

Stay the Course®

Helping Students Earn Degrees

THE NEED

We can all agree that education is the key to increased earning power since people increasingly need college degrees to get living-wage jobs. Community colleges are an affordable option for low-income students, but more than 60% of community college students don't graduate in six years. Low-income students face unequal barriers to achieving a college degree and are three times less likely to complete college. Money is only part of the problem.



Two-in-three community college students are food insecure



50% of community college students are housing insecure



13% of community college students are homeless

Some of Franklin County's hardest-working residents are working multiple jobs and raising families while studying to earn higher education degrees—all with the goal of improving their families' lives. For many of these students, it only takes one crisis to derail their plans. In the words of Columbus State Community College President David Harrison, "Many of our students are a flat tire away from dropping out."

Two out of three community college students are food insecure, 50% are housing insecure, and 13% are homeless. With these odds against them, it is easy to see why low-income students might see a college degree as being beyond their reach.

THE SOLUTION

At Catholic Social Services, we strive to help families navigate permanent paths out of poverty, staying with them for as long as it takes to get there. After seeing the incredible, evidence-based results of Catholic Charities Fort Worth's *Stay the Course*® case management program, we applied to bring it to central Ohio.

We were one of three agencies nationally to win \$1.2 million to replicate *Stay the Course*®. In pilot locations, students who receive *Stay the Course*® services increase their success of graduating at a rate four times higher than those who don't receive services.

Starting in August, Catholic Social Services will begin the *Stay the Course*® program at Columbus State Community College's downtown campus!

By helping students earn degrees, *Stay the Course*® will prepare them to get living-wage jobs that can propel them into the middle class, breaking the cycle of poverty and strengthening the entire community.