



Young adults succeed with individualized support

South King County was one of seven communities selected to participate in Opportunity Works, a national effort to help young adults ages 16-24 who are disconnected from school and work transition to postsecondary education. A recent Urban Institute evaluation found that programs supported through Opportunity Works had a “consistent, large and positive impact,” including a particularly strong effect on young men of color.

In South King County, partners of the regional Road Map Project initiative worked together to make such programming available. Opportunity Works enabled Seattle Education Access to provide individualized postsecondary navigation support to youth nearing graduation in seven Open Doors reengagement programs: Career Link High School; Federal Way Open Doors; Green River College Open Doors; iGrad Academy; Southwest Education Center; Youth Source Renton; and YouthCare. The Community Center for Education Results and United Way of King County served as local anchors for the project and helped build and support the partnerships that made this work possible.

Though Opportunity Works funding ended after three years, this work continues to grow. SEA education advocates now serve over 800 students in 16 programs across the King County Reengagement Provider Network, with support from Best Starts for Kids and United Way.

Opportunity Works was led nationally by Jobs for the Future and the Aspen Forum on Community Solutions, with support from the Social Innovation Fund. Read more in *Opportunity Works: Back on Track* (rdmap.org/opportunity-works).

THE RESULTS

The Urban Institute's quasi-experimental evaluation compared college enrollment rates of South King County opportunity youth receiving navigation support with college enrollment rates of a comparison group that did not receive navigation support.

Participants were **three times as likely** to enroll in postsecondary education:

67%

of young people who worked with Seattle Education Access

23%

of young people without a navigator

Participants who were young men of color were **seven times as likely** to enroll in postsecondary education:

66%

of young men of color who worked with Seattle Education Access

9%

of young men of color without a navigator

Additionally, Seattle Education Access data show a **71% persistence rate** for students with a navigator one year after enrollment.

THE APPROACH

Seattle Education Access provides individualized postsecondary access, readiness, and retention support to young people with significant barriers to success. Their approach draws heavily on Jobs for the Future's Back on Track model, and supports students all the way through to degree completion.

Learn more: seattleeducationaccess.org.

"Life is unpredictable"

By Daniel Juárez



At Career Link, an Open Doors program, I had powerful, uplifting teachers and mentors that supported and guided me. After some stops and starts, I graduated at the top of my class, made the dean's list and received the Student of the Year award. When I walked across that stage at graduation, all I could see was my mother admiring me from above.

I am a proud Mexican American. I came here from my hometown of Guadalajara when I was three. At 16, life threw me a challenge I did not anticipate. My mother died of lupus, and it was suddenly up to me to take care of my two siblings. I left school to focus on putting a roof over their heads.

I finished high school at Career Link, where I connected with Danika from Seattle Education Access.

She helped me learn about and apply for college, helping with everything from scholarship applications, learning about degree options and registering for classes. I received my associate degree in business at South Seattle College.

Though I was accepted at the Foster School of Business at the University of Washington, the financial pressure was too great. I looked for other opportunities and found Year Up, which helps young adults prepare for careers in technology. I took a conscious risk, and here I am now, interning at Microsoft.

Life is a mystery and unpredictable. I would have never imagined myself at a major corporation but now I can't wait to finish my internship so I can start working at Microsoft.

THE STUDENTS

From July 2015 to June 2018, Seattle Education Access supported 405 opportunity youth as part of their participation in Opportunity Works.

44%

had experienced homelessness

92%

were low-income students

Multiracial
11%

88%

were the first in their families to go to college

58%

were the first in their families to graduate from high school

