

What is the community challenge?

College degrees are increasingly linked to middle-class incomes. Low-income students, first generation students and students from certain racial minorities are traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education. This makes them more vulnerable to unemployment and to employment with a lower than middle-class wage.

What is the promising solution?

Success Boston/Boston Coaching for Completion (BosC4C) provides coaching for the first two years of college. The “transition coaching model” offers sustained, responsive and proactive support provided through local non-profits.

What was the purpose of evaluation?

The evaluation of The Boston Foundation’s Success Boston Coaching by Abt Associates began in 2015 and finished reporting in 2019 for this interim report. The study further extends until 2022 when a final report is scheduled. This report focuses on interim impacts of the study and discovering the effect of SBC on student success in college (persistence, cumulative credits, GPA, and FAFSA renewal), and what student or coaching factors may be associated with variance in those effects.

What did the evaluation find?

As a grantee of a CNCS Program, The Boston Foundation engaged an independent evaluator to evaluate Success Boston Coaching. The report findings suggest that Success Boston Coaching increased persistence in college, student achievement, and FAFSA renewal among participants. Specifically:

- SBC-coached students were five percent more likely to persist into the second year of college.
- After two years of college, SBC students had seven percent more credits accumulated.
- Coached students were eight percent more likely to renew their FAFSA.
- Also, the students with the most interaction seemed to have the best success rates in persistence, achievement, and FAFSA renewal.

Notes on the evaluation

It is interesting to note that these findings were not as large as the previous non-scaled-up iteration of Success Boston Coaching. This may be because several of the partner colleges have begun implementing some of the Success Boston Coaching strategies among all of their students. While this may decrease effect sizes as the program continues to mature, it could definitely point to systemic change led by the Success Boston Coaching program, and that is very exciting.

Program At-a-Glance

CNCS Program: Social Innovation Fund

Intervention: Success Boston Coaching / Boston Coaching for Completion (BosC4C)

Grantee: The Boston Foundation

Focus Area: Youth Development

Focus Population: Boston area high school graduates in their first two years of college.

Community Served: Boston, Massachusetts

How is the Boston Foundation using the evaluation findings to improve?

In response to actionable findings, such as the greater impact associated with higher coaching frequency, the Boston Foundation is modifying program expectations to encourage more frequent coach-student interactions.

These positive findings are providing encouragement as the Boston Foundation proceeds to finish the scheduled years of this study.

Evaluation At-a-Glance

Evaluation Design: Quasi-experimental design with PSM

Study Population: College students in their first and second years from groups traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education who graduated from Boston high schools and attended one of 51 Boston area colleges or universities.

Independent Evaluator: Abt. Associates

This Evaluation's Level of Evidence*:
Moderate

*SIF and AmeriCorps currently use different definitions of levels of evidence.

The content of this brief was drawn from the full evaluation report submitted to CNCS by the grantee/subgrantee. The section of the brief that discusses evaluation use includes contribution of the grantee/subgrantee. All original content from the report is attributable to its authors.

To access the full evaluation report and learn more about CNCS, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/research>.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), combines public and private resources to grow the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the U.S. The SIF invests in three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.