



In 2020, people without a high school diploma were **twice as likely** as those with college degrees to have problems paying rent, buying food, covering medical costs, or meeting other financial necessities. Without higher education, large portions of our city’s population remain exceptionally vulnerable. The barriers in their way must be addressed if our city is to have an equitable recovery from the pandemic-induced recession and reduce structural poverty.

This report details results from a fall 2020 survey of nearly 900 Philadelphia residents, focusing on the experiences and opinions of individuals who had not completed a college degree but desired to do so. Together with a [recently released Hope Center report](#) that documents the challenges of students currently enrolled in Philadelphia-area colleges, it provides evidence of barriers to college attainment.

## WE LEARNED THAT...

FEWER THAN

1 IN 10

who have not started or completed college feel that the city’s four-year schools are “**very affordable.**”

MORE THAN

1 IN 3

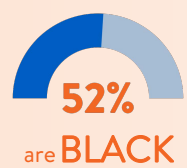
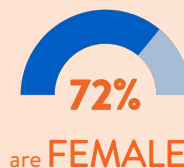
of those who have not started or completed college say they want to pursue a college degree or certificate.

NEARLY

2 IN 5

without a college degree say that rent and childcare are “**not affordable**” for those attending college.

Out of the respondents **WHO HAVE NOT COMPLETED COLLEGE:**



**Policymakers, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations have opportunities to help tens of thousands of our neighbors achieve their dreams and increase their economic mobility by:**

- augmenting existing community-based organizations like Graduate! Philadelphia, and college-run programs aimed at those who have not completed degrees;
- expanding access to supports such as SNAP and subsidized childcare;
- creating a citywide emergency aid fund;
- targeting culturally relevant outreach to those communities and neighborhoods with higher concentrations of residents without college degrees;
- supporting policy changes comparable to the proposed Hunger Free Campus legislation; and
- building on partnerships similar to the one between the Community College of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Philadelphians **support college completion policies.** We found that:

Most respondents, regardless of educational attainment, support a tax increase to fund free education at the Community College of Philadelphia.

More than four in five respondents think the City of Philadelphia should do more to help college students access the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and secure emergency aid grants.