

EDUCATION

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## EFP Takeaways

Impact of a Low-Cost Postsecondary Enrollment Intervention: Evidence from Louisiana

### Background

Despite the increasing importance of education beyond high school in today's society, barriers remain for students seeking to enter a postsecondary education institution. With counselors often overwhelmed by high student-to-counselor ratios in schools, external organizations have stepped in to help students access college. Swarup Joshi of Loyola Marymount University and Stephen Barnes of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette explore one such organization, the Career Compass of Louisiana, and its effects on postsecondary enrollment. Their work is published in vol. 16 issue 3 of *EFP*.

### The Study

Joshi and Barnes examine the effects of exposure to Career Compass of Louisiana, a district-wide external college application assistance program, using a difference-in-differences framework. Specifically, the authors ask whether exposure to the program increases college enrollment and how the program's impact varies across schools with different student characteristics. The study includes 99 treated schools and 139 control schools.

#### For more details:

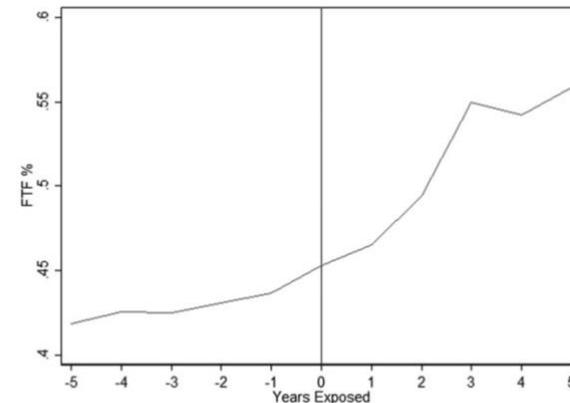
- View the [full issue](#).
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- Summary of:  
Joshi, S. & Barnes, S. (2021). Impact of a Low-Cost Postsecondary Enrollment Intervention: Evidence from Louisiana. *Education Finance and Policy*, 16 (3): 493-515.

### Findings

Results indicate that exposure to Career Compass of Louisiana increases postsecondary enrollment by 3.9 percentage points. The program's effect is larger in school districts with a majority of black students as well as districts with a majority of low-income students.

Moreover, by providing services to all schools within a district the program is able to achieve low per-pupil costs relative to similar programs while also generating effects of a similar magnitude to many more expensive programs. The results suggest that scaling this district-wide model to new areas could provide a cost-effective approach to increasing postsecondary enrollment among high school graduates.

Figure 2: Effects of Career Compass on First-Time Freshman Enrollment Over Time



Note: FTF = first-time freshmen.  
Sources: Career Compass of Louisiana and Louisiana Department of Education.