**Summary of Directory Initiative:**

The College Access Provider Directory is part of an attempt to collectively serve more Chicago-area students in need of support to enter and succeed in college. Currently there is no comprehensive directory of Chicago-area college access providers, leading to a lack of information about the scope and scale of the current landscape and uncertainty about where gaps in services may exist. The directory will offer a “one stop shop” for current organizations interested in learning about other area providers, higher education institutions and high schools looking to create partnerships and funders focused on the college access sector. The directory will also offer valuable information for college access organizations looking to expand to Chicago.

**Definition of College Access Organization:**

A college access organization is an organization which devotes a significant portion of its mission to focusing on college access, persistence and success, directly serves students in high school and/or college and measures college enrollment, persistence and/or completion outcomes as a primary metric of evaluation.

**FAQs:**

1. Who/what is Thrive Chicago?

Thrive Chicago is a collective impact initiative that aims to align the efforts of organizations, city agencies, funders and institutions around outcomes proven to help children succeed from birth through adulthood. More than 600 individuals have come together, representing nearly 200 organizations including nonprofit providers, education systems, colleges and universities, research and advocacy organizations, museums and cultural institutions, and philanthropic partners. These individuals are organized into five Change Networks committed to working together to improve specific outcomes along a Chicagoan’s path to adulthood.

The College Enrollment and Completion Change Network is working on improving post-secondary completion rates and first-to-second year retention for Chicago students. The Network is split into several “working groups” each working to address a different aspect of the retention issue, including ensuring that all incoming college students are connected to comprehensive academic, economic, and socio-emotional resources to support their transition to postsecondary education.

2. Why is Thrive creating this directory and what is the initial goal?

The provider directory working group, made up of a diverse group of stakeholders, including higher education institutions, funders, nonprofit organizations and Chicago Public Schools, is creating the directory to be used as a resource for school administrators and organizations, funders and institutions that provide college access and success services. In its first phase, the directory will list college access and success organizations that meet the working group’s definition of a provider in the sector along with a link to each organization’s website. The goal for this first phase is to provide users with a deeper understanding of the sector and help develop partnerships between organizations and between school leaders and providers. In this first phase, the directory is not intended to serve as a resource guide for students and parents.

3. What is the timeline for the completion of the first phase of the directory?

We anticipate the initial directory will be online early in the second quarter of 2016. The working group plans to consider incorporating additional data, as discussed above, following its launch.

4. What are the long terms goals for the directory?

The group plans to add a mapping component to allow users to determine where service gaps exist. The group is also considering whether and how to include outcome and cost metrics to the provider list. If input from the participating college access organizations and others indicates that the directory could be a valuable tool for students and parents seeking program services, the directory could potentially be marketed as a resource to this wider audience.

5. What is the group hoping to achieve overall once the directory is complete?

The group believes the directory, particularly with the inclusion of the mapping component, can help identify and fill gaps in needed services so that every Chicago student in need of college access and success support can obtain it.

6. Where is the directory going to be located?

Initially, the directory will be housed on the Thrive Chicago webpage. The group will determine a permanent home at a later date.

7. How did Thrive decide which organizations would be included in the directory?

The working group sought to be as inclusive as possible in deciding which organizations to initially include in the provider directory provided the organizations fit within the scope of the working group’s definition of a college access organization. The definition specifies that organizations included have a primary mission that directly focuses on college access, persistence and success, serve students in high school and/or college and measure college enrollment and persistence outcomes as a main metric of evaluation. The directory does include organizations that provide curriculum and/or training supports as long as student-level college access, persistence, and/or completion metrics are tracked and ongoing support is provided.

To be consistent with initial goal of the initiative, ensure that the launch of the first phase is manageable and avoid duplicating the efforts of groups with broader goals, the group decided to exclude organizations or programs that primarily focus on young adult employment outcomes, primarily focus on the middle grades and/or work outside of the city limits. Finally, school (high school and postsecondary) programs and initiatives are not included in the current directory.

8. Are there quality criteria for being included in the directory?

The working group did not take any quality criteria into consideration for inclusion into the directory. The directory is meant to provide a comprehensive look at all organizations currently working in the sector that meet the college access definition above.

9. How does this directory relate to the recently released landscape scan done by Forefront’s (previously the Donors Forum) College and Career Access, Persistence and Success group?

The directory builds on the important work of the CCAPS group’s landscape scan, released in February 2015. The scan highlighted a need to better coordinate services to support equitable access and a desire for more information about who is currently working in the sector. The working group, which includes several members of the CCAPS Landscape Scan Advisory Committee, believes the directory can begin to address those needs by providing more information to providers and others about who is working in the college access sector.

10. What are the benefits to my organization to being included in the directory?

Inclusion in the directory has a number of potential benefits to organizations listed, including additional exposure to CPS, Chicago area schools and post-secondary institutions looking for a college access partner. The directory will also foster a peer community by helping organizations learn more about the successes and challenges of others working in the sector throughout the city.

11. Who will be able to access the directory?

The directory will be publicly available on the Thrive Chicago website.