

## IMPACT STATEMENT

**Legislation title:** \*Authorize a Special Appropriation grant agreement with College Possible in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to provide intensive college access and success programming for low-income Portland students (Ordinance)

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**Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:**

College Possible is a nonprofit corporation striving to make college graduation possible for low-income Portland students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support from junior year in high school through college graduation. Founded in Minnesota in 2000 and launched in Portland in 2012, College Possible is a proven, research-based program with industry-leading results. They serve low-income students who have college potential, but lack the tools necessary to access and succeed in college. Their premise is that the academic, social and financial barriers to college access and success faced by low-income students are mostly identifiable and predictable. Through near-peer coaching by AmeriCorps members who are recent college graduates, they provide students with information and support they typically cannot get from counseling centers, parents or community networks.

For this project, College Possible will serve 100 students at four of their Portland partner high schools: Centennial, David Douglas, Madison and Parkrose. These students will enter their junior year in fall 2016 and are low-income, predominantly students of color, in the academic middle who have a desire to earn a bachelor's degree, with an average family income of \$30,004.

College Possible received funding from the Portland Children's Levy, of \$90,000 each year for fiscal years 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Despite decades of focus on the achievement gap, Oregon has the fourth lowest high school graduation rate in the country and there are disparities in college enrollment and completion along socioeconomic lines. A recent study found that 69.1% of middle and upper-income high school graduates in Oregon go on to enroll in college, compared to just 50% of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (US Department of Education, 2015). Nationally, only 11% of low-income students who graduated high school persist through degree completion. This disparity complicates graduation and degree attainment rates, and yet a college degree is the likeliest pathway out of poverty and can profoundly change the lives of graduates, our communities and the economy.

Their program closes the educational attainment gap and provides a triple payback to further the city's equity goals: (1) improve student success and break the cycle of poverty for generations, (2) develop a diverse and better prepared workforce for our business, and (3) significantly reduce the social costs associated with poverty.

**Financial and budgetary impacts:**

Funding for this grant is available in the FY2016-17 budget in the General Fund Special Appropriations.

**Community impacts and community involvement:**

Funding allows College Possible to strengthen their college program from tech-connected coaching to in-person campus-based coaching. They plan to deepen partnerships with at least two Portland area colleges in the next two years and place an AmeriCorps college coach full-time on these campuses.

College Possible is positively impacting low-income communities of color by empowering them to pursue their dreams of higher education. They currently serve 785 low-income students and 69% are students of color. Each student served becomes a college access messenger to their peers, families and neighbors – spreading the benefits of a college degree far beyond the student who earns it; with the power to transform the communities they call home. In just three years of programming, they have already seen a ripple effect among siblings, cousins and family friends who join the program when they are eligible. These students are breaking the cycle of poverty through education for generations to come.

College Possible students are helping to build capacity in their communities by participating in service events throughout the year. Every student is expected to participate in one large group service activity in their community (neighborhood clean-up, pothole filling, food drives, etc.) in the beginning of the school year. Students will then identify long-term service projects/volunteer opportunities to participate in, which empowers them to become community leaders and fosters a life-long ethic of civic engagement. These future engaged citizens will be more likely to participate in public policy and decision making opportunities as they begin their career and continue to work in their communities, thus helping the city reach their goals of building capacity for a more equitable community.

**Budgetary Impact Worksheet****Does this action change appropriations?**

- ☐ YES: Please complete the information below.  
☒ NO: Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount