

Quick Stats

Agency	Start Date	Number Served Annually	Annual Budget
City University of New York	January 2012	400	\$250,000

Problem Statement

Poverty, health, risk of violence, incarceration and life outcomes for young men of color, their families and communities are all strongly affected by educational attainment. Young black and Latino men are more likely to drop out of school than their white and Asian counterparts, and in 2009, New Yorkers without a high school degree or its equivalent had a median annual income of only \$19,123, just half the state average of \$37,814ⁱ. According to projections, six out of ten job openings in New York State by the year 2018 will require a postsecondary credential, and only one in ten job openings will be accessible to high school dropouts.ⁱⁱ

For many at-risk young men for whom a traditional high school degree is out of reach, the GED is their only option. GED pass rates in New York City are 48.1%, compared to the national average of 72.6%ⁱⁱⁱ. Even for those who earn a GED, most are not adequately prepared for college; and not surprisingly, transition to and persistence in college is low for GED recipients. For example, in 2008, only 13% of GED recipients were fully proficient in basic skills after the first month of enrollment at CUNY, and nearly 40% of GED enrollees did not earn any college credits in their first term^{iv}. In addition, most at-risk young men lack the basic skills, social supports and personal resilience that make persistence in education possible. This only compounds the challenges faced by first-generation college students.

Research and Evidence

Research has shown that peer mentoring is associated with higher GED pass rates and with greater transition to and retention in postsecondary studies^v. IMPACT (Improving My Progress At College Today) is an innovative peer mentoring model developed at Future Now, a GED and college success program located at Bronx Community College.

Future Now/IMPACT trains GED program graduates who are enrolled in college to serve as mentors for current GED students and to provide peer support for other alumni enrolled in college. The majority of Future Now students and IMPACT members are disenfranchised, formerly incarcerated and/or at-risk. IMPACT recognizes these learners as assets and develops learners' capacities and social capital in order to improve outcomes related to educational, employment and life goals.

IMPACT was created by Future Now GED graduates in 2007. Although it has not been formally evaluated, the program has consistently high GED pass rates (87% in FY11) and has dramatically increased college enrollment, retention, and graduation rates among Future Now participants. Before IMPACT, fewer than 30% of Future Now graduates attended college and the majority dropped out in their first semester. Today over 95% of its GED graduates are accepted into college and 67% of those students are completing at least two semesters and passing their courses with As and Bs^{vi}.

IMPACT

<p>Program Description</p>	<p>Through funding from the Young Men’s Initiative, two CUNY campus-based GED programs at Hostos Community College and Medgar Evers College have been chosen as pilot sites to replicate the Future Now/IMPACT model currently underway at Bronx Community College. Future Now will provide the technical assistance for the replication. The pilot programs will be coached to develop an IMPACT mentoring component in their programs, including a GED alumni network and a peer mentoring program to mentor and tutor GED students as well as build bridges to higher education. Project components include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alumni-led peer mentoring initiative that takes the form of a club or organization and focuses on academic success of current GED students; • Assistance with entrance into higher education, including workshops on navigating a campus, applying for financial aid, selecting first-year courses, etc.; • On-going support from peers and program staff for GED alumni enrolled in college through monthly check-ins, quarterly leadership workshops, and one-on-one counseling as needed; • Staff training to establish a culture of success that focuses on students’ strengths; • Leadership development for GED students who become program alumni to return as leaders of the student-run club and/or program staff. <p>The overall goal is to assist both sites in increasing their students’ GED enrollment and pass rates, along with their college transition and retention rates.</p>
<p>Implementation Timeline</p>	<p>IMPACT services launched at participating GED programs in January, 2012.</p>
<p>Target Population</p>	<p>The program will target GED students at participating campuses with a focus on young males ages 16-24.</p>
<p>Expected Outcomes</p>	<p>IMPACT will increase the educational outcomes of young men and women living in impoverished communities. We seek to increase GED enrollment and graduation rates, as well as college transition and retention rates for these students.</p>

ⁱ *Failing the Test*, by Sarah Brannen, Center for an Urban Future, September 2011.

ⁱⁱ *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018: New York State analysis*, by Anthony Carnevale et al, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Failing the Test*.

^{iv} *College Readiness of New York City’s GED Recipients*, CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, November 2008.

^v *The relationship between college experience and academic performance among minority students*. by T. Saenz. The International Journal of Educational Management. 13/4 [199-207] 1999.

^{vi} Future Now/IMPACT Fact Sheet. The CUNY City-wide rate for Associate Degree programs is 61% retention for 2 semesters and 40% for four semesters.