

SHARED POWER, PURPOSE, AND PROGRESS

A Community Strategic Plan to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Kansas City



OVERVIEW

The creation of the **Kansas City College and Career Attainment Network (KCCAN)** marks a critical investment in the future of all Kansas Citians. This initiative, launched by the Missouri College and Career Attainment Network (MOCAN), is focused on driving upward economic mobility through increased postsecondary attainment across the Kansas City metro area. KCCAN is driven by an urgent reality: only 13% of students from Kansas City's low-income high schools will ultimately earn a college degree if current graduation rates hold. This disparity locks individuals out of economic mobility and stunts regional prosperity. The community strategic plan reflects KCCAN's central goal of **raising the attainment rate from 13% to 23% by 2030**, an ambitious aspiration that is only possible through collective investment and strategic collaboration.

AT LOW-INCOME HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE KANSAS CITY REGION CURRENTLY:

85%

HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION



51%

COLLEGE
ENROLLMENT



30%

DEGREE
COMPLETION

13% COLLEGE
DEGREE
ATTAINMENT

OUR GOAL

23% COLLEGE
DEGREE
ATTAINMENT

by 2030

Throughout 2025, MOCAN partnered with Education Strategy Group, a mission-driven consulting firm, to facilitate a community strategic planning process that set the vision for KCCAN. Over the course of four work sessions, KCCAN convened **over 75 stakeholders from more than 40 organizations** connected within the K-12, postsecondary education, workforce, and community-based organization sectors across the Kansas City metro. Between and after the community work sessions, the MOCAN and KCCAN leadership teams worked closely with the diverse nine-member KCCAN Steering Committee to discuss stakeholder feedback and refine the developing plan, resulting in the **co-created Theory of Action that guides this strategy**. KCCAN has been crafted intentionally to build on the knowledge and leadership of community members. Together, the KCCAN community has brought this important initiative from vision to reality.

THE ROAD AHEAD

With the Theory of Action in place, KCCAN has a clear path forward and the work has already begun. Starting in Fall of 2025, KCCAN's team of **College and Career Advisors** began working directly in six high schools throughout the Kansas City Public School (KCPS) District. This powerful partnership between KCCAN and KCPS is an early win for the initiative, allowing students to receive high quality postsecondary advising and direct support.

Along with the advisors, workgroups will serve as the heart of the initiative helping KCCAN drive and scale impact. KCCAN will begin with **three workgroups, each focused on one of the three ultimate outcomes**: Career-Connected Learning, Postsecondary Enrollment, and Postsecondary Completion. Each workgroup will prioritize specific activities to undertake, using the strategic plan as a guide and reporting out quarterly.

KCCAN leadership is actively calling on the entire community to get involved. Help close the attainment gap for the 85,000+ students attending public high schools and 50,000+ students attending public colleges in the Kansas City metro.



Get involved by joining a workgroup or sharing your thoughts on how this work complements your own. To get involved or just get in touch, please reach out to Dr. Mako Miller, KCCAN Strategy Director, at mmiller@mocollegecareer.org.

THEORY OF ACTION

A framework for directing, measuring, and actualizing change in our community.

ULTIMATE OUTCOME 1:

Increased Participation in Career-Connected Learning

KCCAN aims to increase the number of local high school students participating in meaningful career-connected learning experiences that deepen their understanding of and guide their exploration of workforce opportunities across the Kansas City metro. This work will be aligned with strong regional initiatives (e.g., Market Value Assets.)

ULTIMATE OUTCOME 2:

Increased Rates of Postsecondary Enrollment

KCCAN aims to increase the rates at which local high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education programs that culminate in associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and non-degree credentials (e.g., certificates, industry certifications, and occupational licenses, badges, and microcredentials) with value in the labor market.

ULTIMATE OUTCOME 3:

Increased Rates of Postsecondary Completion

KCCAN aims to increase the rates at which local high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education programs complete those programs and earn the credentials associated with them.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Nearer-term changes that will drive the ultimate outcomes we care most about.

↑ *Career Options & Pathways*

Increase student knowledge of possible careers, their careers interests, and the educational pathways and credentials needed to enter into these careers.

↑ *Career Awareness & Exploration*

Expand availability of structured experiences to increase career awareness (e.g., industry guest speakers, career fairs, employer site visits) and facilitate career exploration (e.g., job shadows, mock interviews).

↑ *Career Advising Capacity*

Increase availability of high-quality career-connected advising in high school, including knowledge – among counselors and advisors – of careers available in the KC metro area, the skills and credentials needed to access those careers, and the educational programs that can help students gain those skills and credentials.

↑ *Access & Application*

Boost the number of students who apply to postsecondary programs (including 2-year, 4-year, and non-degree credentials) and complete key financial forms, like the FAFSA and scholarship applications.

↑ *Financial & Career Literacy*

Significantly increase student knowledge of the true cost and return on investment (ROI) of various postsecondary options (credentials, colleges, and majors), alongside helping them identify career interests and educational pathways.

↑ *College Knowledge*

Enhance student awareness of entry requirements, financial aid and scholarship opportunities, and available college access supports both during high school and the college transition.

↑ *Adult & Counselor Capacity*

Increase the knowledge and capacity of adults – especially counselors and families – regarding local career pathways, required credentials, and the affordability and ROI of postsecondary programs.

↑ *Program Progress & Completion*

Increase the percentage of students who understand and complete required credits and requirements "on time" toward their credential.

↑ *Credential Stackability & Workforce Relevance*

Enhance credential stackability (e.g., short-term to associate to bachelor's degrees), especially those applicable to high-growth, high-wage industries in the KC metro area. Ensure postsecondary programs align with workforce skills.

↑ *Career Connections & Social Capital*

Improve student knowledge of how to apply their skills and credentials to their intended careers, and provide opportunities for students to build relevant professional relationships and social capital.

↑ *Adult Capacity and Knowledge*

Increase the capacity and knowledge of key adults – especially college advisors and faculty – of careers available in the KC metro area, the skills and credentials needed to access those careers, and how to help students access those skills and credentials via postsecondary education.

ACTIVITIES

Things KCCAN makes or does to directly influence intermediate outcomes and indirectly drive ultimate outcomes.

Backbone Support

These activities manage, coordinate, and support the entire KCCAN strategic plan. Specifically: convening partners, creating shared informational resources, and building connective tissue between disparate initiatives.

Capacity Building

Design and delivery of professional development to enhance college and career-related knowledge, skills, and behaviors among adults who interact most closely with students.

Direct Service

Providing direct postsecondary advising services to students and facilitating student- and family-facing events and experiences to support the development of college and career-related knowledge, skills, and behaviors.