

Promotional Toolkit: *Better Together*

Overview of Resource

Amid unprecedented circumstances, colleges and universities across the country must reimagine the ways in which they engage, and build relationships, with the tens of thousands of talented students that could thrive at their institutions—but lack the supports, guidance, and advising needed to realize their potential. Community-based organizations (CBOs) represent invaluable partners in addressing this challenge, a collection of local, regional, and national nonprofits that can help institutions diversify their recruitment pipelines, serve as trusted intermediaries for students with whom they have built years-long relationships, and promote more widespread postsecondary access and success for these young people.

In the spirit of this collaboration, the American Talent Initiative and College Greenlight collectively produced the report, *Better Together*, that offers a roadmap for institutions and CBOs as they seek to initiate, implement, and improve mutually beneficial partnerships. To ensure the report can inform effective practice across the field, and reach colleges and CBOs in all communities, we have created a set of promotional assets that you can refer to in the following pages.

These include:

- Social media content for Twitter and LinkedIn (p. 2)
- E-blast and/or newsletter copy (p. 3)
- Social media shareables (p. 4-5)
- Talking points (p. 6-7)
- Institutional inventory of promising practices (p. 8-9)

For further information on the key findings and recommended practices that colleges and CBOs can leverage together to promote postsecondary opportunity, please refer to the full report [here](#) and the executive summary [here](#).

For questions about the items in this toolkit, or on the report more generally, please feel free to email Adam Rabinowitz at Adam.Rabinowitz@aspeninstitute.org.

Promotional Copy for Better Together

We encourage you to use the below content to amplify the report across your networks, ensuring that more higher education institutions and community-based organizations have the opportunity to deepen the ways in which they engage with one another. Feel free to adapt and revise the below copy as needed to align with your organizational voice and the primary messages you wish to convey. Where possible, make sure to use the hashtag #HowWeBecomeBetterTogether as you share the report.

Twitter:

- What can we do to connect more talented students to #highered? Let's encourage colleges & #CBOs to build and deepen their partnerships. Where to start? Read @cgreenlight & ATI's new report to find out. #HowWeBecomeBetterTogether <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>
- #Highered institutions: how can you initiate, implement, and improve your partnerships with #CBOs this year to reach more talented students? #ATI & @cgreenlight have you covered with their latest report on #HowWeBecomeBetterTogether. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>
- How can #highered institutions build & grow their #CBO networks? Look no further than @urichmond & @UMich for guidance on how to develop & implement a CBO partnership strategy. Read more in their case studies in #ATI & @cgreenlight's new report. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>
- Admissions and outreach will look very different this fall. How can we ensure our #colleges are still able reach talented students in all of our communities? #CBOs have a big role to play, which #ATI & @cgreenlight highlight in their new report. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>

LinkedIn:

- Now more than ever, colleges and universities must think creatively about how to reach more talented young people from lower-income, first-generation, and underserved backgrounds across America. As the American Talent Initiative & @College Greenlight write in their new report "Better Together," community-based organizations can serve as invaluable partners in this effort. How? Click below to review the report. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>
- How do we build and expand pipelines to the untapped talent residing in communities across America, represented by tens of thousands of students from lower-income, first-generation, and underserved backgrounds? The American Talent Initiative & @College Greenlight point to a key solution in their new report: deeper, more expansive partnerships between institutions & CBOs. Where do we begin? Read the report here. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>
- As we determine how to meaningfully engage with more talented young people that can thrive in higher education, one thing is clear: colleges and community-based organizations are better together in this effort. The American Talent Initiative & @College Greenlight introduce a 3-part framework in their new report that lays the groundwork for how to realize this promise. Click here to access the framework. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>
- We know institutions have a lot to gain from building and expanding partnerships with community-based organizations, but some may not know where to begin. A new report from the American Talent Initiative & @College Greenlight highlights how the @University of Michigan and @University of Richmond established their own paths to meaningful college-CBO collaboration. You can review their case studies here. <https://bit.ly/cbocollegebettertogether>

E-Blast/Newsletter Copy

For Institutions:

As a new admissions cycle approaches, it is clear that it will be unlike any other, marked by a pressing challenge to reach and engage thousands of talented students from lower-income, first-generation, and underrepresented backgrounds. That is where local, regional, and national community-based organizations (CBOs) come in, representing bridges to the young people that are well-positioned to thrive at our institutions. The [American Talent Initiative](#) and [College Greenlight](#), which draw on expertise from working with 131 of the nation's most selective institutions and a vast network of CBOs respectively, have developed a [new report](#), "Better Together," that highlights the importance of CBOs to the challenge before us, the opportunities we have to build strategic partnerships aligned with institutional goals, and actionable recommendations and institutional examples to translate this work to reality. Click [here](#) to access the report and build bridges to CBOs today.

For CBOs:

In this climate of great uncertainty, our work to connect the young people we serve with the institutions that we know they can thrive at is more important than ever. To realize this vision, we must double down on efforts to connect with colleges, structuring the supports and resources our students need to not only successfully apply to, but enroll in, institutions where they can best realize their potential. A [new report](#) from the [American Talent Initiative](#) and [College Greenlight](#) provides a path forward for how both colleges and CBOs across the country can build mutually beneficial partnerships designed to expand postsecondary access this year, even in these unprecedented circumstances. The report includes a base of evidence that underscores the value of our work, outlines a three-stage partnership framework to follow alongside institutions, and features actionable insights from assorted colleges and CBOs. To access the full report and put the promise of these collaborations into practice, click [here](#).

Social Shareables for *Better Together*

In addition to, and along with, the above social content, we have provided a set of shareables for you to use as you seek to highlight the key elements of this report. These include a snapshot of the elements of the framework as well as the value propositions CBOs can bring to institutions' recruitment and outreach efforts. These are ideally sized for both Twitter and LinkedIn—and can also be included in any emails or outreach efforts that you send to partners and others in your networks.

Shareable 1:




| CBO-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. INITIATE | 2. IMPLEMENT | 3. IMPROVE |
| Define an "ideal" CBO partnership based on institutional priorities. | Develop communications strategies and materials focused on CBOs. | Maintain relationships and preserve institutional knowledge. |
| Examine CBOs' missions and programs to evaluate potential fit. | Anticipate and minimize financial barriers for students from lower-income backgrounds. | Collect and act on data on the impact of CBO student initiatives. |
| Intentionally establish mutually beneficial partnerships. | Provide practical supports and exploration opportunities valued by CBOs. | Evaluate collaborative efforts and extend CBO partnership portfolios. |



Shareable 2:

“
By applying the findings from Better Together, institutions can take steps to establish and deepen partnerships that promote increased access, equity, and success for students from lower-income backgrounds, first-generation families, and communities of color.
 ”

Shareable 3:

What Makes CBOs Ideal Partners

-  Focuses efforts on students from underrepresented backgrounds who aspire to excel in higher education
-  Bridges gaps in college counseling and advising services
-  Empowers students to make significant gains in academic engagement, college-going behavior, and postsecondary enrollment



Shareable 4:

Putting Effective CBO-College Partnerships into Practice

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Lead a structured intake process, assessing the value of a CBO partner by geographic, outcomes data, and other relevant indicators.
- 

Engage in ongoing communications to determine and provide the supports that students need on their path to postsecondary access and attainment.
- 

Continually report progress against measures of success established at the outset of the partnership and use the data to make impactful adjustments.



Talking Points for *Better Together*

We encourage you to use the below messages when framing the report to other CBO partners, institutions, and higher education stakeholders. These can help to underscore the impact that comes from joint efforts between institutions and CBOs to expand postsecondary access and opportunity for students from lower-income, first-generation and underrepresented backgrounds. Feel free to adjust these to fit your local, institutional and organizational contexts—and the needs of those that you serve.

A. Ensuring Our Talented Students from Lower-Income Backgrounds Realize Their Potential:

- Tens of thousands of students from lower-income backgrounds have the credentials to enroll in the nation's more selective colleges, but instead choose less selective institutions; a trend that reverberates across the postsecondary pipeline.
- A growing number of community-based organizations (CBOs) across the nation have emerged to address these inequities, aspiring to provide early, persistent, and personalized support to students from first-generation and lower-income backgrounds as well as communities of color.
- At a time when institutions must reimagine their recruitment and outreach strategies, and maximize limited resources in an uncertain economic climate, CBOs can provide a strategic pipeline to talented students from lower-income and first-generation backgrounds who are well-positioned to thrive in four-year settings.

B. Promoting the Promise of Community-Based Organizations

- *Recruitment:* CBOs identify, and build relationships with, students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds who aspire to enroll in higher education and represent new sources of talent for institutions.
- *Support:* CBOs can bridge significant gaps in counseling and advising services that exist in communities with limited financial resources, navigating students through any number of admissions and financial aid-related barriers to the institutions that represent the best academic, social, and financial fit.
- *Programming:* CBOs connect the students they serve to a diverse set of skill-building initiatives, career development opportunities, and social-emotional programs, ensuring they develop the competencies needed to thrive in a postsecondary setting.
- *Results:* Through ongoing, persistent support and mentorship, CBOs have positioned the students they serve to make significant strides in academic engagement, college-going behavior, postsecondary enrollment, and graduation rates.

C. Making the Most of Mutually Beneficial College-CBO Partnerships

- While enrollment and admissions departments at our four-year institutions generally recognize the value of CBOs to their recruitment efforts, there is ample room to standardize and deepen the ways in which they engage with and support one another.
- *Better Together* provides an organizing framework for institutions as they **initiate, implement, and improve** their partnerships with CBOs, elevating actionable recommendations and examples in practice from colleges across the country.
 - *Initiate:* Both institutions and CBOs must establish a joint definition of what success looks like—and then identify the distinct strengths and resources they can contribute to support progress against that shared imperative (e.g. representation of students from varying socioeconomic statuses or racial and ethnic backgrounds)

- *Implement:* As partnerships arise, institutions should use data from, and work directly with CBOs, to structure the supports and services that address partner students' challenges and needs (e.g. financial aid workshops, specific academic programs, and career training opportunities)
- *Improve:* To ensure the lasting success of these partnerships, CBOs and institutions should continually assess progress against collectively agreed-upon indicators (e.g., numbers of students served, CBO student stories, and/or CBO staff feedback) and ensure their efforts are embedded into transition, onboarding, and strategy documents.
- All institutions, whether they are just formulating a CBO partnership strategy or seeking to scale partnerships already in place, can use this report to tap into the promise of CBO collaborations and propel more students from lower-income and first-generation backgrounds as well as communities of color to postsecondary attainment.

Inventory of Promising Practices in *Better Together*

Better Together is designed to support institutions in their efforts to develop and sustain mutually beneficial partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs). To ensure they can put the recommendations outlined in this report into practice, we elevated a set of actionable strategies that colleges nationwide are adopting in collaboration with CBOs to effectively reach talented students from lower-income and first-generation backgrounds as well as communities of color. To provide institutions with a single reference point for these strategies, we have compiled those promising practices on the following page.

Those practices are sorted across each stage of the partnership development framework featured in this report, which enables institutions to **initiate, implement, and improve** their collaborations with CBOs. For reference, the framework is included below, along with an overview of the actionable strategies associated with each of these stages.

| CBO-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK | | |
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| Examine CBOs’ missions and programs to evaluate potential fit. | Anticipate and minimize financial barriers for students from lower-income backgrounds. | Collect and act on data on the impact of CBO student initiatives. |
| Intentionally establish mutually beneficial partnerships. | Provide practical supports and exploration opportunities valued by CBOs. | Evaluate collaborative efforts and extend CBO partnership portfolios. |

Institutional Inventory

| Stage of Partnership Development | Institution | Promising Practice |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| INITIATE | University of Michigan | <i>Organized a fly-in program to invite students affiliated with <u>College Horizons</u>, a CBO devoted to increasing representation of students from Native American backgrounds in higher education, to campus to engage in assorted postsecondary preparation programs</i> |
| | University of Notre Dame | <i>Encourages admissions staff visit at least three high schools and a CBO for each day of recruitment travel</i> |
| | Amherst College | <i>Establishes expectation that traveling staff meet with one or more CBOs in each of their territories</i> |
| IMPLEMENT | University of California-Los Angeles | <i>Launched the <u>Academic Advancement Program</u> to provide students from historically underrepresented groups with scholarships and long-term supports like peer learning, academic and career counseling, graduate school advising, and research opportunities.</i> |
| | University of Dayton | <i>Developed the <u>Flyer Promise Scholars Program</u> to offer students with high financial need university and donor-funded scholarships and grants, access to study abroad opportunities, and enrichment programs</i> |
| | Northwestern University | <i>Offers an application fee waiver for students if they identify their affiliation with a CBO</i> |
| | Swarthmore College | <i>Addresses financial barriers that arise in a student's college journey through funding for internships, restrictions on tuition hikes, and a reduced reliance on loans in financial aid packages</i> |
| | Bowdoin College | <i>Convenes high schools, CBOs, and college admissions, financial aid, and student affairs offices for an annual conference to surface strategies to advance success for students from underrepresented backgrounds</i> |
| | University of Chicago | <i>Organizes fly-in programs for students and staff affiliated with CBOs, including one that specifically engages organizations from rural settings and addresses the challenges they face</i> |
| | University of Illinois at Chicago | <i>Provides event space for several regional college fairs and other CBO events hosted by local partners (including <u>Chicago Scholars</u>, <u>College Possible</u>, and <u>100 Black Men of Chicago</u>)</i> |
| IMPROVE | Washington & Lee | <i>Created a dedicated CBO liaison staff position to manage existing CBO relationships as well as document updates pertaining to student outcomes and organizational needs</i> |
| | University of Texas at Austin | <i>Structured a CBO advisory board to coordinate updates about CBO efforts in place across the university, manage existing partnerships, and develop plans for enhanced collaboration</i> |
| | Colgate University | <i>Created an <u>Undergraduate Scholars Program</u> that offers a group of students experiencing personal, social, and financial challenges opportunities to build meaningful connections, acclimate to the academic experience, and effectively navigate the transition to college</i> |
| | University of Richmond | <i>Includes a FERPA-compliant data-sharing agreement in memoranda of understanding that they establish with a CBO, enabling them to share student outcomes data with those partners</i> |
| | University of Miami | <i>Leveraged a relationship with College Greenlight to suggest aligned CBO partners that could support their efforts to increase and diversify applicants from major cities across the country</i> |