



OCTOBER 2018

# CHICAGO SCHOLARS

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

# Overview

## ABOUT

Chicago Scholars selects, trains, and mentors academically ambitious students from under-resourced communities to enroll in, persist and graduate from college. Chicago Scholars provides seven years of programming beginning with supporting scholars to enroll and matriculate to the most selective colleges that best match their abilities. Through its programming, the organization aspires to develop the next generation of leaders who will transform their neighborhoods and the city of Chicago.

## WHY WE INVESTED

Chicago Scholars provides high-achieving, low-income students with development opportunities and mentoring to support them through key transitions on the path from high school to college to career. Of the 20 percent of Chicago Public School graduates who graduated with a 3.0 GPA or above in 2015, only 40 percent went on to enroll in a four-year college. Based on the three most recent years of data, 95 percent of Chicago Scholars enrolled in a four-year university over the last three years and 88 percent of those scholars earned a bachelor's degree in six years, a rate far surpassing that of their low-income peers with similar academic credentials.



## GRANTEE SINCE

**2016**

## INVESTMENT TO DATE

**\$1.64M**

## CURRENT NUMBER SERVED

**2,407**

## LEADERSHIP

**Dominique Jordan Turner**  
President + Chief Executive Officer

# Our Assessment



## PROGRAM

Research demonstrates that high-achieving, low-income students lag behind their higher-income peers in bachelor's degree attainment. A study by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation demonstrated a difference of nearly 20 percentage points in the college graduation rates of low-income, high-achieving high school seniors and their higher-income peers with similar academic credentials. Chicago Scholars continues to show significant impact on outcomes with its robust program model. The most recent data shows that 95 percent of Chicago Scholars high school graduates enroll in college, and 87 percent of Chicago Scholars college enrollees earn a bachelor's degree within six years. Additionally, Chicago Scholars has demonstrated the ability to maintain outcomes while growing and expanding its programming. Chicago Scholars is continuing to improve its model with a focus on strengthening the student experience, as well as building its college to career programming. The organization has continued to build its college partnerships and career supports to improve its ability to serve students' trajectories during key transitions. Chicago Scholars plans to launch a randomized controlled trial next fall to further study its impact.



## LEADERSHIP

Chicago Scholars has been led by Chief Executive Officer Dominique Jordan Turner since 2013. Turner remains a strong leader for the organization and an active leader in Chicago. In particular, Turner has bolstered the organization's program model, cultivated strong funder relationships, streamlined operational processes and built a talented team. In 2019, Chicago Scholars will be managing change in its executive team due to both the addition of new roles as well as several leadership transitions. Chicago Scholars has had highly experienced leaders in executive roles historically. A Better Chicago supports changes in role structures and also has reason to believe that Chicago Scholars will be able to build an exceptional team under Turner's leadership. Turner is supported by a regional board that has been heavily involved in strategic planning and fundraising efforts.

# Our Assessment



## OPERATIONS

Chicago Scholars has continued to increase its development capacity. Last year, the organization exceeded its revenue target with a total revenue of \$5.9M. This represents a 74 percent increase since 2016. In the year ahead, Chicago Scholars will continue efforts to diversify funding sources to ensure sustainability, including building stronger individual and corporate revenue streams. Chicago Scholars' staffing remains an area of focus, as the team will grow from 34 to 42 staff members this year and the organization undergoes leadership team transitions. As the organization charts a new strategic growth plan, we believe these two areas will continue to be important factors for continued success.



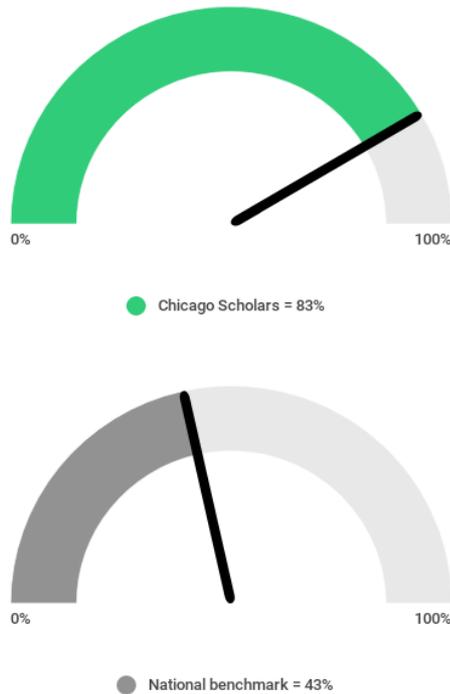
## SCALE

Chicago Scholars has achieved meaningful growth over the past decade with its incoming class size increasing by an average of roughly 30 percent annually. The organization continues to scale its program to serve more students. From 2015 to 2017, Chicago Scholars grew from serving 1,570 students to 2,042 students and, in 2018, served over 2,400 students. Chicago Scholars continues to set ambitious scale goals—serving nearly 3,000 students in the current school year. A Better Chicago is confident that Chicago Scholars can continue to meet ambitious scale targets given its track record to date, sizeable addressable market and steady increase in applicants to the program. Beyond 2019, Chicago Scholars will look to its strategic growth planning currently underway to chart the organization's growth for the next five years and serve as its roadmap in the years ahead.

# Grantee Performance

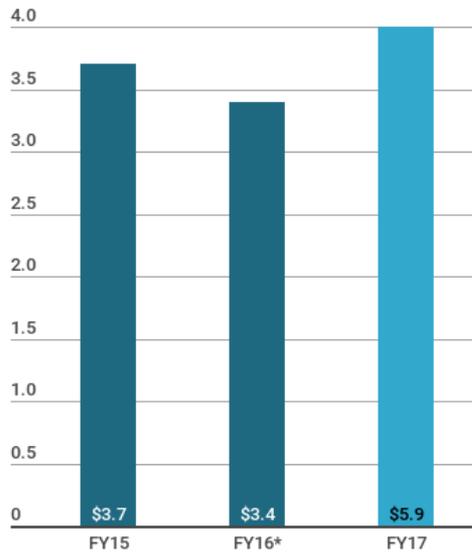
## KEY OUTCOME

Bachelor's degree attainment of high school graduates



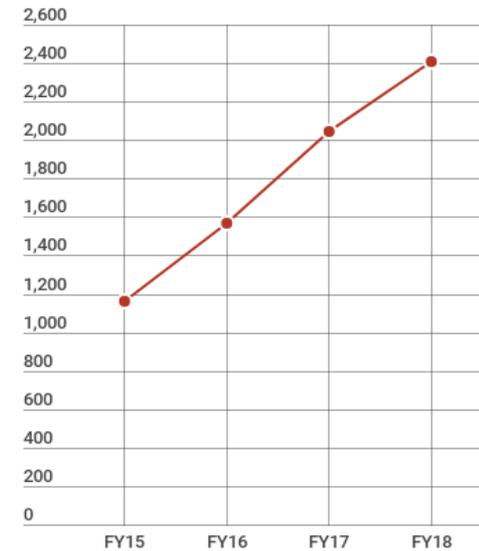
## REVENUE

In millions



## SCALE

Students served

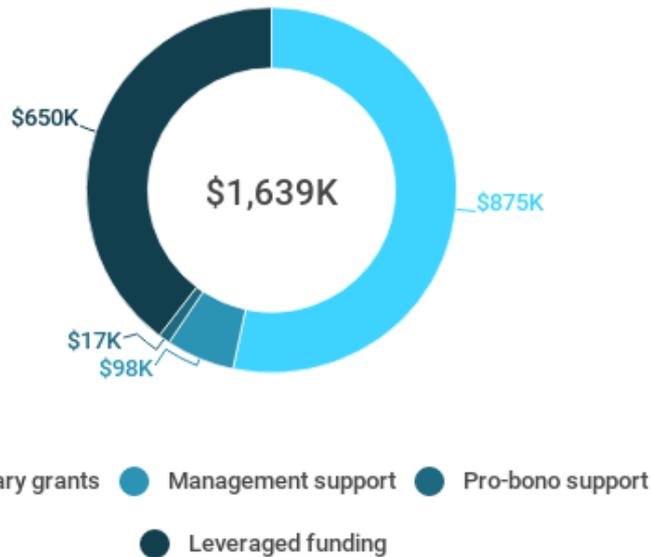


Note: Key outcome and benchmark calculated using an indexed rate (each calculation input based on the most recently available data) rather than a cohort rate (calculation based on data from the same set of students over time) in order to reflect the current state of educational attainment as accurately as possible. Benchmark is based on Chicago and national data reflecting outcomes for students with socio-economic backgrounds and academic credentials similar to Chicago Scholars students. \*Chicago Scholars initiated a fiscal year change in July, 2016 to align the organization's fiscal year with its program year. To estimate Chicago Scholars' annual FY16 revenue, A Better Chicago took the organization's 6-month revenue from January 1, 2016-June 30, 2016 and added it to half of the its prior year's revenue.

Sources: Chicago Scholars; Chicago Scholars financial statements; Chicago Public Schools; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002); U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:04/09)

# Our Impact

## INVESTMENT TO DATE



## MANAGEMENT SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

**President & Chief Operating Officer Search:** Chicago Scholars hired Koya Leadership Partners to support search efforts for a President & Chief Operating Officer role to support its growing team. A Better Chicago helped scope the project, introduced Chicago Scholars to vetted consultants and covered 50 percent of the fees.

**Program Strategy:** Chicago Scholars hired a consultant to support its college to career programming development. A Better Chicago helped scope the project, introduced Chicago Scholars to vetted consultants, and covered 75 percent of the fees.

**Leadership Development:** Chicago Scholars' leadership team is participating in Leading for Impact®, a cohort-driven leadership development program run by The Bridgespan Group. A Better Chicago is covering 50 percent of the fees.

# Contact Us

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