

Increase economic mobility through equitable access to high-quality education and jobs

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC MOBILITY

The Education & Economic Mobility Program supports equitable access to high-quality education and jobs for the region's next generation, especially young people of color and those from low-income communities.

We focus our investment in three areas: K-12 educator quality, pathways from high school to college, and post-secondary attainment.

FOCUS AREAS

K-12 Educator Quality

Research consistently shows that educator quality is the main in-school driver of student success. The Joyce Foundation will work to ensure that students, especially those of color and those who are low-income, attend schools where highly effective teachers and principals work together to create strong learning environments.

We will invest in efforts to improve federal, state, and district policies that ensure students have educators who are highly trained, properly evaluated, and supported in their professional growth. We promote collaboration between school districts and teacher preparation programs to help ensure a steady supply of diverse, high-quality educators. Given the vital role of principals, we also want to make sure they are provided with the data and autonomy they need to improve teaching and learning. We also will invest in efforts that give educators a voice in policy reforms.

Pathways to College & Careers

Post-secondary attainment is the surest path to the middle class, so we must improve and align education and workforce systems so young people are prepared for college and the workplace. We support policies to create seamless pathways from high school through college completion. These pathways should incorporate rigorous college-level coursework and career development opportunities in high school, enabling students to earn significant college credit and work-based learning experience before earning a high school diploma.

We support college and career pathways systems in four Great Lakes communities – Madison, Wisconsin; Rockford, Illinois; Chicago's northwest suburbs; and the Columbus, Ohio area. These structured approaches leading from high school to college are developed and delivered through partnerships between school districts, colleges and employers – and equip students to succeed in college, career, and beyond.

Higher Education

Race- and income-based gaps in higher education are wider by some measures than they were 40 years ago. For example, young white adults are twice as likely as young African American and Latino students to earn a bachelor's degree – a bigger percentage-point gap than in 1980.

Out-of-control student debt, growing race and income disparities in higher education attainment, and dramatically rising tuition have one root cause: the way we finance higher education at the state and federal levels.

The new Joyce higher education portfolio is investigating the causes and extent of these disparities, and working with grantees to develop and advance solutions to disrupt this pattern of inequity. We are increasing support for research, policy development, and advocacy aimed at expanding degree opportunities and improving racial equity for students of color and economic mobility for students from lower-income backgrounds.

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