

New York City Council

Memorandum in Support of Legislation

This memorandum is authored by the sponsor and explains the need for the legislation referenced below, in accordance with Rule 6.00(d) of the Rules of the Council.

Introduction Number:

Int. No. 0700-2024

Prime Sponsors:

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), James F. Gennaro, Shahana K. Hanif, Jennifer Gutiérrez, Farah N. Louis, Lincoln Restler, and Lynn C. Schulman

Bill Title:

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to developing a college admissions counseling program.

Submitted by:

Public Advocate Williams

Justification:

Some of the barriers to students attending college include the high cost of tuition and application fees, the need for timely financial aid education, and lack of access to quality school counseling.¹ The same disparities that we see in achievement in our public schools are reflected in college, with Black, Brown, and low-income students having lower rates of enrollment in bachelor's degree programs.² Bachelor's degree attainment can differ by as much as 76 percent between neighborhoods—for example, a Center for an Urban Future report found that 89 percent of those living on the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island had a bachelor's degree, compared to only 13 percent in Morris Heights and Mount Hope.³

High school counselors play an important role in access to college opportunities, but many under-resourced and overcrowded schools either lack a counselor or have too few counselors for their student population.⁴ According to data collected by the US Department of Education, high

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https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/Research_Brief-College_Affordability_and_School_Funding-12.15.20.pdf

2 https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/Research_Brief-Colleg

3 <https://nycfuture.org/research/closing-nycs-college-attainment-gap>

4

https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/Research_Brief-College_Affordability_and_School_Funding-12.15.20.pdf

school seniors who talked one-on-one with a school counselor were more likely to complete a FAFSA, attend college, and enroll in a bachelor's degree program.⁵

For these reasons I introduced Intro 700, which requires the Department of Youth and Community Development to establish a program that provides counseling, resources, and other support to high school juniors and seniors and their families in applying to college. This program would:

- Provide general information regarding the college admissions process and college readiness, as well as a checklist of information required to successfully complete a college application.
- Provide information regarding how to access and assemble the data and records required to apply to college.
- Counsel students and families regarding college options, including tips on how to present a competitive application.
- Refer students and families to resources regarding financial aid, scholarships, and other college funding options.
- And lastly, require DYCD to engage in outreach to inform students and families about this program.

⁵ <https://www.nacacnet.org/how-can-high-school-counseling-shape-students-postsecondary-attendance/>