Johnson and Wales University
New England Institute of Technology
Northeastern University
Providence College
Rhode Island College
Roger Williams University
UMass Boston
University of Rhode Island



A YEAR OF JOY AND CHALLENGE

~ SERVING 500 STUDENTS IN 2020 ~



COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAM (CSP)

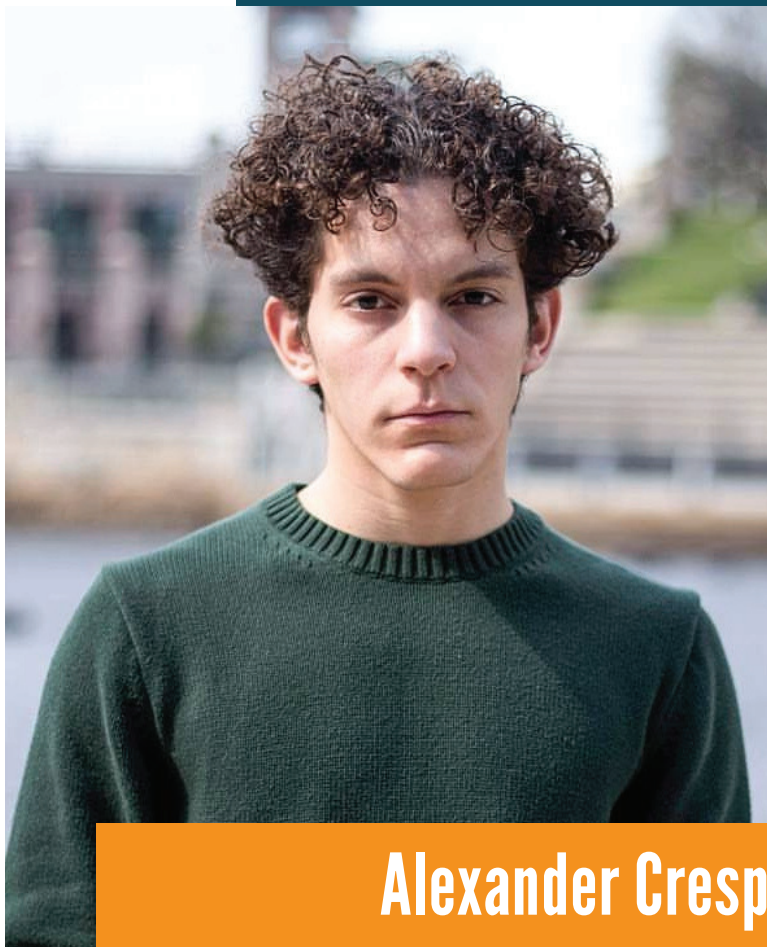
Supporting students to confidently apply to college and then make tough college decisions is a challenge. It is also only the beginning of the work. Through the CSP, CV invests an additional 4 to 6+ years in each student on the path to a degree. Nationally and locally, first-generation, low-income students who enroll in college struggle to complete degrees. **In Rhode Island, 37% of low-income college students will complete a degree within 6 years, however, an impressive 68% of CV students earn a degree within 6 years, the same rate as their wealthy peers!**

The CSP achieves these strong results by building strong mentorship with students, developing workshops that are responsive to student needs, and connecting students with financial, academic, and mental health resources. This year has been particularly hard as students lost room and board, employment, and in-person classes in the spring. Many have also taken on additional family financial and caregiving responsibilities. Whatever the challenges, the CSP shows that when first-generation, low-income college students get the support they need, they thrive!

CV EMERGENCY GRANTS: Scaling up to respond to COVID

CV provides direct financial support to students with exceptional financial need. In a typical year, we budget \$15,000 for emergency grants. **In 2020, we are on track to provide \$52,000 directly to students.** Grants for food, housing, technology for online learning, healthcare, PPE, and other essentials are possible because of generous funders and donors. Our deepest thanks to all who have given to support students during COVID.

"Omg, thank you so much for the support you all have sent me! I can not explain how much this has helped me for the months that are to come. I'm honestly speechless as I never thought to be able to receive as much aid as I have. I'm so grateful and this has extremely lifted so much heaviness that I was carrying in worry about paying the rent. Thank you so much to everyone who made this possible."
- Maria M., Guilford College '20



Alexander Crespo-Rosario

My life has changed dramatically during this pandemic, both negatively and positively. Due to the pandemic, I was unable to graduate last semester because the summer course I was supposed to enroll in, which was the last course I needed to graduate, got canceled. As a result, I had to enroll in one last semester to finish my credits. College Visions has helped me greatly by not just showing support, but also providing financial emergency help for electronics for me to continue my online courses, and even helping me financially with housing, since I had to relocate during this pandemic. As always I would like to also give a special thanks to my CV advisor for always being there to help me with my questions and concerns in school. Thank you all!

- Alexander, Rhode Island College '20

COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS THROUGH THE LENS OF RACIAL EQUITY



At CV, our mission is grounded in these values:

- Empathetic, compassionate, and transformative relationships drive strong organizations.
- Equity creates strong communities.
- In our community we honor the voice, agency, and identities of all.
- Success means reaching our goals through hard work, failure and growth.

2020 has seen both a Pandemic that has disproportionately hurt Black and Brown communities and a worldwide uprising for Black liberation. This year has been one of great suffering as we have lost cherished loved ones and community members. We have also felt hope for a better future.

CV has always been a response to the inequity that is the result of structural racism. We accept students of all races, but the overwhelming majority of the low-income, first-generation students (the first or part of the first-generation to attend college in their family) who apply to our program are Latinx, Black, Asian, Multiracial and Indigenous. These students need more information, guidance, and financial help to get to and through college, but they often get less.

As we imagine a more equitable future, we commit to continue the work of combating racist educational systems. We commit to continue the work of investing in our Black youth and youth of color. Together, we continue to build a Beloved Community in which we listen, we nurture relationships, we celebrate successes and support each other to learn from failure, and we advocate for the resources our communities need.

College Visions will always stand with Black lives. Black Lives Matter today, tomorrow and always.

CV PREP SUMMER PROGRAM



2020 was CV's second year partnering with Providence Public Schools to offer the intensive CV Prep summer program for 100 high school students. This year, things looked different as the program went virtual. Led by CV Prep Director Edmicelly Xavier, our talented summer staff worked hard to keep students engaged and CV Prep students showed an impressive commitment to the 6-week online summer program.

The CV Prep curriculum focuses on building both academic and social/emotional skills while also providing students with essential information about applying to college and succeeding in college and career. At the end of the program, 96% of students said they would recommend CV Prep to a friend and 95% said they were very likely or likely to apply something they learned during the program during their upcoming school year.

"CV Summer Prep encourages students to take control of their own futures and understand how their work now is preparing them for college and beyond. I am constantly in awe of the growth, both personal and academic, that I see in the students. The culture of CV supports and empowers them to set and achieve their own goals. My hope each year is that by the end of the summer, students feel more confident in their own identities and skills, knowing that they now have a CV community of peers and instructors supporting them."
~ Jessica Zambrano, CV Prep Instructor

"Thanks to this program I feel more proud of my roots. This summer I didn't just learn how to write an essay or a cover letter, I also learned and realized the power I have and how important I am." ~Student



THE FUTURE OF COLLEGE VISIONS, 2020



College Visions students are more than just students. They hold different identities that impact their experiences and the opportunities available to them. The majority of our students come from populations that often get overlooked and under resourced. At CV, our full time advising staff work tenaciously to ensure that our first-generation, low-income students can access as many opportunities as they can. In 2020, the importance of our work became more apparent than ever. CV works with populations most impacted by COVID. A majority of our students come from the 5 zip codes that have some of the highest number of cases in RI*. For our students, the global pandemic has resulted in loss of jobs, economic hardship, loss of resources, and higher stress levels.

These impacts have made college decisions more difficult and more uncertain. Our community and our students need to know that we are not giving up on them. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure we bring racial and educational equity to our students, so they too can achieve their aspirations.

This pandemic has shifted our work in unexpected ways. It has forced us to think about our work creatively and it has also shown us how we can expand our work to reach new heights. In the next 2 years our goals are to:

- Build our capacity by sharing our expert knowledge and building partnerships with other institutions to reach thousands more students by 2022.
- Research, develop and pilot programming specifically designed for ELL learners and CCRI students.
- Expand CV's community leadership as a recognized advocate for policies and practices that enable college access and success for low-income, first-generation and historically underserved students.
- Provide College Access students with workplace soft skills and College Success students with meaningful internships or work experiences.

*COVID-19 Rhode Island Data: <https://bit.ly/2VjCn8J>

FINANCIALS, FISCAL YEAR 2020

Income: \$792,125

Foundation & Government Grants - \$484,228

PPP* - \$96,970

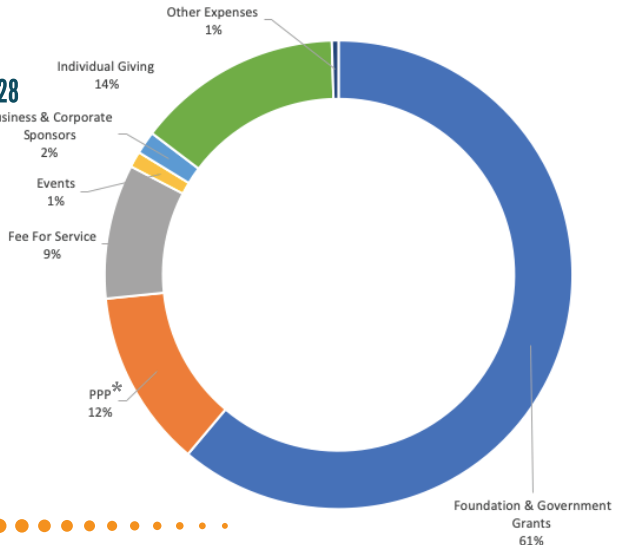
Fee For Service - \$73,482

Events - \$8,648

Business & Corporate Sponsors - \$12,500

Individual Giving - \$112,677

Other Income - \$3,620



*PPP loan forgivable in 2021

Expenses: \$783,082

Personnel - \$587,895

Recruiting - \$6,762

Professional Development - \$5,156

Communications - \$17,992

Occupancy Expenses - \$21,619

Materials & Supplies - \$3,667

Travel - \$3,424

Program Expenses - \$9,443

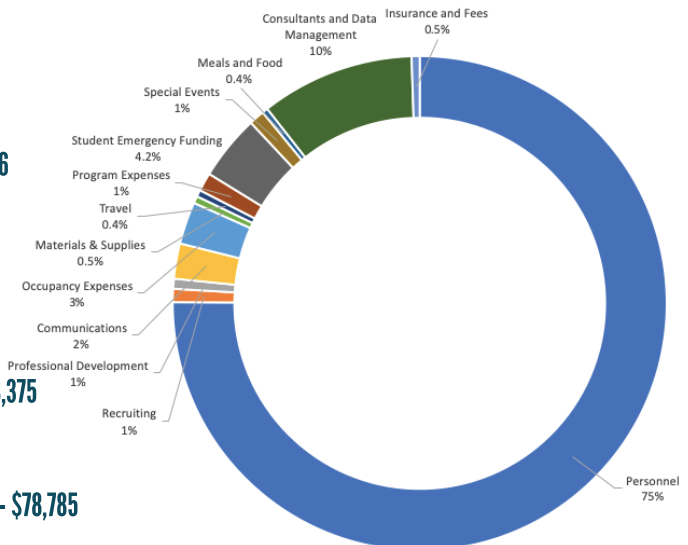
Student Emergency Funding - \$33,375

Special Events - \$7,910

Meals & Food - \$2,928

Consultants & Data Management - \$78,785

Insurance & Fees - \$4,127



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Sr. Application Analyst, Lifespan

"I support College Visions with my time as a board volunteer, and my money as a donor, because College Visions is not only supporting first-gen students of color to access and persist in college, College Visions is run by and staffed by first-gen students. The staff has walked the path that the young people we serve are walking. They are the next-gen of the first-gen. I'm also Making it Monthly to increase the impact of my donations to create sustainable and predictable fiscal health for College Visions."

Jennifer Wood,
College Visions Board Member

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^k Denotes a gift in memory of
 Kolajo Paul Afolabi

"College Visions has given me the support and tools necessary to live out the dreams I had when I was just a boy growing up in public housing in Providence, RI. Through the organization's tireless efforts to educate and prepare me early on: from the 1-on-1 and group sessions with Simon Moore, to the summer writing workshop with Ariel Mae Lambe Mercik, to photographing my portfolio for RJS with Scott Lapham, I was able to reach goals that at the time seemed unreachable."

- Abel Hernandez, CV Alumnus

"I've seen first-hand how transformative a college education can be. My father changed the trajectory for our entire family when he was the first person in his family to graduate from college. I support College Visions because the mentorship and support they offer low-income and first-generation students - just like my father - can provide a pathway to a degree, a career, and prosperity. CV is one of the state's more vocal and effective advocates for policies to make college more accessible and more affordable and its influence will only continue to grow under Tina's direction."

- Dr. Julia Rafal-Baer



College Visions
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"This organization opens doors to
higher education."
- Clarice D. Anderes

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