

College Connect Tempe

The mission of College Connect is to enable young people to pursue post-secondary opportunities by providing free access to resources, guidance and support. By providing relevant, timely, individualized and youth-centered services, College Connect supports youth in effectively creating and navigating their path to college and career success.

Limited access to information about college has been identified as a significant factor that contributes to low college-going rates. In 2015, while 87% of students in Tempe Union High School District (TUHSD) successfully graduated, only 67% enrolled in post-secondary education. An individual with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn three times more income over a lifetime than with a high school diploma. Currently only 52% of Tempe residents have a college degree. College Connect directly supports the City's "Tempe Achieves 65" goal that at least 65% of Tempe residents will have a credential or degree by 2030 by impacting the "increasing access" strategy.

College Connect aims to improve students' post-secondary enrollment by not only making information readily available, but also by providing personal guidance to navigating the variety of education pathways available. Through College Connect Tempe's interactive educational workshops, individualized one-on-one sessions and College Chats with education, youth and their parents receive free access to resources, guidance and support to map out their educational and career pathways.

A strong network of diverse partners from the education, public and private sectors, and volunteers support College Connect. Led by the City of Tempe's Education, Families and Youth Development staff and Tempe's Vice Mayor, partners convene monthly to plan, implement and evaluate program activities, share best practices for engaging and advising youth, and strategize for continuous program quality improvement. Partners include the Tempe Union High School District, Tempe Elementary School District, Kyrene Elementary School District, Arizona State University, University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, Grand Canyon University, Maricopa County Community College District, Maricopa County Youth Workforce Services, and Kaplan Test Preparation. Each partner provides in-kind resources, knowledge, and time to ensure successful programming.

With the support of the Tempe Diablos, College Connect will also be able to support peer-to-peer outreach and education at the Title I Tempe Union High School campuses during the 2018-2019 school year. Peer mentoring and outreach are recognized as best practices for youth engagement in the youth development field. By developing youth to be "College Connect Ambassadors" on campuses, the program anticipates greater youth participation and engagement in all program services.