Community by community, The Graduate! Network is a growing movement to increase college completion among adults.
Completion rates are substantially lower among low-income working learners

- Only 22 percent of low-income working learners complete a bachelor’s degree within six years, compared to 37 percent of higher-income working learners.
- 57 percent of low-income working learners fail to earn a credential within six years, compared to 46 percent of higher-income working learners.
- Low-income working learners are less likely to earn a credential overall, even if they come from the upper end of the academic performance distribution.

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, 2004/2009; see Appendix for full list of sources for all figures.
Community by community, The Graduate! Network is leading a growing movement to increase college completion among adults.

www.Graduate-Network.org
THE U.S. NEEDS AN ALIGNED URBAN HIGHER EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM THAT:

- Puts students at the center
- Connects and coordinates around their needs
- Reduces silos and inefficiencies where efforts are duplicative

A WELL-FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEM WOULD INCLUDE COORDINATION BETWEEN:

- K-12 Schools
- Two-Year Universities
- Four-Year Universities
- Government
- Social Services Nonprofits
- Public Transit
- The Business Community
- Housing
- Philanthropy
- Education Nonprofits
Lessons Learned: Urban Ecosystems

Cities have different levels of commitment to and capacity for greater coordination of college access and success efforts.

Some higher education leaders realize cross-sector partnerships are needed, but no city so far has a fully aligned ecosystem.

Traditional higher education incentives and culture don’t encourage collaboration, while other sectors value these partnerships mainly when it furthers their interests.

Postsecondary institutions are the only entities that confer degrees, so they must be active leaders in an ecosystem approach.

Philanthropic prizes can build on existing local momentum and collaboration, especially on short-term, easily moved outcomes.
Catalyzing a clear vision

- Higher Education
- Comebacker
- Graduate! Network
- Employers
Guiding Principles

• Local/regional ecosystem goals driven by economy and equity
• Stakeholders are engaged because they see the benefit
• Network practices, data services, benchmarks and training
• Local implementation
• Collaborative teams and partners
• Access to National network of like-minded communities
An Operational Model

Messaging

Partnerships

Services

Sustainability
**AGE**  Range is evenly distributed except for slight bump 31 – 40

**FAMILY ANNUAL INCOME**  43% earn less than $24K, 32% earn between $24K and $56K, 10% earn between $56K and $75K, and 3% earn between $75K and $100K

**DEBT**  30% have defaulted loans

**WORK**  77% work: 39% <40 hrs, 38% 40+ hours/week

**DRIVE**  53% say employment or career oriented. 42% are motivated by personal goals. Half say they are ready to return right now, another quarter want to return in 3-6 months. Many are not sure what degree to pursue.

**RACE**  More varied – ranging from 53% to 70% African American or Hispanic
Biggest reason for not completing the first time around

- Finances 36%
- Logistical challenges 27%
- Lacked guidance 20%
- Life challenges 11%
- Academics and learning 6%
Hard Work Drives Results

- Frontloading Graduate! advising increases enrollment x2.5
- Intensive Graduate! advising **quadruples** re-enrollment
- Most Comebackers re-enrolled within 2 - 6 months
- 62% of all re-enrolled comebackers enroll consistently
- 79% of comebackers graduate or are still persisting after 5 years
- Collecting data pays off!
What Have We Learned?

- Start with the adult at the center: and configure systems around adults
- Coordination throughout the ecosystem is essential: no single organization can solve all problems and all are essential
- Comebackers need upfront assistance with options, navigational assistance and motivational support from a trusted source, within higher ed, but also from neutral, external sources
- Comebackers need to see the connection between postsecondary credentials and their goals
- Build and maintain equity in systems and practices
What Have We Learned?

- In order to stay relevant, work with employers on college curriculum
- Provide pathways for people with financial need, defaulted loans, institutional debt, low GPAs, options for those who need to step out
- Food, housing, childcare, income, safety and transportation take priority
- Local colleges have a big opportunity with adult learners
- Shared metrics allow for benchmarking
What Have We Learned?

• The value of communities perfecting and experimenting with frequent, structured opportunities to share

• **Tennessee Reconnect model** (developed with the Graduate! Network)

  State-level workforce-centered goals and resources plus online and regional service points

  Restructured workforce centers, centralized data capture and management system, dedicated and cross-trained staff provide high-quality advising
The Comebacker Value Proposition

- Diversity of age, race, life experiences
- Revenue stream
- Motivation
- Inflow of ideas
- New practices that work for all students
- The Multiplier Effect
- Economic impact
Workers with a Bachelor’s degree have added 8.4 million jobs, but workers with high school diplomas or less added only 80,000 jobs.

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) data, 2007-2016. Note: Employment includes all workers age 18 and older. The monthly employment numbers are seasonally adjusted using the U.S. Census Bureau’s X-12 procedure and smoothed using a four-month moving average.
Data shows that employers are paying a premium for employees with the right skills yet employers are saying that they can’t find employees with the right skills.

Bridging The Talent Gap is a tool for clarifying the needs of employers, employer by employer, in each community, visualizing the opportunity for employers and educational institutions.

bridgingthetalentgap.org – explore the reports
Albuquerque employers are hiring . . . but struggling to find. . . and keep their employees.

### Hiring Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Difficulty in recruiting</th>
<th>Difficulty in retaining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Trades (electricians,...)</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Skill Medical (nurses,...)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales Representatives</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Operators</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and Executives</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Professionals</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and Finance...</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Representatives</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support Staff</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Hiring full-time employees: 90%
- Difficulty in recruiting: 73%
- Difficulty in retaining: 52%
Across all skill types, education attainment offers an “education premium”

Percent of labor pool possessing skills identified as applicable by employers

- **High school diploma**: Baseline (HS) (49%) with a gain of 10%.
- **Two-year degree**: Education premium of 17%.
- **Four-year degree**: Education premium of 17%.

Applied Skills: Percent of respondents saying labor pool possesses skill: High school diploma holders versus four-year degree holders

- **Diversity**: 59% (4-YR Degree) vs. 71% (High school diploma).
- **Teamwork/Collaboration**: 52% (4-YR Degree) vs. 79% (High school diploma).
- **IT Application**: 48% (4-YR Degree) vs. 76% (High school diploma).
- **Problem Solving**: 38% (4-YR Degree) vs. 75% (High school diploma).
- **Leadership**: 24% (4-YR Degree) vs. 60% (High school diploma).
The profile of future education needs for Albuquerque is changing.

Anticipated increased need for graduates over the next 5 years:
- High School: 32%
- Industry: 45%
- Post-secondary: 33%
- Technical College: 33%
- Associate's: 24%
- Bachelor's: 41%
- Advanced: 28%
Partnering with education institutions is the most scalable and affordable way to make progress but relatively few employers take advantage of this opportunity.

Only 10% of employers currently partner with local post-secondary institutions.

- 22% would definitely consider partnering.
- 55% need more information to make a decision.
- 9% might be interested in the future.
- 15% do not anticipate partnering in the foreseeable future.

85% of those not currently partnering either definitely or possibly might consider partnering.
But there are challenges lurking along the way

- Financing education costs: 83%
- Keeping up with family responsibilities: 70%
- Keeping up with work responsibilities: 55%
- Keeping up with or performing satisfactorily in my coursework: 43%
What will motivate employees to take action on their plans?

- Improved financial ability: 67%
- More time to devote to my education: 65%
- More information on how to get financial aid, sign up for coursework, etc.: 39%
- More support from my employer: 37%
- Enhanced adult-friendly learning programs: 30%
What motivated you to stop your plans for education?

- I don't need more education for my career goals: 36%
- The credential I selected is not needed for my educational goals: 35%
- Financial barriers: 26%
- More education would not result in a better job/more pay with my employer: 23%
Would you reconsider your decision?

46% expressed willingness to reconsider their plans . . .

. . . 30% of these respondents said they would welcome suggestions or guidance to achieve their goals.
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