

# Goddard Riverside

INVESTING IN PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

## OPTIONS CENTER INSTITUTE

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# OPTIONS CENTER INSTITUTE

Training for School Counselors  
& College Advisors



# Who We Are

*The Options Institute is a nationally recognized provider of in-service training for college access advisors. The Options Institute has reached more than 7,000 individuals from hundreds of organizations and schools since 2005.*

*Based in New York City, the Institute was launched in 2005 by Goddard Riverside Community Center's Options Center, a community-based program with more than 30 years of experience in supporting low-income, first-generation youth to attend college through highly personalized educational and financial counseling.*

**In 2018, the Options Center received the National College Access Network (NCAN) 2018 Award of Excellence.**

# The Need for College Access Counseling and Training

*College? Too often low-income students rule it out. They can't afford it, don't know where or how to apply, don't know what financial aid is available. Or worse, they attend the wrong schools for them, drop out, and are left without a degree and saddled with crippling student loans.*

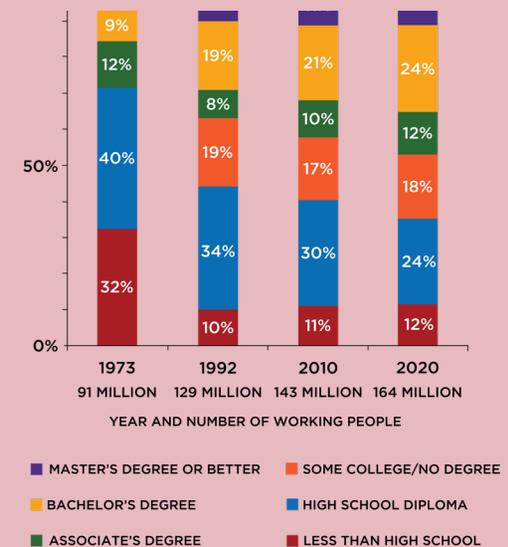
*Informed, dedicated counselors in schools and community-based college access centers can connect young people and schools. They offer college options, career paths, and new perspectives to students from under-resourced communities.*

*Counselors offer a lot: knowledge of colleges and programs, financial aid guidance, counseling skills. However, there are few professional programs that train counselors and other school staff to work with students that, because of their community or family history, need additional support.*

*Options Institute can help.*

**The majority of advisors step into their role at a school or community-based program with little or no specialized training.**

**The Importance of Postsecondary Credentials by 2020**



Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce analysis  
Note: Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding



## What We Offer

The Institute's hallmark program, *Foundation Course for College Access Advising*, covers the essential knowledge and skill counselors need to help young people through the college process.

Developed and trained by college advisors grounded in the day-to-day challenges of effectively counseling a wide range of students, the workshops offer up to date, relevant content to help students make informed decisions about their postsecondary options.

Counselors benefit from networks of colleagues working in similar settings to exchange practices that work, share resources, and feel connected professionally.

### MENU OF SERVICES

- Consultation
- Customization of Content for Your Local Area
- In Person Training
- Train-the-Trainer
- Coaching for the Trainer

### THE FOUNDATION COURSE

- Assessing Postsecondary Readiness
- Exploring Careers for Postsecondary Planning
- Matching Students to Postsecondary Opportunities
- Evaluating Students Postsecondary Choices
- Strong College Applications
- Financial Aid Application Process
- Financial Aid Packages, Loans and Gap

## Our Approach to Training

Our approach is practical: We use adult learning theory and realistic case information to help participants quickly grasp concepts, link it to their environment, and build on what they already know. Participants take away helpful resources they can apply immediately. We use pre and post surveys to assess what participants have learned and to gather feedback for future sessions.

“ I think I might have learned more during these six days than I did in grad school.

*Options Institute participant*

“ I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and skills that now I can practically apply. I have more ideas and programmatic pitches to bring to my school. I feel more confident in my work and ability to articulate and advocate for student needs.

*Options Institute participant*

“ I find myself, at least every few days, when I'm counseling students, pulling an Options training book out, and the materials are good, particularly when it comes to details and facts.

*Options Institute participant*

“ This seminar brought things back to the core of our profession. It serves as reminder of why we do what we do.

*Options Institute participant*

## Learn More About Our Approach

Contact us at [optionsinstitute@goddard.org](mailto:optionsinstitute@goddard.org) or (646) 758-6555

# Our Outcomes

In FY18:



“The Options Institute has come to be viewed as the “gold standard” in professional training for college advisors in New York City and beyond.

- Deloitte Consulting LLP

# Clients

Examples of current and past contractors include:

- NYC Department of Education
- Chicago Public Schools
- iMentor
- Kinesis Foundation (Puerto Rico)
- New York Cares
- NYU's College Advising Corps
- NYC Administration for Children's Services
- The Boys and Girls Club

“The Options Institute has truly, and permanently, changed the college access and success landscape across New York City, positively impacting the futures of many thousands of youth, and the adults that are committed to supporting them in reaching their dreams.

- Andrea Soonachan, Executive Director of College and Career Planning NYC Department of Education

## Partnership with NYC Department of Education (NYC DOE): 2011-2018

The Options Institute has worked closely with the NYC DOE to adapt the Foundation Course for DOE school counselors, college advisors, and other school staff. Since 2011, more than 2,000 personnel have participated and more than 1,000 attended the entire series full-day sessions. An outside evaluation completed in 2016 by Equal Measure found the following:



**13 to 35**  
range of percentage point increase in college access knowledge across all trainings.

## Partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

From 2014-2016, CPS contracted the Options Institute to collaborate on the development of a training program based on the Institute's Foundation Course through which CPS staff could earn a Chicago College & Career Advising Credential (CCCAC).



**12**  
percentage point increase in college enrollment in participating schools between SY15-SY16