PeerForward’s mission is to unleash the power of positive peer influence to transform the lives of youth living in low-income communities by connecting them to college and careers.
In 2022-23, PeerForward leaned in to meet new challenges, such as the U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down affirmative action, while continuing helping students and schools recover from pandemic losses. We enjoyed our first year of a partnership with the NBA Foundation, continued working with new high school partners in Kentucky, Hawaii, and Bermuda. And we saw more promising results from our new PeerForward in College program. PeerForward’s profile was raised in media coverage on The Today Show and in The New York Times Magazine, Education Week, and others. PeerForward’s expertise in assisting students in low-income communities navigate their way to and through college.

We are proud to offer this 2022-2023 review.
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The pandemic only exacerbated the gap, especially for community colleges that serve a majority of Black, Latinx, and low-income students.

By 2029, a shortage of workers with postsecondary credentials is predicted to have a major impact. Until the gap between low-income and high-income students is addressed, equity in health, housing, income will be elusive and the nation will suffer.

The Challenge

$1M

On average, those with a four-year degree earn $1M more over a lifetime than those with only a high school diploma and are more likely to be employed and have health care.

BUT THERE’S A PROBLEM.

**Earned a Bachelors Degree by Age 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Income Students</th>
<th>Low Income Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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</table>

**BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN Community Colleges**

↓ 18%

The pandemic only exacerbated the gap, especially for community colleges that serve a majority of Black, Latinx, and low-income students.

**EFFECT ON THE NATION’S ECONOMY**

↓ $1.2T

By 2029, a shortage of workers with postsecondary credentials is predicted to have a major impact. Until the gap between low-income and high-income students is addressed, equity in health, housing, income will be elusive and the nation will suffer.
Over the last two decades, we have **IGNITED THE POWER OF PEER INFLUENCE** in more than 600 high schools and colleges. Our schools are leaders in the movement for student-driven positive change.

**Where We Work**

783 PEER LEADERS
67 HIGH SCHOOLS
5 COLLEGES
70K IMPACTED

783 PEER LEADERS
67 HIGH SCHOOLS
5 COLLEGES
70K IMPACTED

Where We Work

Over the last two decades, we have **IGNITED THE POWER OF PEER INFLUENCE** in more than 600 high schools and colleges. Our schools are leaders in the movement for student-driven positive change.
PeerForward has a Solution

Leveraging the proven POWER OF PEER INFLUENCE, we recruit, train, and manage peer-led teams to mobilize classmates to and through higher education. The method varies between high schools and colleges, but the power of peer-to-peer engagement is at the core of both.

PeerForward in High School
Increasing College Enrollment
Peer Leader Teams of 8

PeerForward in College
Increasing College Completion
Peer Leader Teams of 25
"A Peer Leader is someone who brings people together. They inspire hope for others that their dreams are possible. They are always thinking of ways to make a difference or to inspire others. They want to see their peers succeed and support them and their accomplishments."

Adam Kone
Peer Leader at High Point High School, Md.
PeerForward's work is more urgent than ever. While high school students continue to recover from pandemic setbacks, a new potential hurdle arose when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled affirmative action unlawful. The decision introduced a great deal of uncertainty in the admissions season, but PeerForward remained true to its work. The organization began to assist students with admissions essays. While the model has evolved, PeerForward continues to provide every Peer Leader with an essay coach – something parents of means pay thousands for (further perpetuating an unequal system). During summer training, all Peer Leaders were coached in writing their own essay and how to coach their friends to do the same.

2022 - 2023 HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

- **67** Low-Income Schools
- **81** Peer-Led Teams
- **648** Peer Leaders
- **15K+** Seniors Served
- **52K** 9 - 11 Graders Impacted
- **791** Campaign Activities
- **$70M** Projected Amount of Financial Aid Students Can Access Through FAFSA by Early Completion
- **88%** School Renewal Rate
- **88%** of Our School Partners Returned for the 2023 - 2024 School Year.

Peer Leaders Changing the Game! Peer Leaders like Za’Naiya Craig Williams are using their platform to address the current youth mental health crisis. Za’Naiya launched a mental health podcast with her school psychiatrist to raise awareness about mental health resources for students.

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-Za’Naiya Craig Williams
Peer Leader, Performing Arts Community School, Los Angeles
PeerForward in College

PeerForward’s newest program operates in two- and four-year colleges serving Black, Latino, Indigenous, and low-income students to improve degree attainment. Trained Peer Leaders execute three campaigns to get classmates to take steps proven to increase chances of persistence to a degree: access academic support opportunities, stay on track with financial aid, and engage with campus communities and activities. Each Peer Leader mentors a roster of fellow students who are identified and recruited by the college. Peer Leaders are paid through AmeriCorps, College Work Study or other programs. Our results are strong.

2022 - 2023 COLLEGE RESULTS

PeerForward students at Broward College, our flagship partner, have a higher rate of degree completion than the general student population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Leaders</th>
<th>135</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Partners</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Served</td>
<td>2.9K</td>
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71% HIGHER RATE OF DEGREE COMPLETION

Retention rate for mentees of Peer Leaders at Cal State LA.

90% MENTEE RETENTION RATE

“Working with PeerForward is an experience characterized by shared goals, vision, and a desire to support students through peer-to-peer practices that are impactful and transformative...”

– Andrew Long, EdD

Executive Director, Center for Academic Success, California State University, Los Angeles
"There are so many youth that just need that one influential person to come into their life and change their entire trajectory...my passion is to be the one person in as many young lives as possible, because they deserve it."

Kendra Yates
PeerForward Alumna, College Coach, and Workshop Director
"Something I will remember from this amazing group is being able to help my peers prepare for the future. Going through so much on my own made me realize that I needed to help others."

Dario Rayes
Peer Leader at Crossland High School, Md.
PeerForward Garners Key Supporters

PeerForward has emerged from pandemic challenges stronger than ever, thanks to numerous supporters who have stepped up to ensure we can deliver, including The Carnegie Corporation, The Kapnick Family Foundation, The Oak Foundation, ECMC Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the Henry McCance Foundation, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation.

Highlights of 2022-2023 academic year include:

- A new partnership with Oakland Promise to serve high schools in the Oakland Area, starting with five in the 2023-24 academic year.
- The Allan & Gill Gray Foundation discovered PeerForward’s work in Bermuda and made a meaningful five-year commitment to support our national operations and expansion.
- Our first year in partnership with the NBA Foundation, which provided opportunities for the organization to build capacity and connected us to Dallas Mavericks, who are supporting two high schools in Dallas in 2023-2024.
- PeerForward received a generous gift from the Together Rising Foundation of Glennon Doyle and Abby Wambach (U.S. Women’s soccer star.)
- Funds from MacKenzie Scott’s generous, $5M donation in 2022 to PeerForward continues to support program and operations.

“I recently learned a saying used in disability communities: ‘Nothing about us without us.’ For me, it’s another beautiful and powerful reminder. I needn’t ask those I care about what to say to them, or what to do for them. I can share what I have with them to stand behind them as they speak and act for themselves.”

– MacKenzie Scott
American Novelist and Philanthropist
In the News

**Education Week**
“To Help Students, One Company Has Unlocked $100 Million a Year in College Aid”, Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute interviews CEO Gary Z. Linnen to learn how the PeerForward model helps 13,000 underserved high school students connect to postsecondary opportunities.

**The New York Times Magazine**
The New York Times Magazine spoke with a couple of our Peer Leaders about the Supreme Court’s ruling on affirmative action. You can read more about what this decision means to our Peer Leaders on The New York Times Magazine’s website.

**Today with Hoda & Jenna**
On their Feel Good Today segment, Today with Hoda & Jenna put their spotlight on PeerForward. In this uplifting segment, we follow PeerForward CEO, Gary Z. Linnen, and Dariel Vasquez, Brothers@ Co-Founder and CEO as they visit Peer Leaders at Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change.

**NYN Media**
College admissions, post-affirmative action. PeerForward CEO Gary Linnen discusses his work helping students of color into higher education in an interview with New York Nonprofit Media.

**Word in Black**
Op-Ed by Gary Z. Linnen: *Protecting Students’ Futures if Affirmative Action Ends* - “The threat to affirmative action is a new front in the battle for education equity. We must fight on. We won’t give up until all students have similar opportunities to dream, learn, achieve, innovate, and lead.” - Gary Z. Linnen

**The Official Black Magazine**
PeerForward CEO, Gary Z. Linnen joins Official Black Magazine CEO & Publisher, Michael Cox for a “CEO in the Spotlight” interview.

Check out our latest features at [www.peerforward.org](http://www.peerforward.org)
Look For Us in 2023-2024!

900
PEER LEADERS

81
PARTNERS

76,000
IMPACTED

Follow us @PeerForward