

Admission Possible evaluation results

A program to increase college admission among low-income students

STRONG RESULTS IN SENIOR YEAR

Overall, the results show, Admission Possible has been very effective in helping the students who complete the program gain admission and financial assistance to college.

- 100% of the 246 students in the program were admitted to college.
- 91% enrolled in college in fall 2005.
- 61% were awarded scholarships for a total of \$857,369.
- The average scholarship awarded was \$6,168.
- Students demonstrated a strong commitment to service, with 83% of students performing community service in the past year.

About the program

Admission Possible's mission is to identify low-income young people with the talent and motivation to go to college and help them earn admission and find the resources to attend. The program serves 575 students and focuses on ACT test preparation, guidance in applying for college, and help in obtaining financial resources. Admission Possible operates in nine high schools in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota.

The two main program goals are:

- Students enroll in a four-year college that is a good fit for them, with the necessary financial support.
- Students and AmeriCorps staff develop or strengthen an ethic of service to the community.

For two years, Wilder Research has been following the group of 246 students who began the program in 2003 at the start of their junior year. This report focuses mainly on the students graduating from high school in 2005, who completed both the junior and senior year components of the program.

The junior year focused on helping this group of students get the test scores needed to be accepted at a college they would like to attend. During their first year in the program, the group achieved an impressive 16 percent average increase in their ACT scores. (Results from the junior year for these students are

available at: http://www.admissionpossible.org/Results_That_Count.html)

The senior year focuses on gaining knowledge about and earning acceptance to college and finding the financial resources to attend. The curriculum also helps the students to prepare for college life. Much of this is accomplished with one-on-one or small group meeting with the program staff.

A diverse group of students

The 246 high school seniors who participated in Admission Possible for the 2004-2005 school year are quite a diverse group. Just over half are Hmong, with about 20 percent each who are Asian or African American and an additional 13 percent who are White. Three-fourths of the participants are girls.

Students' race/ethnicity

Hmong	52%
African American	22%
Other Asian	20%
White	13%
Hispanic	6%
Other	10%

(Multiple response possible)

About four out of five students are in families who moved to the United States from another country, and about two-thirds were born outside the United

States. The highest percentage are Hmong students from Thailand and Laos followed by students born in Somalia.

Students in the program come from families whose incomes are below the median for the city they live in, either Minneapolis or St. Paul.

These students had an average GPA of 3.2 during their senior year and an average ACT of 18 after program participation.

100% college acceptance rate

One hundred percent of Admission Possible students graduating from high school in 2005 were accepted to a college. They each applied to an average of four different colleges, and were accepted to an average of 3.5 colleges, with 74 percent of all college applications being accepted.

Ninety-one percent of students enrolled in college in fall 2005. Interestingly, 98 percent of African American students enrolled in college, compared to 85 percent to 89 percent for the other main racial and cultural groups.

\$857,369 in competitive scholarship dollars

Eighty-six percent of students applied for scholarships, with an average of four applications per student applying. Thirty-four percent applied for nine or more. A total of \$857,369 was awarded to Admission Possible seniors.

Sixty-one percent of students were awarded competitive scholarships. Twenty-five percent were awarded one scholarship and 36 percent were awarded two or more.

The average scholarship received was \$6,168. Students received scholarships ranging from \$160 up to \$35,000.

Actual college enrollment Fall 2005

Overall	91%
African American	98%
Hmong	89%
Asian	85%
White	85%

As scholarships are quite competitive, this result is fairly good, but there may be some room for improvement with helping more students to find scholarships.

African-American students had higher rates of scholarships awarded than either the Hmong or Asian students.

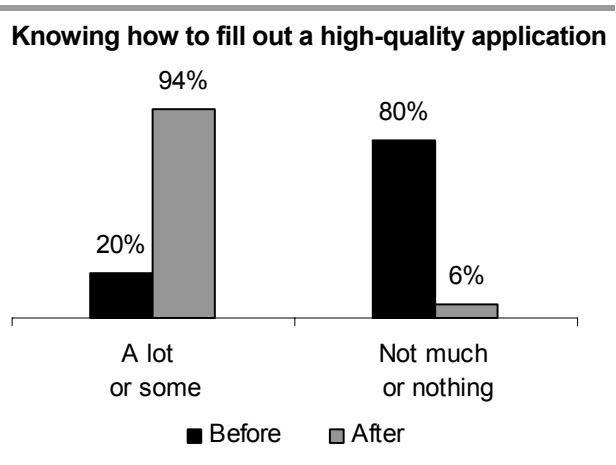
Financial aid from the government and the college itself is usually awarded based on student information provided in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Because this is such a rich source of financial assistance, and because it is difficult for most students to complete on their own, Admission Possible aims to help students complete the FAFSA.

Among seniors, 92 percent completed the FAFSA. Some did not meet the FAFSA requirements of being a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen. A few others chose not to apply.

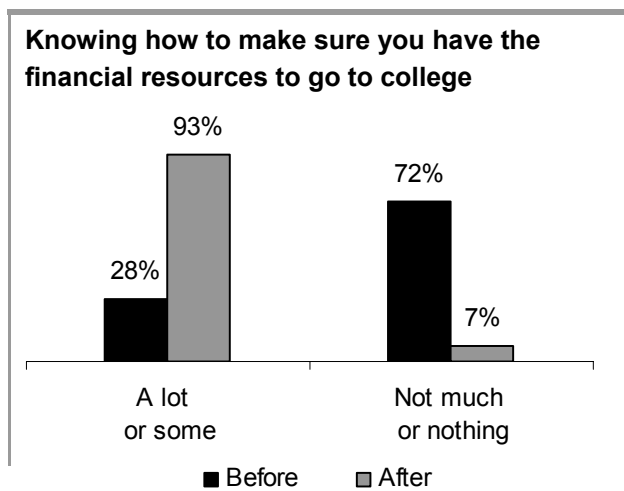
Change in knowledge

Students showed a number of changes during the course of the program, especially in their knowledge about the college application process.

Students gained the most knowledge in filling out high-quality college applications and making sure they have the financial resources to go to college. At the start of the program only 20 percent said they knew “a lot” or even “some” about filing out a high quality application; that rose to 94 percent by the end of the program.



At the beginning of the program, 28 percent said they knew “a lot” or “some” about having the financial resources to go to college; by the end 93 percent said they did.



The students also show large gains in knowledge about finding a college that is right for them and making the transition from high school to college. They also showed improvement in their knowledge about what going to college is really like.

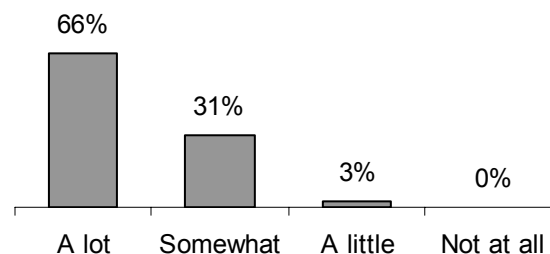
Further, students show a growing knowledge in the benefits of going to college, increasing from 79 percent to 89 percent saying they understood the benefits “a lot” or “some.” Even though the students entered the program because they were interested in college, the program strengthened their understanding of the value of a college education.

Getting through college can be a challenge for students, so a deeper understanding of the benefits may also help them meet their goals to complete college.

Ethic of service

A major goal of Admission Possible is to influence students’ connections to their community. Students are highly encouraged to volunteer or do community service. Admission Possible seems to be meeting student goals in these areas as well.

How important is it to you to be a part of making your community a better place?



By the end of the program 84 percent had performed volunteer or community service work in the past year.

Students’ trust and respect for staff

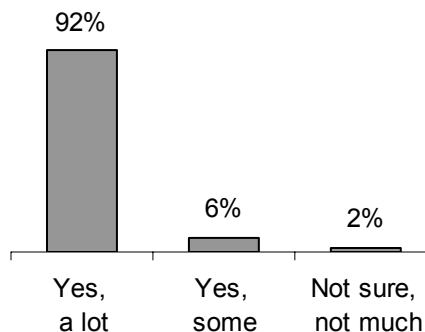
Students rate the staff very highly both for help with the college process and for their relationship with their coaches.

At least 80 percent of students say the staff helped them “a lot” with finding resources to help them learn about different colleges, improving their chances of getting into college, getting good recommendation letters, and understanding how to fill out the FAFSA.

Trust and respect between students and coaches got the highest ratings of the relationship questions, with at least 93 percent of students saying “yes, a lot” to respecting and trusting their coach and also saying their coach respects them.

Students also highly rate their coach’s willingness to help them, with 92 percent agreeing “a lot” that their coach does whatever it takes to help them.

Coach does whatever it takes to help



High ratings were also given to some areas of knowledge and help from the coaches. Ninety-eight percent of students say their coach knows “a lot” about getting into college. And 94 percent said the same about their coach giving them useful information.

Variations by gender

There was little variation in the program results by race, but the female students had better results than the males in a number of areas.

For college applications, number of college acceptances, and percentage of college applications that were accepted, female students had significantly higher results than males. On average, 75 percent of females’ college applications were accepted compared to 67 percent of males’ applications.

The same was true for scholarship applications, and scholarships awarded, but not the average dollar amount of the scholarships.

Males tended to rate their own gain in knowledge about college at lower levels than female students, and also enrolled in college in fall 2005 at a lower rate than females (85 percent compared to 93 percent).

Some of this is in line with current trends found in other studies, but it is still worth noting the differences to look at how Admission Possible might work to better help young men meet their college goals.

Comparison of programs

The table below compares programs serving economically disadvantaged students with goals similar to Admission Possible. It appears that Admission Possible’s results compared favorably to a range of other similar organizations.

Comparison of programs similar to Admission Possible			
Program	Type of students	Service type and length	College enrollment outcome
Admission Possible	Low-income 11 th and 12 th graders with the potential and motivation to go to college	ACT test preparation, guidance in college and financial aid applications, weekly events during the school year for building connections with staff and community.	91% enroll in college
Multicultural Excellence Program	First-generation college students, 7 th to 12 th graders, with 3.0 GPA or above	Monthly mentoring, test preparation, and college counseling	85% post-secondary enrollment
College Summit	Low-income high schools	Four day summer workshops which include essay writing, college counseling, help with college applications. Senior year, teachers trained to support college application process.	79% enroll in college
Upward Bound	9 th or 10 th graders with potential to attend college but with inadequate achievement and school preparation	Students encouraged to take college-prep classes. Weekly meetings during the school year and intensive six week full-day summer instructional program, with tutoring, help preparing for college entrance exams, enrichment activities, and campus tours.	74% enroll in post-secondary institution

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For more information

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