

Evaluation Report Brief

GreenLight Fund: College Advising Corps @ Boston University (CAC)

What is the community challenge?

Many well-qualified students are discouraged from pursuing higher education by avoidable barriers such as a lack of information about college admissions and financial aid (Avery & Kane, 2004). Only 59 percent of students who aspire to attain a four-year degree actually apply, and of those who do apply, only 41 percent complete the steps necessary to enroll in a four-year college during their senior year (Roderick, Nagoaka, Coca, & Moeller, 2008).

What is the promising solution?

College Advising Corps (CAC) strives to increase the number of low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students

entering and completing higher education. CAC recruits and trains recent college graduates from partner higher education institutions across the country, who then serve as full-time advisers, providing support that high-need students require as they navigate the complex processes necessary to attend and matriculate in college and to secure financial aid.

What was the purpose of evaluation?

The evaluation of GreenLight Fund's College Advising Corps @ Boston University by Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education, LLC, began in spring 2014 and finished reporting in 2018. The evaluation assessed program impacts and implementation. The primary outcome CAC aims to change for students is college attendance. This is adjacent to intermediate outcomes associated with college access, such as the acquisition of college knowledge, improved perceptions or knowledge of the college access process, greater involvement in preparation, and greater parental involvement. Researchers employed a variant of a single group design that included an interrupted time series with a control group in order to assess the main confirmatory outcome, differences in college enrollment between schools implementing the CAC program and those yet to begin rollout of the program

What did the evaluation find?

As a grantee of SIF, GreenLight Fund engaged an independent evaluator to evaluate College Advising Corps @ Boston University. The impact and implementation evaluations had the following key findings:

- CAC improved college enrollment for students, with a significant positive impact when students were disaggregated by income status, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- CAC was found to have significant positive findings on college enrollment for Hispanic, low-income, and male students.
- The enrollment impacts of CAC are not concentrated in four- or two-year schools.
- Students who reported meeting with a CAC adviser were more likely to complete intermediate college preparation tasks than those who did not meet with an adviser.

Program At-a-Glance

CNCS Program: Social Innovation Fund

Intervention: College Advising Corps @ Boston University (CAC)

Subgrantee: The College Advising Corps

Intermediary: GreenLight Fund

Focus Area: Youth Development

Focus Population: Low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students

Community Served: 33 Boston Public High Schools and in one additional Boston area charter school

Notes on the evaluation

CAC had significant positive effects on college enrollment for demographic groups that are a particular focus of program services (low income students, Hispanic students, and males). The magnitude of the effect sizes obtained in this study are in-line with other studies achieving “moderate evidence” ratings under the SIF program (Zhang & Sun, 2016). Evaluators note that these are conservative estimated impacts because analyses included all available data for all Boston Public Schools, some of which had trends that differed from the rest of Boston Public Schools and could warrant their exclusion from the analyses. For example, one school was completely reconstituted over the period in question, likely decreasing CAC’s effectiveness at this location. Researchers also measured college-going culture with two kinds of qualitative data: student survey and site visits – and additionally relied on internal student-tracking data provided by CAC and an adviser survey.

Due to delays in processing a National Student Clearinghouse match until Winter 2019, college enrollment results in the report do not include graduating class of 2018. An updated version of the report, which includes data from the graduating class of 2018 analyzed in March 2018 can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/y4lk6ee2>

How is CAC using the evaluation findings to improve?

As a program, CAC continues to expand its services to new schools and states, as well as grow its internal evaluation staff and capabilities. CAC continues to partner with EASE and other evaluators to identify best practices and other ways to strengthen its program. Specifically, CAC will continue to assess its impact in Boston upon receipt of the 2018 NSC data and will continue to explore new avenues and partnerships that allow them to have an even stronger impact on college enrollment.

Evaluation At-a-Glance

Evaluation Design: Single group ITS design, with staggered rollout of the treatment condition, assessed using regression analyses

Study Population: Low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students in schools served by CAC.

Independent Evaluator: Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education, LLC

This Evaluation’s Level of Evidence*: Moderate

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



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

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

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