

ABOUT NPEA DATA COUNTS

NPEA Data Counts (NDC) is a data project run by the National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) that provides **best practices, research, and resources around data collection and analysis** to organizations, programs, and institutions committed to educational access for underserved students. The project also seeks to further understand the **impact of NPEA members’ collective work** on the broader educational access field and on positive educational outcomes for underserved students.

A key element of NDC is the sharing of best practices related to **10 Key Indicators** of college access and success for underserved students. The goal is to help those who are working to expand educational access understand **what to measure and why, common terms and definitions across the field, indicator benchmarks, and more.**

INTRODUCING “DATA CHAMPIONS SPOTLIGHTS”

NPEA is pleased to introduce **Data Champions Spotlights, in which NPEA features members who are achieving exceptional results and shares their stories with the broader field.**

Our hope is that we can learn from one another about the variety of perspectives and approaches to data work that we employ in the interest of ultimately best supporting underserved students.

Our first Data Champions Spotlight focuses on **Indicator 10: persisting through post-secondary degree attainment.** Specifically, this indicator measures results for the cohort of students who graduated high school six years ago, and asks whether or not those students pursued two- or four-year degrees, and if those who *did* pursue degrees attained them in two, four, or six years.

In the NDC’s 2016 Data Collection Tool, 22 programs submitted responses for Indicator 10. For this Spotlight, we reached out to nine of those 22 programs, specifically those who reported on more than 30 alumni for this indicator and who completed the Data Tool both years. Six of those nine programs responded to our outreach and are included in this Spotlight.

NDC 10 KEY INDICATORS

Demographic Indicators

1. Number of participants served by a program in a given year.
2. Background characteristics (grade levels, gender, race).
3. Descriptions related to educational access challenges (low-income, first-generation, etc.)

Progress Indicators: Before High School

4. Staying on track in middle school.
5. Gaining access to competitive/independent school placement.

Progress Indicators: High School and Beyond

6. Engaging in academically rigorous courses during high school.
7. Taking proactive steps toward college admissions.
8. Graduating from high school.
9. Enrolling in a post-secondary program immediately after high school.
10. Persisting through degree attainment.

MEET THE DATA CHAMPIONS



Approximately
500
college students served annually

Founded: 1989 (Making Waves Foundation)/2013 (College and Alumni Program)

Staffing: Approximately 15 FTE, with two FTE who work specifically on data.

Web: www.making-waves.org/how/cap

Facebook: facebook.com/makingwavesfoundation



**Office of Engineering
Outreach Programs**



Approximately
350
students in grades 7-12 served
annually

Founded: 1975

Staffing: Approximately 10 FTE, with one FTE who works specifically on data.

Web: oeop.mit.edu

Facebook: facebook.com/mitoeop

Instagram: [mitoeop](https://instagram.com/mitoeop)



Approximately
750
students in grades 5-12 and into
college served annually

Founded: 1992

Staffing: Approximately 26 FTE, with 14 FTE who contribute to data input, two FTE who help with database management, and five FTE who work with data reporting.

Web: www.njseeds.org

Facebook: facebook.com/newjerseyseeds

Twitter: [@NJSEEDS](https://twitter.com/NJSEEDS)

Instagram: [newjerseyseeds](https://instagram.com/newjerseyseeds)

OLIVER SCHOLARS

opportunity unlocked



Approximately
400
students in grades 4-6 served annually

Founded: 1984

Staffing: Approximately 22 FTE who share data collection and analysis responsibilities (there is no *one* person whose sole responsibility is data work).

Web: www.oliverscholars.org

Facebook: facebook.com/oliverscholars

Twitter: @Oliver_Scholars

Instagram: oliverscholars

SEO Scholars

Seizing Every Opportunity



Approximately
250
students in grades 9-12 served annually

Founded: 1963

Staffing: Approximately 50 FTE (30 FTE work with high school students, 20 FTE with college students), with 2 FTE (one on each team) who work specifically on data.

Web: www.seo-usa.org

Facebook: facebook.com/seoscholars

Twitter: @SEOScholars

Instagram: seoscholarsnyc



steppingstone
FOUNDATION



Approximately
1,600
students in grades 5-16 served annually

Year Founded: 1990

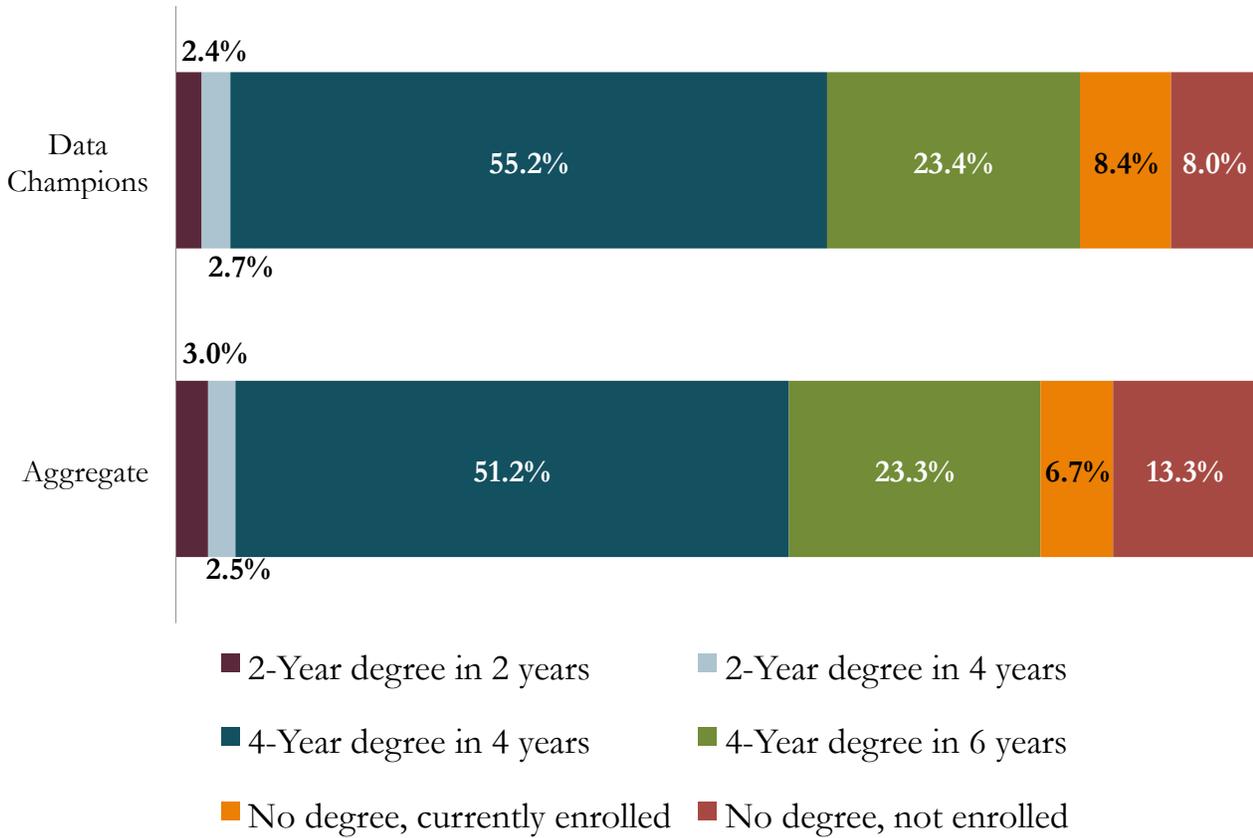
Staffing: Approximately 35 FTE, with 1 FTE (grant funded, temporary contract position) who works specifically on data.

Web: www.tsf.org

Facebook: facebook.com/steppingstonefoundation

Twitter: @Steppingstone90

INDICATOR 10: Post-Secondary Persistence 6 Years After High School Graduation (Percentage of Students)



	Students Served	
Data Champions	415	(Collective results of all six Data Champions noted on p. 2-3)
Aggregate	893	(Collective results of all 22 programs that submitted data on Indicator 10 in the 2016 Tool, including the six Data Champions)

QUESTION 1

What systems, strategies, and/or approaches does your organization or school use to track data about students pursuing post-secondary degrees?

Making Waves CAP: We use the [Salesforce CRM](#) to manage all our student data and facilitate staff and coach interaction. This platform is integrated with our financial system to facilitate scholarship and vendor payments on behalf of students. Through an online portal that's an extension of our database, students submit data and supporting documentation. Our coaching team members—who manage a caseload of approximately 80 students each—hold students accountable for submitting required data and verify submitted information to ensure completion and accuracy. As appropriate, students lose access to scholarship funding if they do not provide required data and documentation. Via the [Salesforce CRM](#), we track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and automate quarterly scorecards that benchmark progress against our program goals. All CAP stakeholders have direct access to this data. We also run a bi-annual search of our students' graduations via the [National Student Clearinghouse](#).

MIT OEOP: The OEOP uses several tools to track the two- and four-year degree completion of our alumni. We collect the majority of our data from the [National Student Clearinghouse's StudentTracker](#) tool, which we clean and analyze using a combination of Microsoft Excel and the [FOYOST College Enrollment Visualizer](#) offered through the



nonprofit organization [Degrees of Change](#). To determine the long-term impact of our programs, we compare student outcomes using key indicators such as program attended, program year attended, first generation college student status, socioeconomic status, and race and ethnicity. We also maintain contact with alumni through regular surveys, in which we ask alumni to update their contact information and notify us of any academic or career developments in their lives.

New Jersey SEEDS: We work with the [StudentTracker](#) tool through [National Student Clearinghouse](#). We submit a spreadsheet with student information after they graduate high school and we get data returned to us. We then import that data into our database (FileMaker) and clean it (with the help of our FileMaker vendor, inRESONANCE) so we can report on it. Each year we add to the spreadsheet, so once a student is college age they will always remain on the spreadsheet. This allows us to collect information on students who take time off before enrolling in college, students who earn advanced or additional degrees, and other non-traditional situations a student might experience through their college

enrollment. For students not found through [StudentTracker](#), we do our best to get self-reported data through phone calls, emails, and surveys.

Oliver Scholars: Our online admissions application is the entry point where we obtain a lot of our data. We work closely with our students to track their progress and obtain additional data from event surveys and annual surveys. Databases utilized include, but are not limited to, [inResonance](#) and [Raiser's Edge](#). We also use [bit.ly](#) links to track click rates.

SEO Scholars: SEO College Scholars builds partnerships with schools and organizations to assist our scholars with persisting through college. We rely on these partnerships, as well as a robust data tracking and management system, to ensure that we are being as efficient as possible. We currently use [Apricot](#) as our main repository for student data, but are considering switching to [Salesforce CRM](#).

Steppingstone: We track this data through Excel spreadsheets and a [FileMaker Pro](#) database system. We gather this data through [National Student Clearinghouse](#) and individual conversations with students and families.

QUESTION 2

What 3-5 pieces of advice or best practices would you pass along to other programs or schools interested in better tracking and/or working with students as they pursue postsecondary 2- or 4-year degrees?

Making Waves CAP: (1) Take advantage of the [National Student Clearinghouse](#). (2) Engage all staff in data collection and be transparent about how data is used to support the students and the organization. (3) Invest in a CRM or quality database system. (4) Invest in staff positions to support data management and database administration. (5) Incentivize data submission (and/or penalize non-submission).



MIT OEOP: (1) The Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science ([MITES](#)) program, our flagship program, is now over 40 years old. Until recently, most of our students' data were on paper and could not be easily analyzed or utilized. We have now imported nearly all our historical student data into a personalized database that is stored remotely and password-protected. For any organization in a similar position, I highly recommend digitizing and securely storing any data that is currently on paper. This allows organizations to use the data, but it also helps protect students' confidentiality while keeping their data safe in case the

organization's original records are damaged or destroyed (in a fire, for example). (2) As organizations age, employees come and go. We have found it highly beneficial to request that employees document their work processes and practices, especially if they manage data, to ensure that their work can continue after they move on to their next role. (3) Maintain contact with alumni if possible. The OEOP maintains contact with our alumni through alumni surveys, regular alumni events, and a personalized online networking platform that promotes alumni mentorship and connects alumni with potential employers. These practices help us engage alumni; as a result, many alumni return in future years to work or volunteer in our programs.

New Jersey SEEDS: (1) The importance of data integrity—if we have an incorrect date of birth (which is what [StudentTracker](#) uses to find student information) and/or incorrect contact information, we will never be able to obtain college enrollment data for that student. (2) Wait until after a semester has started to submit a spreadsheet to [StudentTracker](#). If you do it during the summer, you will miss students who will enroll that fall. (3) Have only one or two people manage and maintain the data. Too many people working on a project of this magnitude is risky.



Oliver Scholars: (1) Establish the expectation of communication between student and program. Establishing a culture of contact eases the process of obtaining data and deepens trust. (2) Have a high-touch model with students during their freshman year of college. The first year is crucial to establishing the foundation to college persistence and to developing a lasting relationship with young people. (3) Have a hook: what services are better offered coming from you as opposed to their college? Can you provide internship placement? What incentives do they have to go to you, listen to you, and/or provide you with needed data?

SEO Scholars: Use the [National Student Clearinghouse](#). Track your information cleanly and robustly the first time around. Our College Persistence Advisers maintain individualized, regular contact with their student cohort, which helps us when we need them to report information to us directly. We also use [Signal Vine](#), a mass-texting platform, to send students reminders or have them answer quick surveys.

Steppingstone: [National Student Clearinghouse](#) is a great resource for information. We also encourage the continued development of individual relationships with the students. Connecting with college students seems to work best through texting. It's also important to ensure that you're offering services to students that they feel they need. We've had the greatest response for financial aid assistance and internship support.

QUESTION 3

When you consider the students you've worked with in supporting their postsecondary progress and positive outcomes, what student story (or stories) come(s) to mind that you would like to share with the NPEA community? Putting a "face to the data" is always helpful to paint a picture.

Making Waves CAP: At CAP, our goal is not only to help students graduate as quickly and with as little debt as possible, but also to enable our students to build meaningful careers. On the CAP Facebook page, we recently shared the story of our alumnus, Juan Sarabia, who graduated from the University of San Francisco in 2012 and now works as a Treasury

“Never stopped by the struggle, forever pushed by an untamed dream...No matter what obstacles I may face, my dreams and hunger for success will get me to the next best thing.”

-Juan Sarabia
Making Waves CAP alum

Analyst at Kaiser Permanente. In addition to his amazing job, Juan received his MBA last spring from San Francisco State University. Juan describes his motivation by sharing a favorite quote, “Never stopped by the struggle, forever pushed by an untamed dream.” Juan used this quote as “my constant reminder to never be complacent. No matter what obstacles I may face, my dreams and hunger for success will get me to the next best thing.” For more stories, please see our [Facebook](#) page (specifically “Wave-Maker Wednesdays” and “Flashback Fridays”).

MIT OEOP: We have quite a few stories to share with the NPEA community! You can learn about a number of our alumni through the news articles linked here: [Danielle Olson](#), [José Alberto Aceves Salvador](#), [Elizabeth Rider](#), [Joshua Woodward](#), [Bettina Arkhurst](#), [Jerry Akinsulire](#), and [Kaylee de Soto](#).

New Jersey SEEDS: One of our New Jersey SEEDS’ Scholars Program graduates (Class of 2011), Claudia Torres, is currently a junior at Yale University. Before attending Yale, SEEDS helped Claudia find Kent Place School. She graduated from Kent Place in 2015. The most important lesson Claudia learned during her time with SEEDS was that working hard always has its rewards, even if those rewards aren’t immediately visible. Without SEEDS, Claudia would have never experienced the unique opportunities Kent Place had to offer. She would not have been able to conduct independent research in a college-level laboratory or had the chance to shadow doctors at Overlook Medical Center. She would have missed out on the close-knit alumni networks of SEEDS and Kent Place and the countless opportunities that come from those relationships, including the FlexMed Program at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. FlexMed is an early assurance program for college sophomores who are interested in pursuing medicine, but also want to delve deeper into their undergraduate studies. Students in the program are guaranteed a spot at Mount Sinai and can pursue their intellectual interests, without having to worry about the MCAT and some of the traditional pre-med requirements.

Oliver Scholars: I think of one student who matriculated into her last-choice school; she was not excited to attend. I advised her to ground herself in her passions, and identify how she could realize those through her extracurricular activities and coursework. I encouraged her to take advantage of the career center resources to get externships while in school or during breaks, and to leverage those opportunities to make the most out of her time. I encouraged her to study abroad and she went to Morocco, which proved to be one of the most important moments in her self-actualization as she matured and discovered her passions. I invited her to speak on college information panels about her college process and subsequent experience, and encouraged her to be as honest as possible. As she participated in panels over time, her tone and outlook gradually went from one of uncertainty and pessimism to one of optimism and excitement. She ended up loving her school experience, and learning a lot about herself in the process. Ultimately, she had a hard time leaving the community she had invested in, and that had invested in her.

SEO Scholars: Please see our [Meet our Scholars](#) video (shared on our website) to learn about their stories.

Steppingstone: Some students have intrinsic determination to receive high grades in challenging courses. Other students, however, start struggling in college when they lose a vision for their future career. In one case, a student started at UMass Boston as a business major. Though his coursework was going fairly well, he was not feeling fulfilled and soon his grades started slipping. His coach started talking to him about what he wanted to do after college, and he admitted that while he was studying business, he had not particularly liked his business classes, and his exploration of careers—though shallow—was not proving to be a motivator. However, he talked at length and with enthusiasm about his job at an afterschool program. At his job, he was a student manager and took the sort of pride in his efforts that he wished he was showing in his college courses. His coach is now helping him start to discover his career aspirations. First, she had him take an MBTI survey and they discussed his natural strengths. Next, she encouraged him to sign up for Steppingstone’s Professional Connections program, which supports college students to explore potential careers through mentoring, informational interviewing, and career skills building (such as resume review and cover letter writing). Lastly, she helped him reflect on his coursework in business through the lens of nonprofit management and not through corporate work, which he reports is the focus of the conversations in class. While he is finding more enthusiasm, his coach also is excited for the work he has put into self-discovery and career exploration, and she feels confident about his ability to advocate for himself in this process.



QUESTION 4

Is there anything else you would like NPEA or its members to know about your organization or school's work with data, and/or specifically with students as they pursue two- or four-year degrees?

Making Waves CAP: To successfully use data, an organization must make significant investments in both financial and human resources. However, this investment pays off—our use of data and technology has allowed us to achieve results at scale. While nationally just 9% of low-income students have a college degree by age 24 (or six years), 75% of CAP's 500 students are on track to graduate in six years. And, 85% of CAP students are projected to owe less than \$20,000 in loans upon completion of their bachelor's degrees.

Oliver Scholars: Regarding data, be routine, scheduled, intentional, and structured about how you collect data. Establish a culture of data collection by setting expected and consistent collection and submission dates throughout the year. Consider the audiences that would benefit from knowing your organizational data so that when you solicit information or consider the data points you want to measure, you are being holistic and efficient when collecting and reporting. Regarding college, consider gap years as part of the post-secondary experience. Some students would benefit from having an additional year to develop and explore. Taking that time could set someone up for a more successful college experience and sharpen their trajectory in the process.

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