



**CITY COLLEGES<sup>®</sup>**  
OF CHICAGO

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**City Colleges of Chicago and One Million Degrees Launch Major Expansion of Proven Student Support Model to Increase College Graduation and Boost Economic Mobility**

*Nearly \$20 Million Raised in Public/Private Funding to  
to Serve Thousands of Students, Create National Model for Scaling Student Support*

**CHICAGO**, Nov. 15—City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) and One Million Degrees (OMD), a leading provider of wraparound services to community college students, today announce the launch of a new partnership to reach thousands of students with coaching, mentoring, financial and professional development support, putting them on a path to graduation and economic mobility.

Under the public/private partnership, new and re-enrolling degree-seeking students will be automatically accepted into the OMD program. The program will launch at Olive-Harvey College this year, and expand to additional colleges, reaching 3,000 students annually by year four. The partnership has the potential to achieve unprecedented and equitable outcomes for students, underscoring City Colleges' commitment to closing the racial opportunity gap by one-third by 2026 and reaching a 55% universal completion rate by 2032.

"We are growing the proven One Million Degrees model to tackle the equity gap in student outcomes head on and provide our students with the wraparound support to reach their goals," said City Colleges of Chicago Chancellor Juan Salgado.

The partnership builds on the existing relationship between City Colleges and the research-proven model of OMD, which significantly boosts community college graduation rates and prepares students for upwardly mobile careers.

Lead funding of \$5 million each from City Colleges and the Pritzker Foundation, as well as a \$1 million investment from One Million Degrees, demonstrates the shared bold vision to transform the student experience. Nearly \$20 million has been raised to date. The partnership seeks

additional funding to support the first four years of the program as well as employer partners to provide mentors and career exposure opportunities for participating students.

“Taking the proven success of the One Million Degrees-City Colleges partnership to scale across Chicago’s community college system will change the game for our students and our city,” said Aneesh Sohoni, CEO, One Million Degrees. “On behalf of community college students, their families, and our community, we are grateful to City Colleges and our philanthropic partners for investing in a program that works.”

Many community college students face an array of challenges to graduation, from juggling family and jobs to finances. The [University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab](#) finds that students who applied to the One Million Degrees program before enrolling were 70% more likely to enroll in college, 94% more likely to remain enrolled, and 73% more likely to earn a degree within three years and move directly into the workforce or pursue a four-year degree. OMD and CCC will continue to partner with the University of Chicago to evaluate and strengthen the new embedded model.

“Improving community college graduation rates is vital to building a more inclusive and equitable workforce,” said Penny Pritzker, Pritzker Foundation trustee. “The expansion of this already proven partnership can help address long standing under-representation of Black, Latinx, and female graduates in high-growth fields. It represents a terrific opportunity for employers to meet their talent needs through internships, apprenticeships, and full-time recruitment of City College students and in doing so help thousands of Chicagoans increase their shot at the American dream.”

In Illinois, students who gain an associate degree will earn \$222,753 more in their lifetime compared with those students who do not. OMD is the only organization in Illinois and one of few in the country providing community college students with wraparound supports.

“Increasing graduation rates and access to high-value careers has far-ranging impact – on student economic outcomes, on their families and communities, and on the local economy,” said Beth Swanson, CEO of A Better Chicago, an early funder of the partnership and City Colleges board vice chair.

In addition to Pritzker Foundation and the City Colleges of Chicago, funding commitments for the first four years include A Better Chicago, the Finnegan Family Foundation and JPMorgan Chase. The foresight and financial leadership of the initial funders is an endorsement of the value and sustainability of the OMD-City Colleges partnership - and ensures that the program will grow to scale across all seven colleges with City Colleges support.

“Olive-Harvey College is thrilled to join forces with OMD because we’ve seen how this program increases college enrollment, full-time enrollment, and first-year persistence,” said Olive-Harvey College President Kimberly Hollingsworth, Ed.D. “Our students overcome many barriers

to attend college and working with OMD, we will ensure they are fully supported every step of the way.”

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**About City Colleges of Chicago**

City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) is an open access community college system that aims to put every student on the path to upward mobility. With locations across the city, the seven colleges include: Richard J. Daley College, Kennedy-King College, Malcolm X College, Olive-Harvey College, Harry S Truman College, Harold Washington College and Wilbur Wright College. City Colleges also oversees: the award-winning Washburne Culinary Institute, the Sikia Banquet Facility, five Child Development Centers, and radio station WKKC FM 89.3. To learn about City Colleges’ five-year strategic framework and college strategic plans, go to:

[www.ccc.edu/strategicplan](http://www.ccc.edu/strategicplan).

**About One Million Degrees**

One Million Degrees accelerates community college students’ progress on career pathways to economic mobility by providing wrap-around supports to highly motivated community college students to help them succeed in school, in work, and in life. From tutors and coaches to financial assistance and professional development, OMD offers the support that empowers scholars to transform their lives and those around them for generations. OMD currently serves nearly 900 community college scholars from under-resourced neighborhoods at 10 Chicago-area community colleges, including all seven City Colleges of Chicago. OMD partners with employers across industries to build on-ramps to in-demand jobs through new apprenticeship and credentialing programs.

**About Inclusive Economy Lab**

The Inclusive Economy Lab partners with policymakers, community-based organizations and others to generate rigorous evidence that leads to greater economic opportunity for communities harmed by disinvestment and segregation.

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