



Strong Start to Finish Expands to Now Include Arkansas

Many students begin postsecondary education in remedial courses, delaying their progress toward a degree and often causing them to accumulate more debt. To address this issue, we joined with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Kresge Foundation, pooling \$13 million to build the **Strong Start to Finish (SSTF)** network in 2017. SSTF aims to increase the number of students who pass gateway math and English classes in their first year of college—a key predictor of postsecondary success—by integrating developmental education reforms with established degree pathways.

Initially, four college systems were each awarded \$2.1 million to participate, and five other finalists received smaller grants to support their participation in the learning community. In 2018, The Kresge Foundation awarded a grant to a nonprofit group serving Arkansas' college system to join SSTF as the network's first Associate Member. The Arkansas system brings valuable experience to the learning community thanks to their statewide efforts to reform developmental mathematics in partnership with the Dana Center—a **project we funded in 2016**. We're excited to see the SSTF network growing and look forward to working together to share best practices with the field. [Read more.](#)

In December 2018, SSTF published, **Understanding Impact: A Holistic Return on Investment Framework for Developmental Education**, a report that builds on earlier research by the Boston Consulting Group.

The report notes that developmental education reforms that compress courses and place students into college-level classes sooner are the most impactful. SSTF also reports that implementing these changes requires institutionwide effort, but ultimately allows more students—especially those from low-income backgrounds—to complete postsecondary degrees faster and at lower costs to students and institutions.



Two-Year Findings Show ASAP Replication in Ohio Doubled Graduation Rates

Ohio Study Reinforces Success and Scaling Potential for Innovative Strategies

The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) initiative launched by the City University of New York (CUNY) in 2007 is helping students graduate faster and at more than twice the rate of their peers through a comprehensive array of student success interventions. Encouraged by the success of ASAP at CUNY, we funded a project in 2014 aimed at exploring whether it would be possible to replicate those impressive results in a different setting.

The replication took place at three community colleges in Ohio—Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Cuyahoga Community College and Lorain County Community College. The program provided full-time students with enhanced advising, tutoring, career services, a tuition gap waiver and financial incentives to be used at local gas and grocery store chains.

In December 2018, MDRC **issued a brief** with results from the first two years of the Ohio program. They found that participating students outperformed the control group in persistence, credit accumulation and completion: 19% of the test group earned a degree or credential after two years compared with 8% of the control group. The brief also breaks down the costs of the components of the programs and outlines next steps.

The report shows that the Ohio program reproduced the positive CUNY outcomes, reinforcing the idea that wraparound support can affect student success dramatically. This work complements other early intervention projects we fund, such as **Strong Start to Finish**, **Early Indicators of Success**, **College Promise Success Initiative** and the **Multiple Measures Assessment**. [Read more.](#)