# High School and Postsecondary Student Success

The eight programs funded under OFCY's High School and Postsecondary Success (HSPSS) strategy are designed to support student success and persistence through school and community-based programming that aims to support achievements in learning, increase youth attachment to school, and facilitate older youth transitions into high school and postsecondary education. To summarize strategy achievements and progress to date, this report draws on participant surveys, administrative data, interviews with two programs (College Track's Empowering Oakland Students To and Through College and Oakland Unified School District's African American Male Achievement), and a focus group with youth from one program (College Track's Empowering Oakland Students To and Through College).

## FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Catholic Charities of the East Bay - Experience Hope
- Centro Legal de la Raza, Inc. - Youth Law Academy
- College Track - Empowering Oakland Students To and Through College
- Oakland Kids First - Knight Success: College Ready, Career Ready and Community Ready
- Oakland Unified School District - African American Male Achievement: College and Career Performance Program
- Oakland Unified School District - OIHS: Refugee & Immigrant Wellness, Leadership and Restorative Justice Initiative
- Oakland Unified School District - Student Engagement in Restorative Justice
- The Mentoring Center – EMERGE

## Strategy Results

**2,047** **Youth**
participated in programming

**93,313** **Total Hours**
of academic services and college access/persistence support provided

**46** **Average Hours**
per youth participant

**8** **Programs**
received funding

**89%** **of Youth**
agreed that the program helped them feel more motivated to learn in school

**$1,200,027**
granted to programs

# Strategy Results

OFCY uses a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to assess its role in contributing toward city-wide goals. The RBA model is a comprehensive approach for assessing the quantity of services provided by programs, the quality of those services, and the effect of those services on the lives of children, youth, and families. It does this by addressing three guiding questions: *(1) How much did we do? (2) How well did we do it? (3) Is anyone better off?*

| How Much Did We Do? | |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of Programs Funded** | 8 |
| **Number of Youth Served** | 2,047 |
| **Total Hours of Service Provided** | 93,313 |
| **Average Hours of Service per Youth** | 46 |
| **Number of High Schools Served** | 8 |
| **How Well Did We Do It?** | |
| **Enrollment:** Average progress toward projected number of youth served[1] | 105% |
| **Total Hours of Service:** Average progress toward projected total hours of service | 167% |
| **Average Hours of Service:** Average progress toward projected average hours of service | 200% |
| **Safety:** Youth who report feeling safe in their program | 96% |
| **Caring Adults**: Youth who agreed that there is an adult at their program who really cares about them | 92% |
| **Positive Engagement**: Youth who agreed that they are interested in their program | 88% |
| **Is Anyone Better Off?** | |
| **Motivated to Learn**: Youth who report that they are more motivated to learn in school | 89% |
| **Academic Skills:** Youth who report that they learned skills that help with their schoolwork | 86% |

The remainder of this report includes the following sections aligned with this RBA framework:

1) Programs and Participants
2) How much did the programs provide?
3) How well did programs do it?
4) Is anyone better off as a result of the strategy's work?

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[1] At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate their annual enrollment and the total number of hours of service they will provide. Progress is calculated as the actual enrollment divided by the projected enrollment.
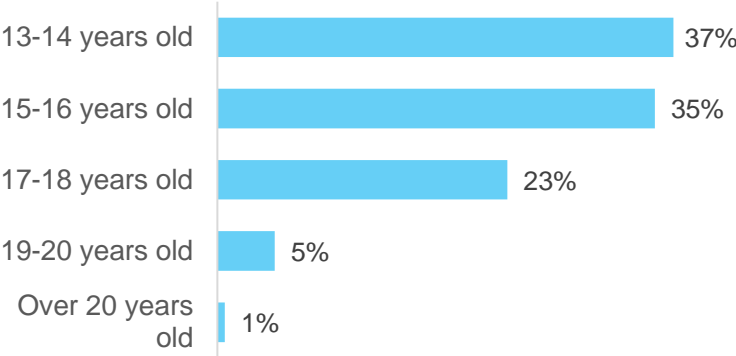
# Programs and Participants

During FY20-21, **2,047 unduplicated youth participated in High School and Post-Secondary Success (HSPSS) programs**, generally at high schools and alternative schools where students experience high levels of environmental stress. With a focus on students facing barriers in the traditional education system, programs offered support in high school academics and college access and persistence, as well as internship placements, socio-emotional wellness support, and access to financial aid and scholarship opportunities.

Although HSPSS programs share a commitment to serving youth who face barriers in traditional schools, they support different groups of young people and have diverse intervention models. For example, College Track supports and empowers youth from low-income backgrounds who are historically underrepresented in higher education and would be the first in their family to go to college. OUSD's African American Male Achievement Program provides predominantly African American and Latinx high school athletes with an array of academic, enrichment, and college-readiness supports.

Most participants are in high school or will soon transition into high school. As shown below, youth ages 15 to 18 represented close to 60% of participants served by this strategy in FY20-21.

### *Age of Participants*

| Age | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| 13-14 years old | 37% |
| 15-16 years old | 35% |
| 17-18 years old | 23% |
| 19-20 years old | 5% |
| Over 20 years old | 1% |

HSPSS programs provide support for high school students and those transitioning into and out of high school, prioritizing youth who face barriers in the traditional education system.
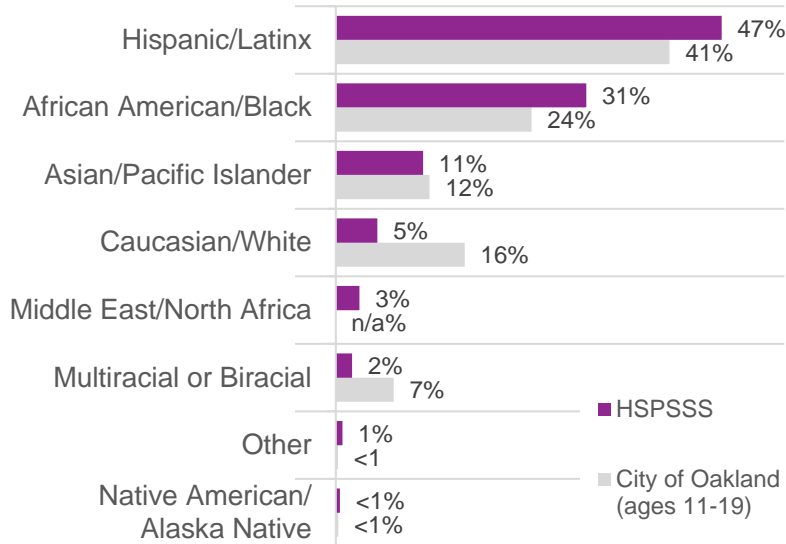
## Program Spotlights

To inform this report, SPR conducted interviews with staff from two HSPSS programs:

**College Track's Empowering Oakland Students To and Through College** empowers low-income and first generation students to persist to and through college. From enrollment in ninth grade through their graduation from college, students receive services including academic advising and tutoring, social emotional wellness programming, college exploration/application support, scholarships, and career exploration opportunities.

**Oakland Unified School District's African American Male Achievement Program** provides culturally responsive academic care management, transcript review, course planning, study strategies, study hall tutors, mentorships, mindfulness, life skills, college application and enrollment, career exploration and internships to students who play on their school's competitive sports teams.
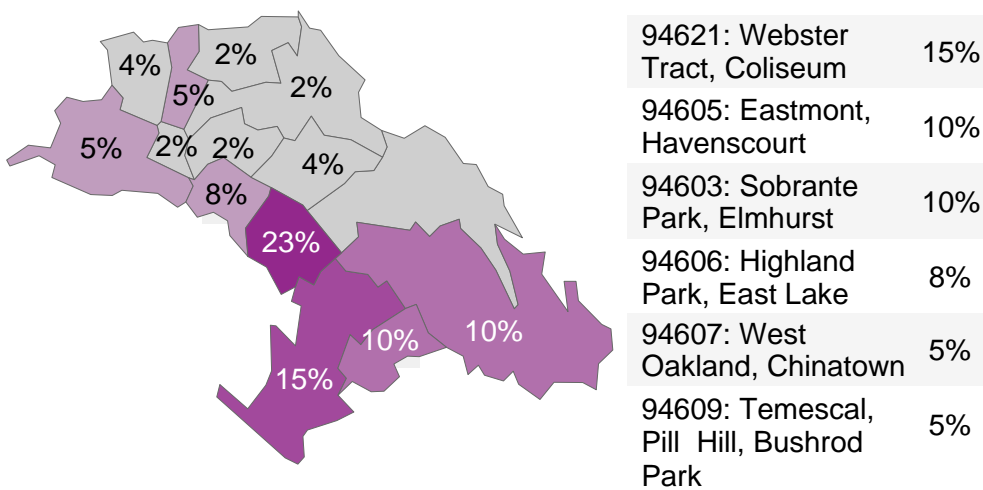
In alignment with OFCY's goal of reducing race-based disparities in employment, over three-quarters of participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx or African American/Black.

*Race/Ethnicity of OFCY Participants and Oakland Youth*



Relative to the city's population, youth who identify as Hispanic/Latinx or African American/Black were most likely to be served.
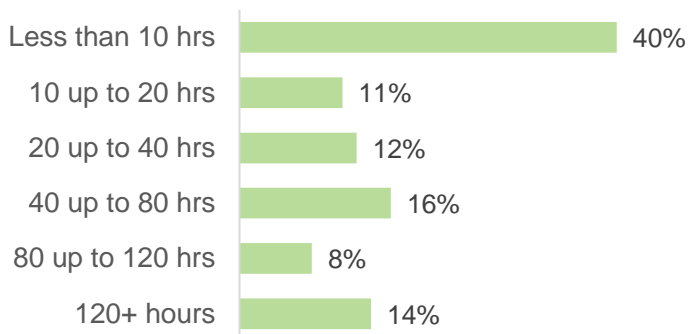
" *[Our students bring] maturity. Their confidence and their maturity to get on a bus and to travel between school and us and home is something that kids outside a city just don't do...I also think that about their persistence and resilience. They face all kinds of things... They also bring a sense of community and family inspiration and aspirations because they're setting out on [this college path] for themselves and for their family potentially for the first time.*

– Staff, College Track's Empowering Oakland's Students To and Through College

As illustrated below, most participants lived in zip codes that experience high levels of community stress, including Fruitvale, Webster Tract, Sobrante Park, and Eastmont.

**Zip Code of Residence**



| | |
|---|---|
| 94601: Fruitvale | 23% |
| 94621: Webster Tract, Coliseum | 15% |
| 94605: Eastmont, Havenscourt | 10% |
| 94603: Sobrante Park, Elmhurst | 10% |
| 94606: Highland Park, East Lake | 8% |
| 94607: West Oakland, Chinatown | 5% |
| 94609: Temescal, Pill Hill, Bushrod Park | 5% |

# How Much Did Programs Do?

**Programs provided 93,313 hours of service.** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, programs offered many of their services online. In this virtual program environment, disparities in technological literacy and access to technology posed challenges, including unstable connections to Zoom meetings and difficulties gathering online registration forms and other materials from families. Despite the challenges of the virtual environment, College Track launched its largest ever cohort of students in January 2021, reflecting how well the program is known in the community and the strong desire for college access and support for students in Oakland.

HSPSS programs varied in duration and intensity of services offered. For example, participants at College Track's Empowering Oakland's Students To and Through College spent 107 hours in program on average. In comparison, at Oakland Unified School District's Student Engagement in Restorative Justice Student, students spent an average of 9 hours engaged in restorative justice circles that were organized and facilitated by 45 student leaders. A shown below, 63% of youth participants attended programs for 40 hours or less. On average, youth spent 46 hours in programming.

*Average Hours of Attendance*



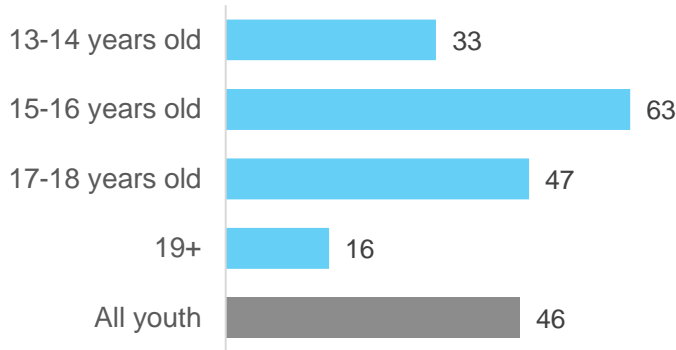| | |
|---|---|
| Less than 10 hrs | 40% |
| 10 up to 20 hrs | 11% |
| 20 up to 40 hrs | 12% |
| 40 up to 80 hrs | 16% |
| 80 up to 120 hrs | 8% |
| 120+ hours | 14% |

Programs provided virtual and modified in-person programming that focused on academic support, emotional wellbeing, and college access.

Youth spent an average of 46 hours in High School and Post-Secondary Success programming.
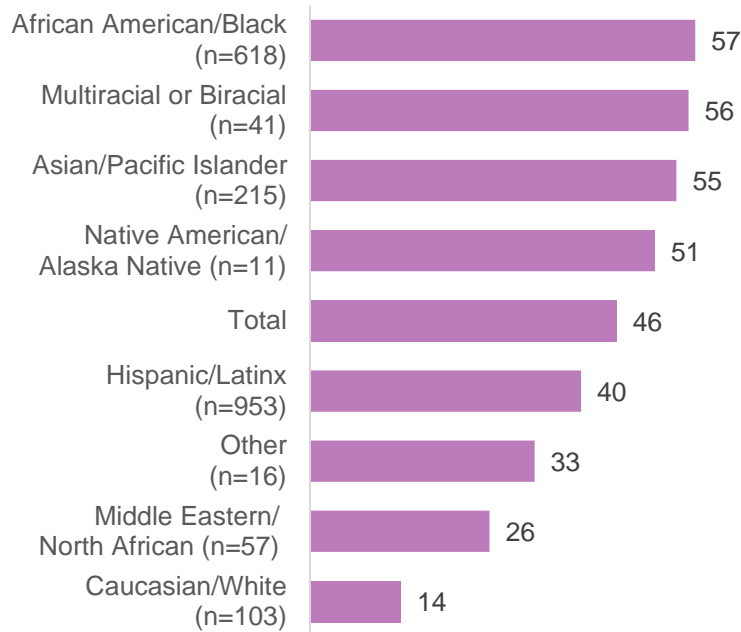
In line with the strategy's focus on older youth transitioning to adulthood, youth in the target age range (15-18) had the highest hours of service.

**Average Hours of Attendance by Age**

| Age | Hours |
|---|---|
| 13-14 years old | 33 |
| 15-16 years old | 63 |
| 17-18 years old | 47 |
| 19+ | 16 |
| All youth | 46 |

High-school aged youth spent the most time in programming.

The number of hours spent in programming varied somewhat by race/ethnicity. As shown below, African American/Black, multiracial or biracial, or Asian/Pacific Islander youth had the highest average hours of participation.[2]

**Average Hours of Participation by Race/Ethnicity**

| Race/Ethnicity | Hours |
|---|---|
| African American/Black (n=618) | 57 |
| Multiracial or Biracial (n=41) | 56 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander (n=215) | 55 |
| Native American/ Alaska Native (n=11) | 51 |
| Total | 46 |
| Hispanic/Latinx (n=953) | 40 |
| Other (n=16) | 33 |
| Middle Eastern/ North African (n=57) | 26 |
| Caucasian/White (n=103) | 14 |

Youth who identified as African American/Black, multiracial or biracial, or Asian/Pacific Islander youth spent the most time in programming.

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[2]   The chart only includes racial/ethnic groups with at least three members.

# How Well Did Programs Do It?

OFCY tracks a series of indicators to assess how well grantees implemented their programming. The first three indicators include progress toward projected enrollment, total hours of service, and average hours of service per participant.[3] **Program attendance and enrollment were strong:** On average, programs enrolled over 100% of the youth they anticipated.

In addition to these measures, OFCY uses youth survey results as indicators of program quality. As shown on the right, the 370 participants who completed surveys generally felt safe, interested in their program, and connected to adults that cared about them in their programs.

To create a **safe environment**, programs fostered community through ice-breakers, engaged youth through multiple contact points, and supported families with basic needs. In addition to hiring diverse staff and providing diversity training, programs encouraged inclusivity by translating materials and meetings, displaying signage to show solidarity with diverse community groups, and celebrating multicultural and identity-based holidays and celebrations, such as Lunar New Year and Pride Month.

To encourage **positive engagement**, programs prioritized student-led activities and drew on student interest when developing curriculum and activities. Finally, programs assigned coaches to students for regular check-ins and mentoring and were available to youth outside of traditional hours, which encouraged **strong connections between adults and participants**.

**Average Progress Toward Projected Enrollment and Attendance**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Number of Youth Served** | 105% |
| **Total Hours of Service** | 167% |
| **Average Hours of Attendance** | 200% |

**Program Quality: Youth Survey Responses (n=370)**

**Safety** — 96%
Youth who agree that they feel safe in their program

**Caring Adults** — 92%
Youth who agree that there is an adult who cares about them at their program

**Positive Engagement** — 88%
Youth who agree that they are interested in what they do at the program

> *We got to be **student-led**. We can't be adult-led. That's part of the problem with our educational system. Nobody wants to hear me go on and on. It's more powerful if there's a student voice involved. That's one of the things that we are doing differently.*
>
> *-Staff, OUSD's African American Male Achievement: College and Career Performance Program*

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[3]  At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate the units of service enrollment they expect to meet. By the end of the year, programs are expected to reach at least 80% of their projected enrollment and units of service.

# Participant Outcomes

To assess if HSPSS participants are better off because of their participation, OFCY uses surveys related to youth leadership and community connectedness. As shown below, most youth reported gaining the experience and skills that the strategy aims to provide.

In addition to these outcome indicators, participant survey data and program interviews tell a more comprehensive story about the ways that career awareness programs prepare youth for success in youth employment and their future careers.

**Program Outcomes: Youth Survey Results (n = 370)**

### Motivated to Learn — 89%

Youth who agreed that the program helped them feel more motivated to learn in school

### Academic Skills — 86%

Youth who report that they learned skills that help with their schoolwork in their program

## Increased Academic Preparedness and Engagement

HSPSS programs explicitly focus on academic preparedness and engagement. For example, College Track's supports students in achieving a C or better in their A-G requirements, an ACT score of 18 or higher, and an average GPA of 3.0 or better to avoid remedial classes at California State Universities and to be eligible for the University of California system. The program supports college application, matriculation, persistence, and completion with a goal of 100% of students accepted into 4-year colleges, 95% or more matriculating, a 90% persistence rate from the first to second year, and graduation with 6 years. To support these outcomes, 11th and 12th graders receive weekly support with college search and application, and college completion advisors ensure enrolled students get what they need to be successful in higher education. The African American Male Achievement program also focuses on A-G completion as well as increased graduation, college acceptance, and college attendance rates. The program holds Breakfast Club meetings every Monday through Friday to bring together members of the Fremont football team and covers topics like jobs, internships, A-G requirements, college readiness, and other topics in a community setting.

**86%**
**of youth agreed**: This program helped me feel more confident about going to college.

**74%**
**of youth agreed**: Because of this program, I participate in more class discussions and activities at school.

> *College Track keeps me where I need to go every step of the way, especially right now with all the applications I need to fill out and everything I need to do. They let us know what we need to do it and how to do it, and all these workshops **really keep us on track**."*
>
> *- Participant, College Track's Empowering Students To and Through College*

## Increased sense of belonging and mental wellness

High School and Post-Secondary Success programs embed a focus on belonging and mental wellness into their programming. In response to COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic on students' mental health, programs noted they have taken more of a social-emotional wellness approach. To support engagement and meet young people where they are, College Track opens meetings and activities with meditation and mindfulness exercises to normalize self-care and wellness. College Track's Student Life Department provides social-emotional wellness support to students and helps them identify and declare a purpose, dream, or passion that serves as the anchor for their work in the program.

**98%**
**of youth agreed:**
I feel supported and respected at this program.

**"** *[Staff] talked to us like all the time. We'll just be talking out in the open and then they may join in and all that stuff and the kids talk to them all the time. They're very involved with like everyone, very intermingled. Kids just walk up and talk to them...I guess they just **try to get to know you**, like make an active effort.*

*- Participant, College Track's Empowering Students To and Through College*

## Decision-making and Goal Setting

Programs support youth on decision-making and goal setting in different ways. For example, Knight Success supported students in reaching their academic goals through offering evening study hall sessions. African American Male Achievement helped student athletes work towards completing their college applications and securing scholarship awards.

**88%**
**of youth agreed:**
This program helps me think about the future.

**"** *I think **that this program is like putting all of us on the right track**, like to our desired careers. I think if I wasn't in the program, I'd just be making a lot of mistakes, like the classes I choose, stuff like that.*

*- Participant, College Track's Empowering Students To and Through College*

**87%**
**of youth agreed:**
I learned how to set goals and meet them.

## Survey Responses by Subgroups

An analysis of survey responses by subgroup revealed some differences in outcomes across race and age: [4]

- **Youth who have already left high school reported higher connections to caring adults and stronger progress in the area of Development and Mastery of Skills** than high school students did**.**

- **Asian/Pacific Islander youth reported lower progress in some areas**, including Connections to Adults, Positive Engagement, School Connectedness, and Academic Engagement than other students. **African American/Black youth reported lower progress** in the areas of academic preparedness and school connections.

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[4]    All findings were statistically significant at p<.01.