



CradletoCareer

Anchored at United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Chapter 5

2021 Community Impact Report

Advancing Equity and Excellence in Education



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Dear Friends,

As Pima County continued to grapple with the effects of the pandemic, it was clear that the only way to support those in greatest need was through collaborative action. The Cradle to Career (C2C) Partnership has responded to the needs of our community. The challenges and adversity experienced by our community inspired change, mindful discussion, and thoughtful action by C2C Partners.

Through this annual community impact report, we share our progress towards systems change. This report is a key vehicle for highlighting our successes and areas of opportunity at the systemic and individual level across the educational pipeline. In this report, the work being done across the key milestones is highlighted. As you read the community impact report you will notice that not all data is complete. That is because the impact of COVID made data collection challenging at local, statewide, and national levels. However, you will notice that there are stories of hope at every milestone. Members of our community supported each other to solve pressing needs, creating a sense of resiliency and opportunity that ripples across Pima County.

No one individual or organization alone can change the systemic realities faced by children of color, low-income families, and underrepresented students in our community. However, when leaders across sectors work together with urgency toward equitable results, large-scale improvements are possible. C2C is comprised of individuals and organizations representing public, private, and non-profit organizations. The work is grounded in trust, collaborative relationships, and the willingness to have difficult conversations - resulting in action.

Systems change is most achievable and impactful when resources and leadership are aligned. C2C is honored to work alongside so many champions in the community, who unite to hold each other accountable for achieving equitable outcomes for all people throughout Pima County. The backbone provides C2C with meeting space (physical and virtual), convening, facilitation expertise, data, and amplifies diverse voices to do this important work. C2C has worked closely with partners to create strategies to pivot and create more equitable pathways for children, youth, and young adults from cradle to career.

Onward,



STEVE HOLMES, CO-CHAIR

Superintendent
Sunnyside Unified School District



CALLINE SANCHEZ, CO-CHAIR

Vice President
IBM Worldwide Systems Lab Services

2021 Leadership Council

Members who served on the Steering Committee are indicated with an * next to their name.

Christopher Bonn

Superintendent
Baboquivari Unified School District

Brett Bonner

Assistant Superintendent
Sahuarita Unified School District

Andrew Comrie

Chief Academic Officer
Arizona Board of Regents

Dolores Duran-Cerda*

Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost
Pima Community College

Francisco Garcia

Deputy County Administrator
Pima County

Bernadette Gruber

Education Domain Director
4Tucson

Michael Guymon*

Interim President
Tucson Metro Chamber

Jessica Harrington*

Senior Director, SE Regional Area
First Things First

Graham Hoffman

CEO
Jewish Community Foundation of
Southern Arizona

Steve Holmes, Co-Chair*

Superintendent
Sunnyside Unified School District

Flori Huitt

Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum & Instruction
Tucson Unified School District

Todd Jaeger

Superintendent
Amphitheater Public Schools

Bruce Johnson

Dean of the College of Education
University of Arizona

Jennifer Lohse*

Vice President of External Relations
Tucson Foundations

Erin Lyons

CEO
Child-Parent Centers, Inc.

Doug Martin

President/General Manager
Good News Communications

Tony Penn

President & CEO
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Kathy Prather

Superintendent
Pima JTED

Kathleen Quigley

Presiding Judge
Pima County Juvenile Court Center

Kristin Reidy

Assistant Superintendent
Marana Unified School District

Joe Salkowski

Senior Director of Communications and Public Affairs
Tucson Electric Power

Calline Sanchez, Co-Chair*

Vice President
IBM Worldwide Systems Lab Services

Eric Schindler

President & CEO
Child & Family Resources, Inc.

Kevin Stoltzfus

Superintendent
Flowing Wells Unified School District

Matt Tarver-Wahlquist

Executive Director
Literacy Connects

Manny Valenzuela

Superintendent
Sahuarita Unified School District

Adrian Verduzco

Subsystems Operations Director
Raytheon Technologies

Mark Vitale

Director, Academic Affairs
University of Phoenix

Jenny Volpe

Executive Director
Make Way for Books

Dustin Williams

Superintendent
Office of the Pima County Superintendent

Working Better Together

Our Role

The Cradle to Career Partnership (C2C) is a results-focused collaborative committed to ensuring that children and youth in Pima County have access to opportunities and resources to succeed not only in school, but in life. Convened by a backbone team anchored at United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, C2C seeks to align organizations, institutions, and individuals to change systems so that every young person - no matter their race, ethnicity, zip code, or circumstance - is fully supported in an informed and equitable way.

Our Vision

Successful children | Engaged community | Thriving economy

Our Mission

The mission of the Cradle to Career Partnership is to prepare every child for success in school and life, ensuring the economic vitality of our community.



C2C Backbone Staff

Melissa Hernandez

Associate Vice President, Cradle to Career

Allison Titcomb

Chief Impact Officer
Senior Vice President

Monica Brinkerhoff

Associate Vice President for Early Childhood Education

Kassondra Silva

Senior Director, Data and Impact

Robert Clark

Family/Community Empowerment Director

Desiree Collins

Data Analyst

Malika Ghafour

Youth Coordinator

Denisse Hernandez de Ortiz

Post-Secondary Change Network Facilitator

Caroline Lewis

Change Network Facilitator

Andrew Pieterick

Marketing Senior Manager

Amber Schlak

School Partnerships Facilitator



Building a Shared Community Vision of Long-Term Impact:

We support and align leaders and practitioners with a relentless focus on putting innovation into action.



Putting the Right Data in the Hands of the Right People at the Right Time:

We broker access to data and build capacity among our partner schools and agencies to use data to improve systems.



Aligning Resources to the Practices that Get Results:

We listen to educators and service providers to give system leaders and investors insights that allow them to align resources to support what works.



Centering Equitable Outcomes:

We work with our partners and individuals (parents and young people) most impacted by systems who have the lived experience to co-develop relevant solutions and use data to highlight gaps and accelerate progress to eliminate disparities.

Partnership Region
Pima County
by the Numbers

2019 Total Population

1,043,433
6% percent growth since 2010

Number of children, youth,
and young adults in Pima County

336,593

Students Enrolled in Public School in 2019

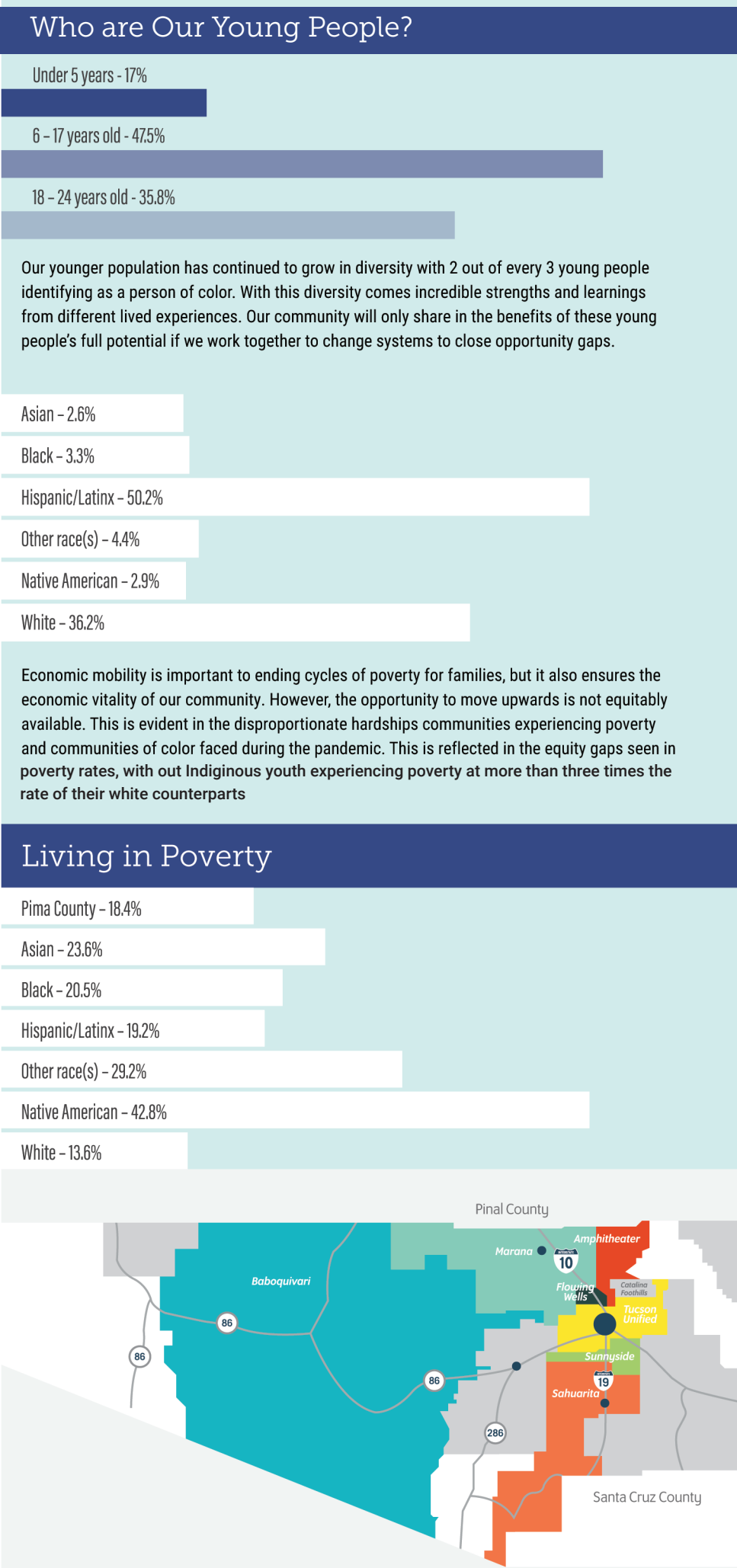
73.4%

Cradle to Career
partners with
seven public
school districts
which serve

144,269 students
This is 65% of students in Pima County

Compared to all of Pima County, these seven
districts serve a higher percentage of
students of color, 75.2% compared to 67.1%

Data Sources: US Census, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-year estimates, 2019; Arizona Department of Education (ADE), October Enrollment, 2020-2021.
Note: White refers to non-Hispanic/Latinx individuals unless otherwise noted.



Our Approach

Developing solutions for complex social problems is not something a single organization can do alone. However, when individual organizations come together and combine their resources, expertise, and data, they build impactful and meaningful connections across sectors. These connections can be thought of as bridges that create systems that work for all kids. The work that C2C is doing is not easy or quick. Helping every child to maximize their fullest potential requires a rigorous approach, yet one that is flexible enough to meet Pima County’s unique needs.

Our Theory of Change

The Cradle to Career Partnership believes that by working together we can accomplish more. We use a collective impact approach that aligns contributions from across sectors and employs a continuous improvement framework to produce better educational and life outcomes for our students.

Key Terms

Throughout this report, you will see a few key terms used to describe the processes of the work of Cradle to Career.

Backbone:

The team at United Way that provides results-based meeting facilitation and data analysis, communicates barriers and opportunities to Leadership Council, and handles logistics support and administrative details needed for the work to function.

Change Networks:

Change Networks are how the work of collective impact gets done. Organizations that participate are committed to applying continuous improvement to focus on a specific outcome.

Collaborative Action:

Co-executing improvement plans in a relationship built on trust.

Collective Impact:

Community members, organizations, and institutions working together to achieve population- and systems-level change.

Continuous Improvement:

An ongoing process of using data to set goals, plan interventions, act, reflect, adjust....and repeat.

The Path Forward

This annual report highlights accomplishments, changes in the way Pima County works, and bright spots that showcase the continued impact of this partnership.

As with many things over the last two years, this report will look a little different from previous ones. The continuing presence of COVID-19 in our community has been felt at every level of our lives; this is reflected in how the work of C2C pivoted and continued in a mostly virtual world. It is also reflected in the data that is tracked as part of our shared accountability for results. Some community-level indicators cannot be updated because the U.S. Census did not release 2020 estimates for the American Community Survey due to effects of the pandemic on data quality, and the data that is available was collected amid unprecedented times. Because of this, comparisons to previous years will not be as straightforward and interpretation can only be done in the context of the challenges of the last two and a half school years.

However, data is only part of the story being shared. This report is also a celebration of the resiliency, innovation, and dedication of our partners and stakeholders as they continued to serve children, youth, and families in new ways. In the midst of crisis, opportunities emerged, new strategic partnerships formed, and conversations about what equity means deepened.



Impact Beyond the Outcomes

Systems-Level Indicators

As a collective impact initiative, C2C’s efforts focus on transforming systems and structures to improve community outcomes at scale. Only when the conditions that perpetuate inequity are disrupted will the opportunity for economic mobility no longer be out of reach for so many children with regard to race, income, and zip codes. Often those conditions are engrained at the systems level and contribute to the disparities seen in individual-level student data.

C2C has reported student outcomes that indicate progress towards our goals since 2015. What individual outcomes, such as reading scores, do not tell us is what systems and structures are in place that contribute to opportunity gaps. Systems indicators are measurements, both qualitative and quantitative, that help us acknowledge and reveal inequitable distribution of resources, decision-making power, and opportunities within systems, organizations, and institutions.

This past year, C2C completed StriveTogether’s inaugural Systems Indicator pilot series. As part of a cohort of six partnerships selected from across the country, Kassondra Silva, Senior Director, Data and Impact, joined by community partner, Hilda Ladner, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office at Pima Community College, participated in a community of practice and the partnership received \$10,000 to support this work. They engaged in learning about the importance of systems-level indicators to accelerate progress. The team also worked on creating an action plan to engage community members, students, and families as co-developers of solutions that address systemic inequities.

This action plan includes using both individual-level and systems-level indicators to give a more complete view of barriers and supports faced by community members. With this view comes a better understanding of what needs to happen so that systems are student- and youth-ready. Individual-level data helps us discover what is happening in our community, but systems-level data can help us know why it is happening.

As you read through this report, we encourage you to look at the student-level outcomes in the context and history of these larger systems – the lack of affordable and reliable internet to all households, inequitable access to high-quality childcare, the under-resourcing of public education. That is why the work of C2C is more important than ever; the partnership’s efforts are not just focused on programmatic improvements using continuous improvement, but also on supporting long-term systems change.



Family & Community Engagement

Solutions developed with the intentional and authentic participation of communities most impacted by inequities are integral to closing opportunity gaps in education. Amplifying and listening to the voices of those most impacted by inequities connects the needs of those communities, as defined by those communities, to decisions that affect the distribution of resources and investments.

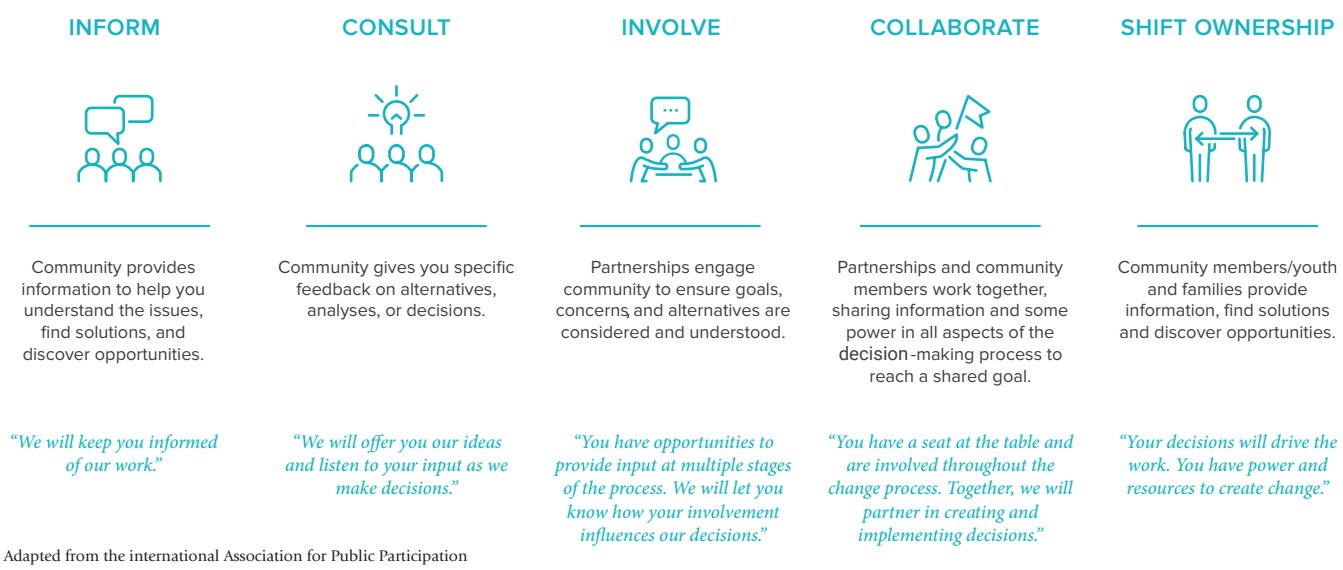
Cradle to Career is prioritizing community capacity to participate in and lead decision-making processes to meet educational needs and maximize community strengths. Funds secured from our national partner, StriveTogether, made it possible to hire a full-time staff member to assess community participation efforts, and inform a clearer vision of family and youth inclusion, racial justice, and community ownership.

Inequities that were magnified by the pandemic required urgent action by all sectors to implement solutions quickly. Collaboration between community-based organizations and school districts are a step forward but community, family and student voices need to be amplified to accelerate the viability of these solutions.

Community Engagement Spectrum

The Community Engagement Spectrum charts a pathway to transform the way that systems address problem solving in communities. C2C is working to prioritize opportunities for the partnership to progress from informing community members , families, and youth to shifting ownership of our efforts to them.

Leaders across multiple sectors can use the Community Engagement Spectrum to assess and revolutionize efforts to advance community-driven solutions.



Adapted from the international Association for Public Participation

Sources: Kirwan Institute, Bergstrom, D., Rose, K., Olinger, J., & Holley, K. (2020). The Sustainable Communities Initiative: The Community Engagement Guide. Policy Link.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Digital Equity

Many of us don't have to think about whether we'll be able to check email, make appointments online, or find the nearest pharmacy. However, nearly 10% of households in Pima County do not have reliable internet service. This percentage triples to 29% for households with an income of less than \$20,000 and is even higher for rural areas. This uneven distribution of digital access, skills, and support is known as the digital divide. The digital divide existed before the pandemic but emerged as one of the largest barriers and inequities faced by students and families with the rapid shift to virtual learning.

Internet Service Type in Pima County

- 67.3% - Multiple types of internet
- 13.6% - Cellular data only
- 9.5% - No internet access
- 6.5% - Broadband only
- 2.0% - Internet, no subscription
- 0.8% - Other
- 0.3% - Dial-up only

Source: US Census, ACS, 1-year estimates, 2019.



As C2C pivoted and began to learn about the most pressing digital needs of students, it was clear that bridging the digital divide required a multi-faceted approach. Students need affordable, reliable high-speed service, as well as personal, secure, and updated devices. Additionally, it is critical that support for students, families, and caregivers be available as they navigate the landscape of online learning, aspects of which have remained even as students returned to physical classroom spaces. Supported by funding from the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, C2C facilitated a partnership between Arizona Serve and Baboquivari Unified School District (BUSD) for the 2020-2021 school year to utilize two AmeriCorps state members. These members were recent BUSD graduates and helped organize the Baboquivari Tech Squad (BTS). BTS provided individualized outreach, targeting students with the highest risk for falling behind. They also created an online support system for students and families to request help with technical issues. BTS members were consistent, often checking in daily with students and caregivers to ensure they were logging in and addressing any technical problems. Their strategies increased participation in the district's online intervention program by 150% from 73 to 181 students.

This increase in activity directly impacted student achievement in reading and mathematics. By the end of the school year, 103 students caught up by at least a month in reading, and 89 students caught up by at least a month in math.

There have been tremendous gains toward closing the digital divide over the last 18 months, but it will take continued intentional and data-informed action to build on those gains. The students and families that remain disconnected or inconsistently connected are most likely experiencing the biggest, most deeply embedded inequities. It will take large-scale systems change, but it is a critical component of advancing racial and educational equity.



Breaking Down Barriers

Behavioral Health

The impact of students' mental health on their learning and achievement is well documented. The cumulative effects of the pandemic were expected to contribute to more mental stress in addition to daily pressures. Districts are working hard to protect their students' social and emotional well-being. This includes ensuring that students and families who are seeking out behavioral and mental health services are connected to the appropriate resources.

Large-scale systemic changes are needed to eliminate barriers to equitable access and treatment within the healthcare system. But there are opportunities to make small-scale changes that will help address the immediate needs of students. Schools play a critical role in identifying students who may be struggling - and for students in crisis, schools can be an important initiator of referrals to providers. C2C convened a Behavioral Health Action Team with partners from school districts and behavioral health providers to prioritize strategies for increased coordination

Over the last year, C2C's collaboration with community partners have resulted in the following:

- Pilot of common referral form to be used by school staff to streamline referral processes.
- Centralized online directory with quick links to different providers' referral forms for school staff that has been accessed more than 600 times.
- Identification of existing efforts in the community to support better alignment across organizations and minimize duplication.
- Joining efforts with the Pima County Health Department's Behavioral Health in School Coalition focused on supporting schools and students coping with pandemic trauma as co-facilitators of the Process Improvement workgroup.



Getting Schools Ready for
Kindergarten-aged Children

Children are learning all the time, and the earliest years of a child’s life are especially important. About 90% of a child’s brain develops before the age of five. Children who have access to quality early learning settings enter kindergarten prepared to learn and interact with their peers. Home visitation programs, high-quality early care, as well as student-ready educational systems are part of a foundation that creates a strong educational pipeline to success as adults.

C2C tracks the percentage of three- and four-year olds in high-quality early education childcare programs. This indicator provides data on how well our community is supporting our youngest children and their caregivers in accessing high-quality, affordable childcare that meets their needs. Though limitations with Census data don’t allow for an update on this indicator, there has been a steady increase in the percentage from 16.4% in 2014 to 23.4% in 2019. At the same time, childcare systems across the country were severely impacted by the pandemic. The long-term underinvestment in our early childhood education infrastructure made it even more susceptible to the negative effects of COVID-19. As a result, high-quality, affordable childcare is out of reach for even more families and has put an enormous amount of stress on an undervalued early childhood workforce.

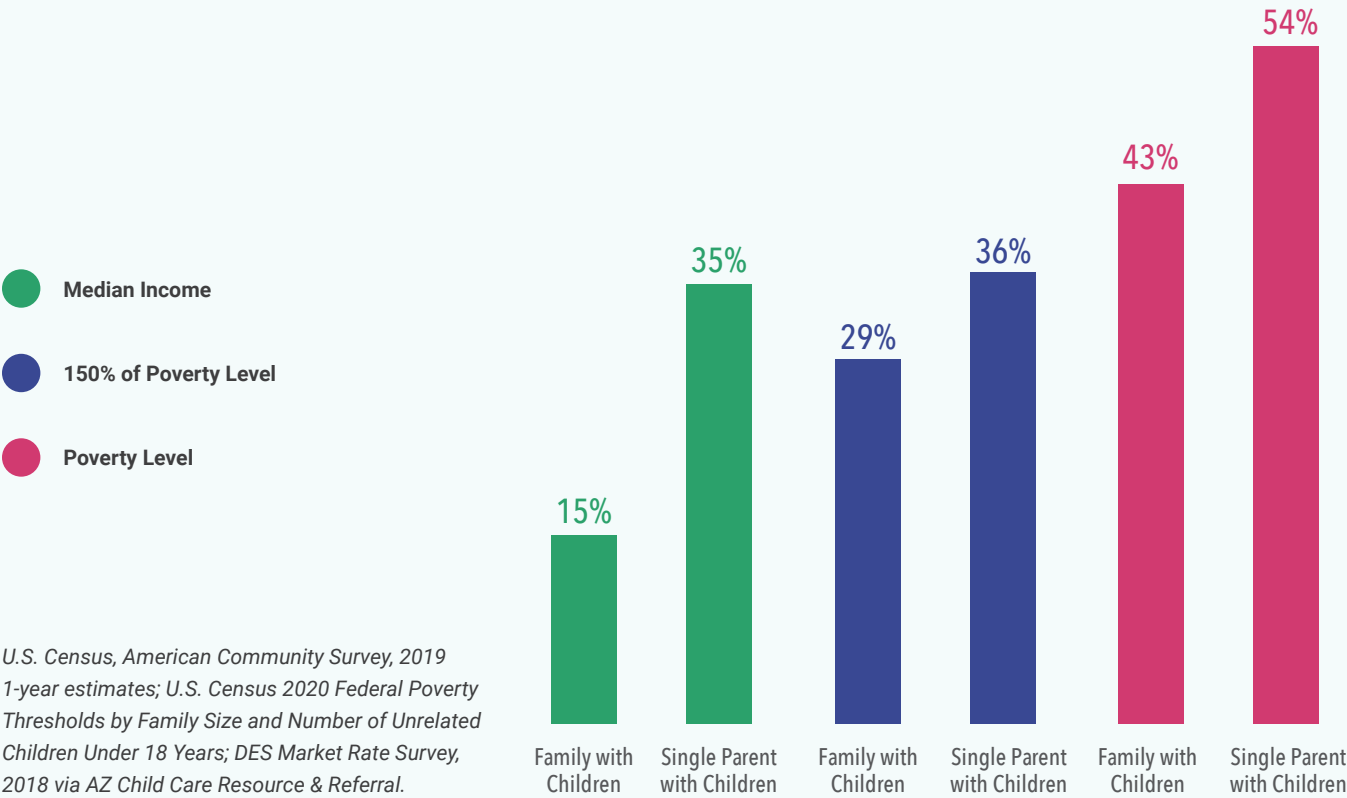
Affordability and Equitable Access

Equitable access to high-quality childcare includes ensuring families have options that are reasonably close to home and work, requires culturally competent definitions of quality that reflect the values of all families, a valued and adequately compensated workforce, as well as affordability. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, affordable childcare should not exceed 7% of a household’s income. In Pima County, center-based childcare for one three-, four-, or five-year-old costs more than double that amount, at 15% based on the median income. For Black, Latinx, and Native American households the cost is more than 25% and more than 50% for single females with two children.

“During the pandemic, access to childcare has diminished significantly, disproportionately affecting working families, especially moms, who rely on childcare in order to be able to go to work. Multiple studies have shown the long-term economic, workforce development, community safety, and other social benefits of investing in early childhood education.”

Mayor REGINA ROMERO
following the Pima County Board of Supervisors approval of \$10 million for early childhood education

Percent of Income for Center-Based Childcare Cost



Getting Systems Ready

Pima Early Education Program (PEEPs)

Given the urgency with which action is needed, C2C and coalitions across the country are working toward long-term, sustainable changes, including advocating for more sustainable investment. In the Spring of 2021, the Pima County Board of Supervisors took bold action to create the Pima Early Education Program (PEEPs). PEEP is designed to assist as many as 1,145 three and four-year-old children from income eligible families to attend high-quality preschool at multiple locations through a mixed delivery system across Pima County. Initial funding was provided by Pima County’s share of Federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, the City of Tucson, Towns of Marana, and Oro Valley, participating school districts, the business community, and local non-profit agencies. Additional buy-in from state agencies like First Things First (FTF) and the Department of Economic Security (DES) and the local Head Start grantee, Child-Parent Centers, Inc., contributed to the success of the effort. As a partnership, C2C publicly advocated for the program while many C2C Leadership Council members also participated in the local grassroots coalition, Preschool Promise, a group of advocates who support the goal of making high-quality preschool available for every child.



Progress has been made with the PEEP rollout. As of the end of 2021, 567 children are receiving assistance through this effort, approximately 50% of the 1,145 children the program is expected to serve.

In addition to increasing access through subsidies, efforts were also focused on shifting policies that ensure there are childcare options that meet the needs of families. More Head Start locations are now offering full-day, extended childcare, which can alleviate stress for working parents and help them to maintain a work-life balance. With the new DES legislation (HB 2016 in 2021 Legislative Session), parents now enrolled in school full-time are eligible for DES subsidies. Overall, there are new supports for high-quality early learning for children who need it most.

Continuous Improvement in Home Visitation

Data Informed Action

United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona and C2C have been part of a project with the National League of Cities called the Municipal Policy Alignment for Early Childhood Success. The learning community brings together staff from communities across the country that are working toward policy changes at a local level to help fund early childhood initiatives and has led to the creation of the Arizona PreK Alignment Team. This team includes members from cities across the state, all of whom are implementing publicly funded PreK in their communities. This team is working to create local data briefs for Mayors and other local policy makers to use. The scans are being completed by WestEd with support from Helios, and in collaboration with other entities that have access to relevant data. Once completed, the Kindergarten Readiness Change Network will identify any additional data needed to inform action.



Throughout 2021, C2C and the Family Support Alliance (FSA), supported by First Things First, have worked with home visitation programs to address staff retention, an important factor related to family retention. Data showed that families often disengaged or disenrolled from programs if they experienced a change in their home visitor. In collaboration with home visitation supervisors and staff C2C designed a survey to learn more about job satisfaction, reasons for continuing or changing careers, distribution of time on job tasks, connectedness, and training.

Data and insights from this survey have been shared with interest groups at the organizational, local, and state levels as part of larger conversations on how to support early childhood educators and staff. Additionally, results of this survey and the commitment of FSA partners have supported data-driven tests of change across programs and organizations, including:

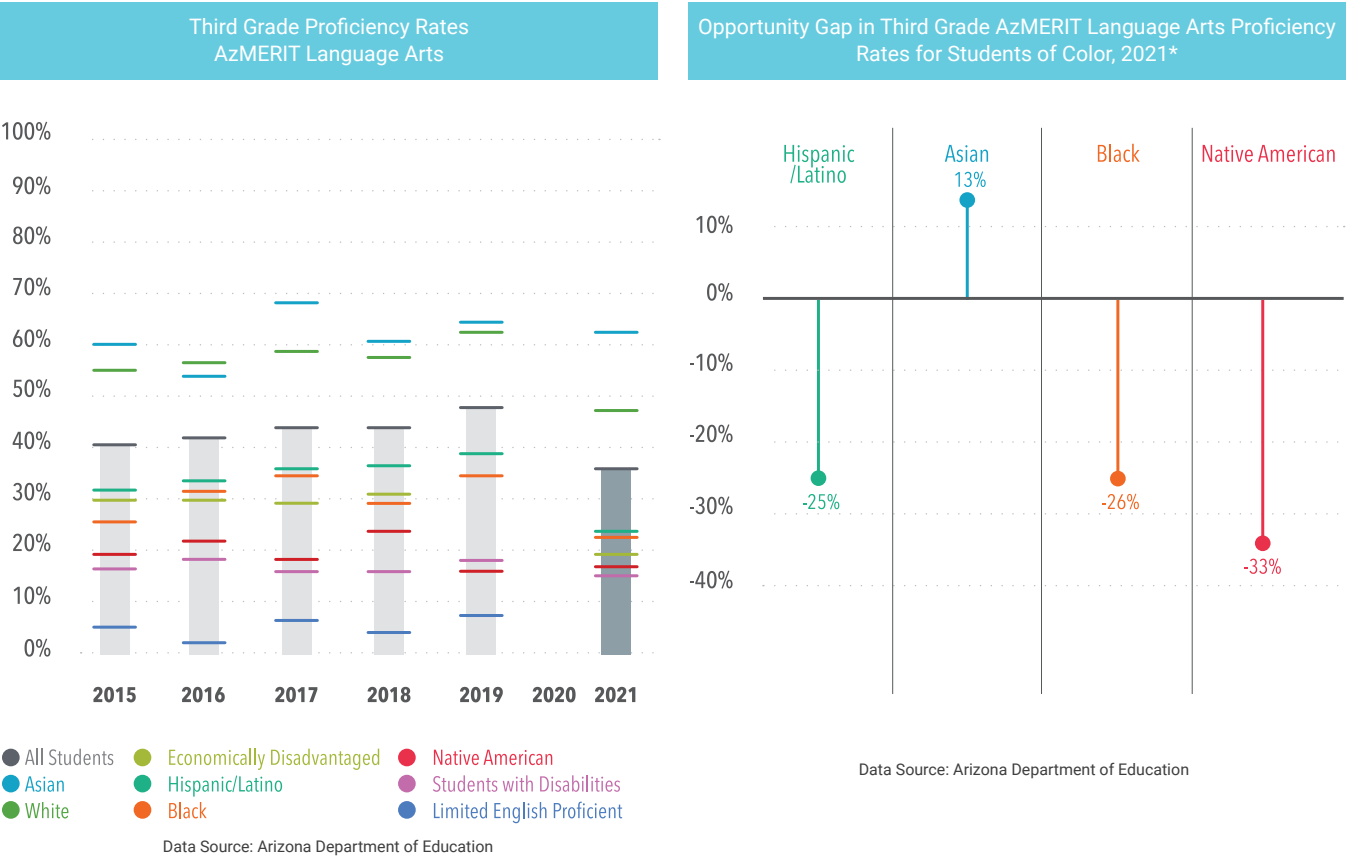
- Revised job descriptions for home visitation staff and updates to interviewing and onboarding processes.
- Implementation of a formal mentoring process for new hires by more experienced staff, who will be compensated for their new responsibilities and roles as mentors.
- Shifting staff roles to better accommodate the strengths of home visitors to improve family recruitment

Every Child is Successful

Early Grade Literacy

Early literacy skills are foundational as children move from learning to read to reading to learn. Research shows that children who are reading at grade level by third grade are on track for better academic outcomes as they continue along the educational pipeline. The percentage of Pima County third graders proficient on the state assessment is one indicator of how well the school systems are ready and adequately resourced to support all students.

State assessment data has shown a steady increase in the overall proficiency rate in reading up by six percentage points in 2019, as compared to 2015. Arizona did not administer the AzMerit assessment in 2020 due to the mandatory shutdowns but resumed testing in the Spring of 2021. Students were required to take the test in-person, which presented several logistical challenges as students had been remote for the entire year. This resulted in fewer students coming into schools to be tested, and those that were able to participate did so under unparalleled circumstances. Additionally, portions of the assessment were shortened to limit the amount of time students were around others. Thus, state assessment results for 2021 as a student-level indicator of progress present several challenges, especially compared to previous years. The data for 2021 is still presented, and although limited conclusions can be drawn, opportunity gaps remain for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American students.



For the last three years, C2C has implemented site-based continuous improvement projects in several elementary schools. Because of the learnings and successful strategies that have resulted from their work, four elementary schools in Marana Unified School District continued with projects for the 2021 school year even as they faced constantly changing classroom conditions. During monthly meetings facilitated by C2C, teacher teams set goals, look at data, develop strategies, test them, and adopt or adapt as needed.

In addition, these meetings provide valuable dedicated time with one another for peer-to-peer conversations and learning. This year’s teams include the school’s Lead Reading Specialist and Principal to support more alignment between them and teachers, as well as ensure that strategies and learnings can be shared more broadly with other school staff, such as other teachers, paraprofessionals and the school librarian.

Because the continuous improvement process is about making small changes in real-time, teachers are able to adjust their instructional practices immediately and assess the effectiveness quarterly. This also allows teachers to strategically target individual students who need additional interventions and support. This year, there are 23 staff and teachers participating and 480 students being impacted by these strategies. By the third quarter, 60% of students were reading at grade level compared to 50% at the beginning of the year. Additionally, 100% of principals and teachers reported that continuous improvement work facilitated by C2C had a positive impact on students’ literacy skills and they want to stay involved.

“C2C helps us to think outside of the box and gives us the time and space to work more intentionally on meeting students’ needs.”

EVI CARDENAS
1st grade Teacher
Butterfield Elementary School

Through the continuous improvement process, teachers tested key strategies to improve reading achievement. Based on student assessment data, the following are three effective strategies:

- Utilizing resource staff, reading specialists, paraprofessionals, and other grade-level teachers to increase guided reading lessons to five times a week.
- Restructuring independent work and guided reading time to include specific activities to develop vocabulary and spelling skills.
- Increasing phonics lessons and use of visuals to address challenges that accompanied online learning.

“Looking at data can often times make teachers feel like we are not doing the right things. Working with our C2C facilitator has helped us focus on the good in the data and encourages us to take steps to make small improvements that end up making a big impact.”

MICHELLE CASTILLO
Lead Reading Specialist
Butterfield Elementary School



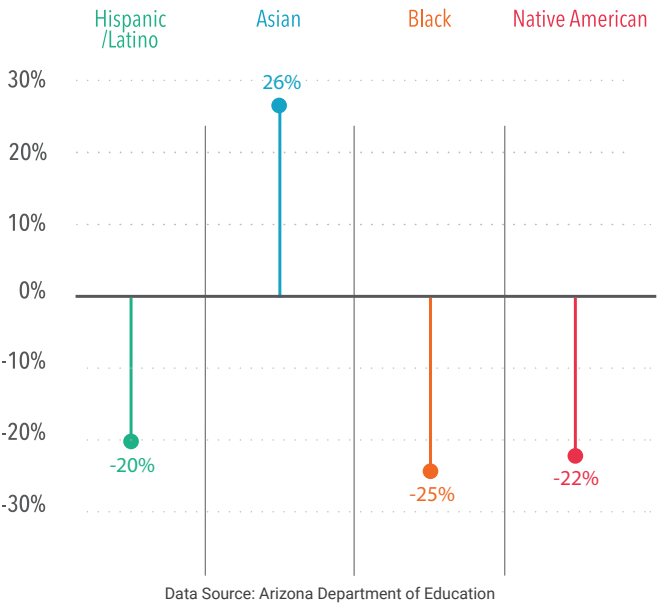
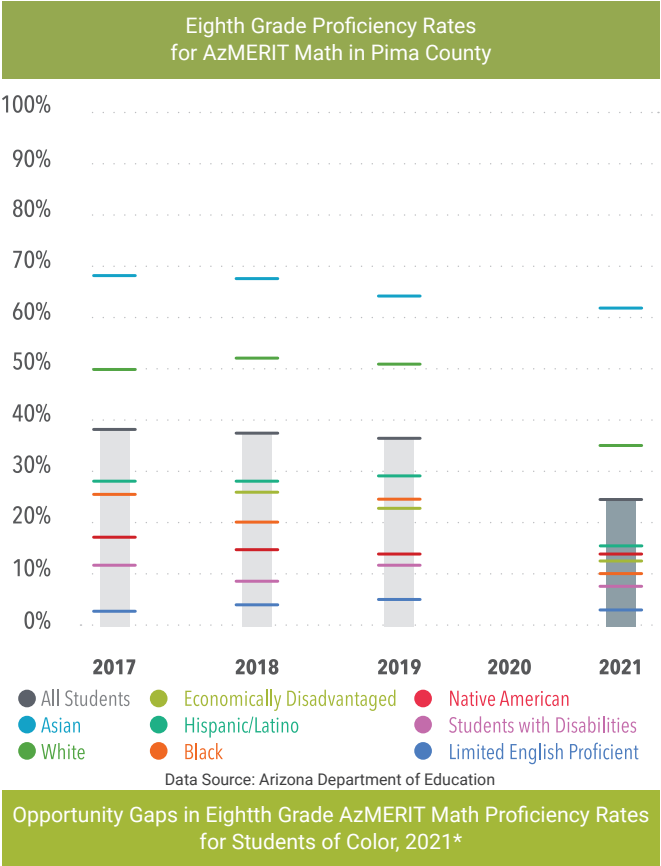
Every Child is Successful

Middle School Math

Being proficient at math in eighth grade is a critical milestone, and there are many factors, academic and non-academic, that contribute to students’ achievement in mathematics. AzMERIT scores from 2019 show that 36% of eighth graders were proficient in math, which was relatively unchanged from the previous years. The data from 2021 is unique because not all students were tested and therefore the data collected was incomplete. Despite this, the data collected indicates that opportunity gaps still persist for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American students mirroring similar disparities in the other outcome areas.

C2C ’s Middle School Math (MSM) Change Network is testing strategies to increase the number of students who enter into high school prepared and confident to continue their math courses. In 2021, partners from Marana Unified School District and Tucson Unified School District and content experts from the University of Arizona’s Center for the Recruitment and Retention of Math Teachers (CRR), continued the collaborative work virtually. Together they identified that creating a bridge between fifth and sixth grade curricula would better prepare students for a successful transition to middle school math.

During the 2021 school year, Marana Unified School District tested an innovative professional development opportunity created for sixth grade math teachers. Monthly sessions were designed around students’ upcoming lessons. By doing so, teachers received instructional supports and hands-on previews specific to the concepts they would be teaching next. C2C is providing technical assistance for continuous improvement and data support to assess the impact of this professional development strategy on student learning. This support includes designing teacher surveys to track changes in their confidence and knowledge of sixth grade math standards. The early successes and learnings from this project are informing similar strategies in other districts, as well as action towards prioritizing professional development opportunities that meet teachers’ needs.



“It is important for teachers to understand the alignment and coherence of standards across grade bands in order to build upon prior knowledge and best support the needs of students mathematically.”

JEN HENDRICKSON
K-8 Math Specialist for
Marana Unified School District

Promising practices for math achievement:

- Targeted support for teachers during classroom visits and ongoing professional development from the district math specialist.
- Focusing on current or upcoming math lessons enabling teachers to receive just-in-time support for their classroom instruction.
- Supporting teachers in developing a deeper understanding of grade-level standards and math concepts taught before and after their grade level instruction.



In addition to continuous improvement efforts in school districts, C2C continued its partnership with CRR, which not only brings content expertise to the Change Network, but also provides direct professional development to MSM teachers through the Improving Mathematical Problem Solving, Agency, and Student-Centered Instruction for K-8 Teachers and Students program (IMPACTS). The IMPACTS program focuses on developing teacher confidence and proficiency in K-8 mathematics, while also supporting opportunities for teacher leadership. The program caters to teachers seeking to achieve the greatest change in students’ mathematical experiences and improving student outcomes in mathematics. C2C leveraged resources to scale programming by hiring an additional coach. As a result of increased staff capacity, 16 additional teachers, impacting 1,040 students were able to participate this past year, despite challenges recruiting teachers amid a pandemic.

Every Child Graduates

High School Graduation

High school graduation is a critical milestone in a student’s academic journey that is related to positive outcomes for college, career attainment, and life. It is also another pivotal transition point for a student’s next step along the education pipeline. When high schools are equitably and adequately resourced to meet the diverse needs of students, students graduate at a higher rate and are prepared for their next step towards a post-secondary credential.

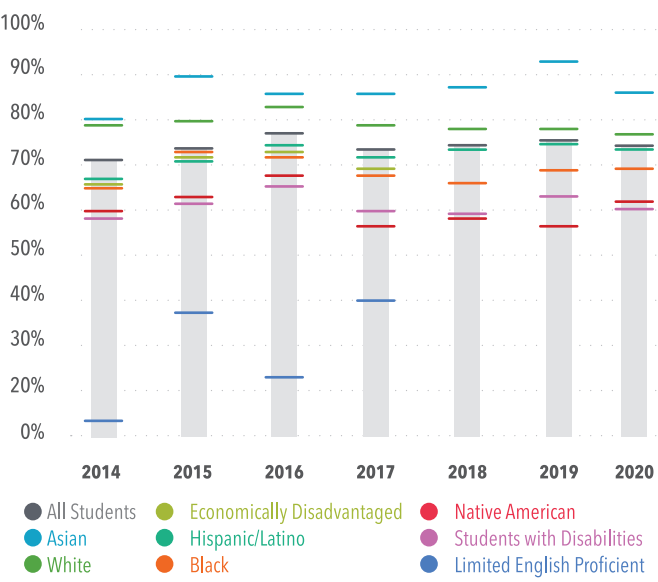
The most recent high school graduation data available is for the Class of 2020. Most of their senior year was completed before mandatory shutdowns and the shift to virtual learning, which may have mitigated the effects on graduation for students who graduated in the spring. Data shows that the 2020 four- and five-year graduation rates stayed relatively stable at 74.2%. When disaggregated, data reveals that opportunity gaps for Hispanic/Latinx and Black students have decreased by 8.3 and 6.2 percentage points, respectively.

Work in the high school graduation space has pivoted the most during the 2020-2021 academic year. Many of the site-based projects developed in collaboration with alternative high schools were put on hold as schools addressed immediate needs brought on by the pandemic. Despite these challenges, C2C was able to leverage existing partnerships to continue supporting partners in efforts that directly impacted high school graduation rates in new ways and for the most underserved populations.



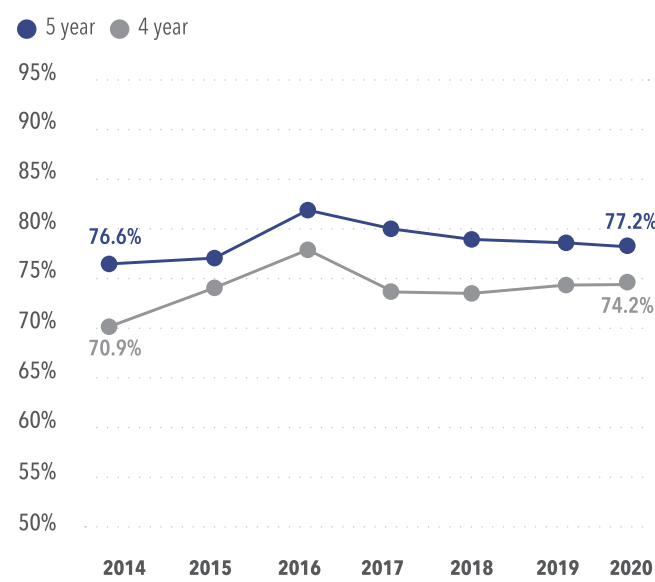
The Re-Engagement Center (REC) is partnering with the Pima County School Superintendent’s Office to bring a mobile GED testing unit on-site. This strategy addressed student transportation barriers and allowed youth to take the test in a space they are familiar with, feel safe in, and with trusted pathway coaches to support them. The REC’s partnership with Grad Solutions, an online educational program that leads to a high school diploma, has also continued. Through this partnership, the REC and GradSolutions share resources to be able to provide on-site assistance for enrollment and academic support. The number of REC-enrolled youth who have received a high school diploma or GED more than doubled to 97 in the last year. Because of successes like this and the utilization of data to inform decision-making, there are plans to open two more REC locations in 2022. These locations were strategically chosen to serve youth in areas that are lacking in youth-serving service providers. Currently two REC locations are serving more than 1,100 youth – a 30% increase compared to 2020 – and it is expected that an additional 200 youths will be served at the new locations. Most of these youths will not have a secondary credential, making strategies like these crucial.

Four Year High School Graduation Rates by Subgroups



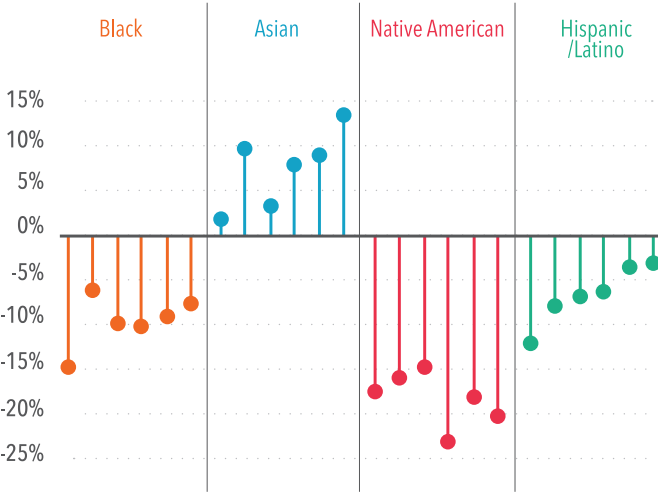
Data Source: Arizona Department of Education.

High School Graduation Rates in Pima County



Data Source: Arizona Department of Education.

Opportunity Gaps in High School Graduation Rates for Students of Color, 2021*



Data Source: Arizona Department of Education.

Every Young Adult is College and Career Ready

Post-Secondary Enrollment

Post-Secondary Completion

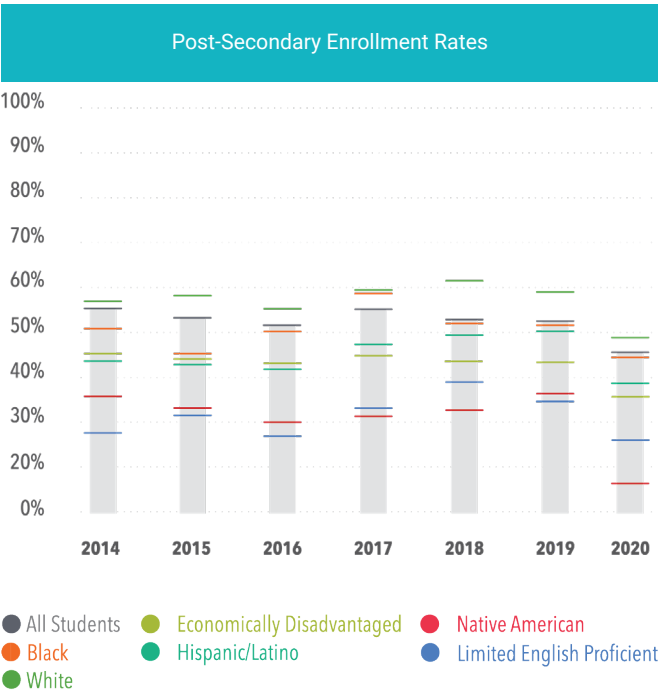
Education after high school provides opportunities for social and economic mobility, but only if there is equitable access to pathways that lead to a credential and systemic support for student success. In the absence of either, race, ethnicity, and income will continue to be predictors of who does and does not achieve these milestones.

The disruptions and uncertainty faced by new graduates over the past two years affected students’ navigation of post-secondary pathways, as well as aspirations after high school. The percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in a post-secondary institution was 46.3% in 2020, a decrease of almost 7 percentage points from 2019. Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and students experiencing poverty had lower rates compared to their white peers, while students with limited English proficiency and Native American students

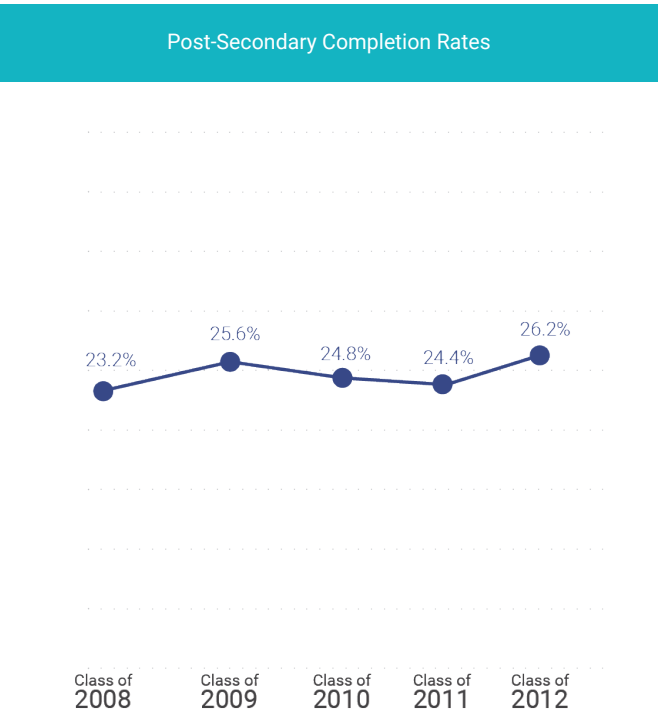
experienced the most disparity. Post-secondary completion rates are even lower with only 26.2% of students obtaining a degree within six years of enrollment.

Even before students start the process of enrolling in higher education, there are factors that can affect opportunities for post-secondary success. Early targeted support promoting college and career exploration can help students leave high school with the knowledge necessary to navigate post-secondary pathways and courses. However, access to college and career counselors is limited for many students as Arizona schools continue to be under-resourced. Without awareness of the resources available, students are more likely to delay enrolling in post-secondary pathways. This delay increases the risk of never receiving a degree or credential compared to students who enroll immediately after high school graduation.

Conditions that contribute to academic deficiencies continue to prevent students from completing the 16-core enrollment credit requirements to apply to Arizona’s four-year universities. Similarly, biases in admission processes continue to be an access barrier and negatively affect underserved students, disproportionately those of color. Consequently, due to embedded inequities, students are placed in developmental courses which costs more money, time, and effort. To ensure that every student can be successful, a shift in thinking - from students needing to be college-ready to institutions needing to be accountable for being student-ready - is critical.



Enrollment data is number of graduates of each cohort who enrolled in a post-secondary institution the fall after graduation.
Source: National Student Clearinghouse, Arizona Board of Regents, 2014-2020 and National Center for Education Statistics, 2018-19 via Education Forward Arizona Progress Meter.



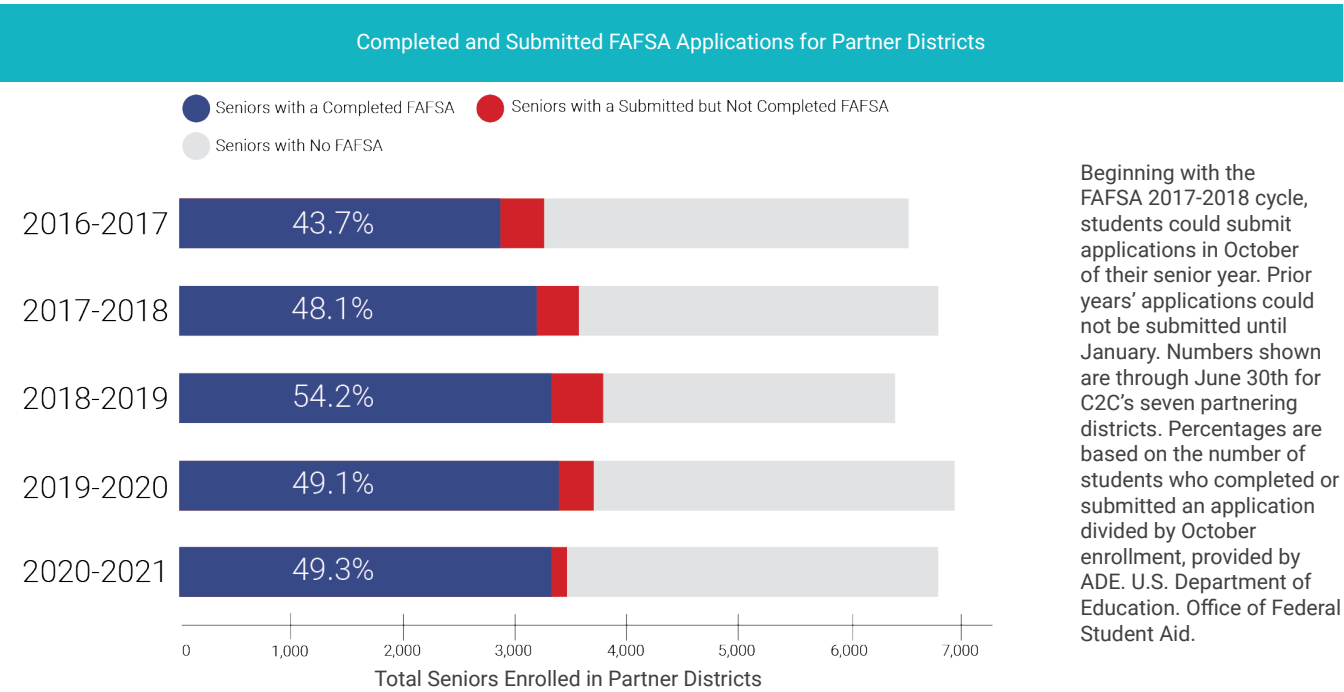
Completion data is the number of high school graduates who completed an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree within six years of high school graduation. Schools that did not have complete data for both 2- and 4-year institutions were excluded.
Source: Arizona Board of Regents Annual Report

Collaborative Action for Results

In 2021, C2C convened more than 35 cross-sector leaders and launched the Post-Secondary Enrollment and Post-Secondary Completion Change Networks. Both Change Networks committed to taking collaborative action to increase student success. The Enrollment Change Network is increasing awareness and access to post-secondary support and resources, particularly for students who have historically had limited opportunity to utilize them. The Completion Change Network is working towards changing practices to ensure students have the knowledge and guidance to choose the most appropriate math pathways as they work towards their education and career goals. This strategy will help students avoid deficiencies upon high school graduation and the need for developmental courses.

To accelerate the elimination of opportunity gaps for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, the StriveTogether Cradle to Career National Network awarded C2C funds to support these launches. This funding has allowed C2C to provide critical backbone support, as well as resources to partnering organizations. The partners below, are committed to removing barriers that contribute to disparities by prioritizing underserved and marginalized students, families, and educators. This will be accomplished through testing strategies using continuous improvement and using data to assess impact, and sharing learnings with both Change Networks.

- Scholarships A-Z
- Tucson Regional Educators Collaborative (TREC), University of Arizona
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Tucson Unified School District
- Joint Technical Education District (JTED)
- Dual Enrollment, Pima Community College



Beginning with the FAFSA 2017-2018 cycle, students could submit applications in October of their senior year. Prior years’ applications could not be submitted until January. Numbers shown are through June 30th for C2C’s seven partnering districts. Percentages are based on the number of students who completed or submitted an application divided by October enrollment, provided by ADE. U.S. Department of Education. Office of Federal Student Aid.



Every Young Adult is College and Career Ready

Career Attainment

Entering a career pathway that provides real opportunity for economic mobility has implications not only for individuals, but also for society. Experiencing unemployment early in one’s working years come with high costs for both individuals and their community. Young adults who do not have access to consistent work before the age of 25 will have earnings that are 44% less than the earnings of those who consistently work during the course of their lives. It is imperative that communities build and resource multiple pathways to career success, especially for those who continue to experience systemic barriers or need to take a non-traditional path through school. When all young adults have meaningful opportunities to enter the workforce, it will be reflected in our community’s economic growth.

The effects of the pandemic disrupted employment for many individuals and presented new challenges to enter the workforce. The resulting economic downturn has been disproportionately felt by young people, particularly Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian young adults. As these communities navigate the labor market, they face barriers, discrimination, and systemic inequities that not only affects their career opportunities, but also their overall well-being.

Employment rates for young adults aged 20 to 24 years in Pima County cannot be updated without 2020 Census data. However, national trends suggest the effects of COVID-19 on unemployment rates for young people peaked in the Spring of 2020 at around 25% compared to 8.4% in the Spring of 2019, with young people of color experiencing higher rates, particularly Black males.

C2C does not currently have a Change Network focused on this outcome, but it is closely related to post-secondary success. Many of the projects and collaborative action in the Post-Secondary Change Networks are exploring strategies that, while developed to support more students in obtaining post-secondary credentials, are, at the same time, providing career exploration and readiness opportunities.



Creating Employment Pathways for Young People

As the ebbs and flows of the ongoing economic recovery continue, provisions available through Federal efforts present an immense opportunity to address longstanding, deeply embedded inequities and mitigate the disparities which the past two years have widened. Below are recommendations presented by The Yes Project, centered on youth’s lived experiences and best practices aligned with C2C’s priorities:

- Maximize benefits of available resources and leverage existing infrastructure to engage more young people in high-quality programs that provide education, paid training, and employment support together.
- Take action to remove policies, practices, and systems that disenfranchise women and people of color in the workplace, including redesigning training and pathways to advancement to close gaps; rethinking recruitment and hiring practices; and reconstructing workplace culture to promote a sense of belonging and being valued.
- Enrich young people’s network of relationships to build social capital and promote connections with others who can meet youth where they are and offer support tailored to their career needs and aspirations.

Sources: Flanagan, Margolius, Lynch, & Hynes. “The State of Youth Employment – Navigating the World of Work During COVID-19.” May 2021. The Yes Project, America’s Promise Alliance; America’s Promise Alliance. <https://www.americaspromise.org/resource/state-youth-employment>, <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/covid-19-recession-hits-black-young-adult-employment-especially-hard>

Every Youth is Connected

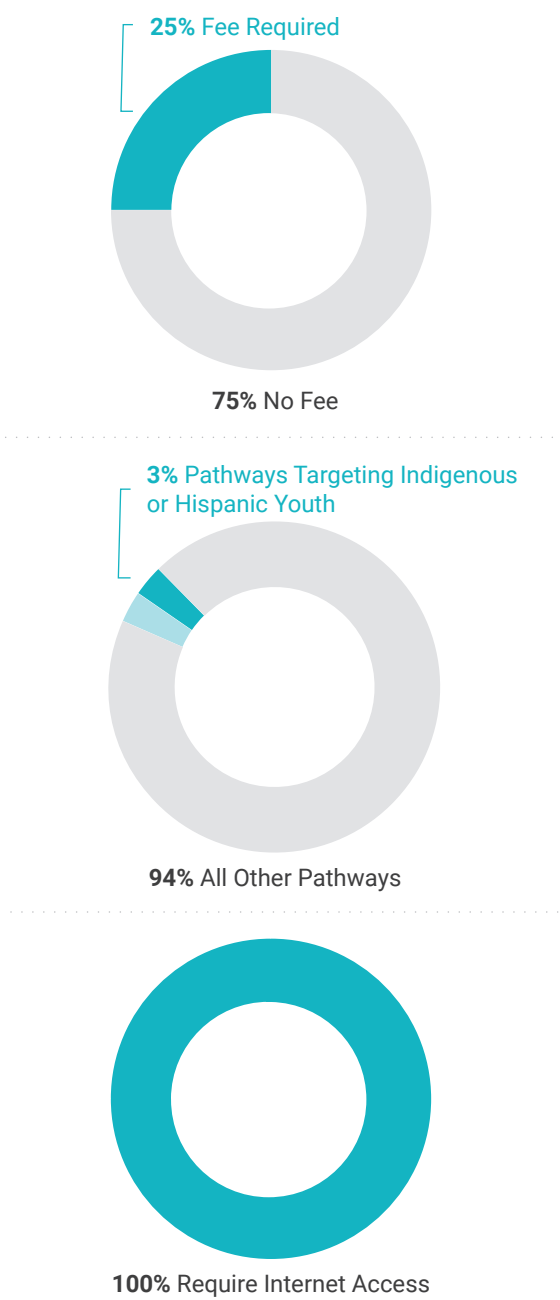
Re-Engagement of Opportunity Youth

Throughout emerging adulthood, young people engage in education and training pathways to equip them for successful entry into the workforce. For many young people, systemic inequities make it difficult to remain engaged in these pathways. Based on the most recent data available from 2019, there are 16,783 (11.8%) youth aged 16 to 24 years in Pima County who are not in school and not working, also referred to as Opportunity Youth. Though the youth disconnection rate has fluctuated over the last several years, there has been a slight downward trend since 2014, when there were 19,845 (13.7%). However, this overall decrease has not resulted in fewer disparities for youth of color. Our systems are still inadequately serving Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youth, with those groups experiencing higher disconnection rates than their white peers. Similar to other educational indicators, the full and long-term effects of the pandemic are not yet known, and updated data is not currently available. However, pre-pandemic numbers provide an important snapshot of the progress that needs to be made. This is especially true given the negative effects of the pandemic that youth from underserved communities are disproportionately experiencing.

Youth on the Rise (YOTR), the Change Network for Re-Engagement of Opportunity Youth, takes collective action to reduce Opportunity Youth disconnection in Pima County. One of the main strategies of YOTR is the implementation of re-engagement centers. These centers are youth-centered, safe spaces where youth can receive individualized support from trusted adults and have access to other community resources and peer support. When this strategy was implemented about eight years ago, there was one location that served between 20 and 40 youths. In 2018, with funding and data support from C2C, Goodwill Industries of Southern Arizona (Goodwill) launched their flagship re-engagement center near downtown Tucson and quickly opened a second location near South Tucson. Later this year, Goodwill will open two additional centers, strategically located to scale their re-engagement practices across Pima County. The re-engagement centers and many community partners that collaborate with Goodwill are meeting the immediate needs of youth to ensure they have access to resources, but even on a larger scale, this strategy is strengthening connections among providers that serve youth. These connections are crucial to put the onus on systems to be youth-ready, and to identify and address institutional inequities.

Barriers to Engaging in Education and Career Pathways for Opportunity Youth

A significant focus of YOTR has been collaborating with community partners on innovative strategies to connect youth to internships and work experience opportunities that align with their goals. Research conducted by a C2C Coverdell Fellow illustrated the prevalence of barriers at the policy and systems-level that make it more difficult for Opportunity Youth to re-connect. Of the 65 providers and programs included, 1 in 4 had financial requirements while less than 5% targeted Indigenous or Hispanic/Latinx Opportunity Youth.



Data provided by Rae Richards, Workforce Development Data Coordinator & C2C Coverdell Fellow, 2020-2021.



Changing the Narrative

Changing the narrative about youths and young adults disconnected from school and work is part of systems change work. Youth on the Rise, and similar collaboratives across the country, are transforming narratives by (1) creating an asset-based frame that elevates the strengths and contributions of opportunity youth, and (2) lifting the systemic – rather than individual - nature of the challenges young people face. Amplifying youth voices through their own storytelling and preparing them to participate as equal partners with adult leaders are part of the shifting narratives. But doing so in an exploitative manner has the potential to be disempowering. To ensure that youths have control over how and when their personal stories are shared, if at all, organizations and programs can do the following:

- Encourage young people to reflect on and understand their story as a powerful personal growth experience.
- Encourage a culture of treating personal stories as belonging to someone who may or may not choose to share that story in any given setting.
- Treat youth and young adults as equal partners who are no more obligated to share personal information than are staff.
- Provide numerous ways for young people to contribute meaningfully to important work.

Source: "Advancing Youth Voice and Changing Narrative About Opportunity Youth." Monique Miles, Yelena Nemoy, and Nancy Martin. March 2021. The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions.

Youth in Action

Improving the Youth Probation Experience

The United Youth Leadership Council remains a crucial part of co-developing solutions with youth-serving organizations and systems leaders. While Youth Council members develop their own interpersonal and workforce skills, they are implementing youth-driven, data-informed projects aligned with the goals of YOTR and C2C.

As of October 2021, there were more than 255 youth on probation and 300 youth probation referrals. Pima County sought assistance from C2C to develop a youth probation feedback survey to advise changes in professional development for probation officers. To collect the most actionable data, C2C helped revise the survey with edits informed by youth feedback while ensuring accessibility measures are considered – it is mobile-friendly and available in English and Spanish. Results from the survey will be analyzed and shared with the court this summer.

“The Probation Survey Project will assist us [the court] in identifying our success or areas of improvement within our systems to enhance relationships and in providing supports and resources to increase positive outcomes and successes for our youth and families; but most importantly, our youth and families will have a voice of their expectations of the court and probation officers they interact with. With Cradle to Career and the United Youth Leadership Council as the main drivers in the creation of the survey, field testing, and data collection, C2C has been integral in the success of our project.”

Nandi Muhammad
Pima County Juvenile Courts

Promising Practices

The work of YOTR focuses on the use of local data, youth and community expertise, and shared learnings among active partners. Below are some promising practices in the Opportunity Youth space:

- Easy and standardized processes for organizations and individual staff members to build relationships with each other to facilitate warm handoffs for youth.
- Employment opportunities for re-connected Opportunity Youth to support re-engagement efforts through outreach and recruitment to ensure youth are connected to a trusted peer during the intake process.
- Participation in community coalitions and boards by youth-serving agencies to amplify youth voices and advocate for change at the systems and policy levels.



Our Investors

Valedictorian - \$100,000+

The San Francisco Foundation
StriveTogether
Tucson Foundations
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Dean’s List - \$50,000-\$99,999

The Aspen Institute
Freeport-McMoRan

Honor Roll - \$20,000 - \$49,000

Raytheon

Council - \$5,000 - \$19,999

Laura and Archibald Brown
Community Foundation for Southern Arizona
Family Support/First Things First
Jewish Community Foundation
Calline Sanchez & Chad Driedger
Wells Fargo

A+ - \$1,000 - \$4,999

Vicki & John Balentine
University of Utah

Friend - \$25 - \$999

Jennifer Lohse
Doug Martin
Kassondra Silva



Get Involved

The change we want to achieve cannot be accomplished alone. It is going to take all of us working together in new and transformative ways to realize our vision of successful children, an engaged community, and a thriving economy. We thank you for your support in this important work and we encourage you to explore additional ways you can help improve equitable outcomes for our young people.

Here are some ideas:

- Volunteer through one of our partner organizations
- Sign up for our newsletter and help us raise awareness of our work and impact
- Elect candidates for local, state, and national offices who support equitable opportunities for educational success
- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@C2CPima)
- Align your funding priorities with cradle-to-career outcomes

Advocates

Sign up for updates on the following advocacy organizations:

- Children’s Action Alliance
- Pima County Early Education Update (working with United Way to get a link like the Steps Forward)
- Education Forward Arizona
- Aspen Institute: Forum for Community Solutions

Business Owners

- Partner with youth-serving agencies to develop work-based learning opportunities for Opportunity Youth
- Help your employees locate high-quality preschool programs by sharing the Quality First website www.qualityfirstaz.com
- Put children’s books in waiting areas
- Support in-school employees by encouraging attendance and academic persistence

Elected Policy Makers

- Meet with us to discuss the important policy and legislative actions that can improve educational outcomes
- Champion initiatives that advance equitable access to world-class education for every child

Parents or Caregivers

- Read to and with your children daily
- Learn about developmental milestones for children
- Take your child to doctor and dentist checkups every year
- Let your federal, state, and local government officials know that investing in early education is critical for family and child success

Support the Cradle to Career Partnership by donating today.

Visit our website: C2CPima.org

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