

National Collaborative Forms to Help States and Higher Education Systems Scale Wraparound Support Programs for Community College Students

Complete College America and One Million Degrees team up to remove barriers to student success and college completion through holistic student support

INDIANAPOLIS (June 4, 2025) — [Complete College America](#) (CCA), a national nonprofit on a mission to raise postsecondary attainment in the United States, today announced the launch of a multi-year holistic student support initiative aimed at improving graduation and career outcomes for community college students across the country. In collaboration with [Chicago-based nonprofit One Million Degrees](#) (OMD), the new pilot will bring an evidence-based student support model to community colleges nationwide to address critical barriers to college completion and career readiness for thousands of students from low-income backgrounds.

“Fulfilling the promise of college completion and career readiness requires us to break down barriers that students face on their path to graduation,” said Yolanda Watson Spiva, president of Complete College America. “Through this new partnership, we’re providing institutions with the tools, support, and guidance needed to help meet students’ needs in a more holistic way and empower their success from enrollment to career success.”

Nationally, more than 72% of new jobs created by 2031 [are expected](#) to require at least an associate degree; however, more than 40 million Americans—many of whom began their educational journey at community colleges—have some college, but no degree. Despite recent improvements in community college graduation rates, [fewer than half](#) of community college students complete their degrees on time. Those numbers are often much lower for first-generation, low-income, and part-time students.

Complete College America’s partnership with One Million Degrees, whose evidence-based holistic student support model, developed during a long-running research collaboration with the University of Chicago’s Inclusive Economy Lab, has been shown to significantly improve student persistence, retention, and career outcomes. The OMD program provides a comprehensive system of wraparound support—including academic coaching, financial assistance, and career services—that reinforces and enhances existing student success efforts, helping community college students thrive and transition successfully into four-year institutions.

The collaboration with CCA will create opportunities to scale this proven model on a statewide level as the two organizations will collaborate with colleges across at least three systems. Organizers have selected Delgado Community College in New Orleans and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) to launch the initiative, with plans to add additional institutions to the partnership in 2026 through a competitive RFP

process. Over the next year, Delgado, Northwest State, and Clark State colleges will integrate the One Million Degrees program model into their first-year student experience, with students beginning the program in fall 2025. Colleges will receive institutional coaching from Complete College America and training from One Million Degrees to ensure seamless implementation. A team of experts from the two nonprofits will work closely with college leadership to build and implement the data and technology systems to strengthen student support services.

In addition to helping colleges build the internal capacity needed to deliver and sustain the program, CCA will also work with state systems to advocate for the funding and policy changes necessary to drive broader adoption.

“At a time when the majority of students are balancing work, family commitments, and financial responsibilities with education, we need to double down on what works to remove barriers to college access and success,” said Josh Hoen, interim CEO of One Million Degrees. “This is about ensuring that community college students not only complete their credentials, but launch into careers that deliver lasting economic mobility and opportunity.”

The OMD-CCA partnership is funded through generous support from Ascendium Education Group and The Kresge Foundation. For institutions and organizations interested in learning more about this national pilot, visit www.completecollege.org and www.onemilliondegrees.org or contact coconnor@onemilliondegrees.org.

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About Complete College America: Complete College America (CCA) is a bold national advocate for dramatically increasing college completion rates and closing institutional performance gaps by working with states, systems, institutions, and partners to scale highly effective structural reforms and promote policies that improve student success. To learn more about CCA, visit www.completecollege.org

About One Million Degrees: One Million Degrees accelerates community college students’ progress on career pathways to economic mobility by providing wrap-around support 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.

Currently, OMD serves over 2000 scholars in all 7 of the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) and is scaling to reach over 3000 community college scholars through our unique partnership with CCC. In addition to direct services, OMD partners with

employers across industries to build on-ramps to in-demand jobs through internships and apprenticeships, and supports institutions nationwide to design and implement models of holistic student support.