

Background **Why low-income students need help**

In 2009 more than 80 percent of the individuals participating in an economic mobility project poll indicated that possessing a good education is essential or very important in experiencing economic mobility (Haskins, 2009).

Annually, hundreds of thousands of students who are low-income are challenged by obstacles that impede their pursuit of higher education success. Many lack the overall support they need to prepare for higher education (TEOP, 2014). WKI leaders feel it is our duty as American citizens to encourage low-income students who have made a commitment to progress in their education (TEOP, 2014). WKI's goals and objectives use proven and innovative strategies that have a great potential to successfully empower the low-income students/families of this generation. WKI educates and encourages the community to become more actively involved in the fight against student poverty. WKI is moved by community **conversation** about poverty but understands the need for more community **action**.

WKI targets needy youth who lack opportunities for educational support, and attend schools that lack resources. Knowledge is irreplaceable, and WKI's staff knowledge base includes over 50 years of experience working with underrepresented youth. WKI possesses the experience and instinctive skills to relentlessly grind out solutions needed to successfully empower these students.

WKI understands the need to exceed the "cookie cutter" approach and use strong personal human service techniques when working with underrepresented youth. WKI provides tangible solutions that change the lives of low-income students and their families. WKI works with parents, administrators, counselors, and community partners to create successful elementary, middle and high school attainment initiatives for low-income students. WKI builds "community" by facilitating initiatives that build the educational skills these students need to reach their educational aspirations and then give back to the community.

Current Situation

†To make the American labor market more competitive, it is crucial for all students to seek higher education. Forty-seven percent of citizens who are born in poverty will most likely stay in poverty if they do not obtain a college degree [Pew Economic Mobility Project (HBCM, 2014)]. This is unfortunate, because

many low-income students face multiple obstacles to their access and attainment (Ashtiani, 2012). These students face obstacles that hinder their college success at multiple stages of their journey from elementary school through postsecondary education (TEOP, 2014). These obstacles frequently stem from lack of support and resources, which impacts preparation, access and achievement (TEOP, 2014). Richard D. Kahlenburg, senior fellow of the Washington-based Century Foundation, noted that three quarters of poor children attend challenged neighborhood public schools (Blad, 2014) that lack resources to compete with schools in affluent areas. This is a critical issue, because the quality of elementary, middle and high-school education influences a student's ability to achieve in college.

The DNA of our belief system as Americans is the idea that anyone can get to the top with talent and hard work. This belief holds true for some; however, conditions of inequality experienced by students who reside in poverty prevent many from getting to the top. Low-income students face overwhelming obstacles. Which individuals eventually achieve a bachelor's degree by the age of 24 is largely determined at birth (Sacks, 2006).

Strategic Options

WKI targets low-income students who attend schools in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. Over 75 percent of Indianapolis Public Schools' students are eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch, a commonly used indicator of poverty. WKI pursues its passion of enriching the lives of students who can benefit most from WKI services. WKI builds strong communities by empowering low-income students and families.

Mission

The MISSION OF WISE KNOWLEDGE INC. is to provide empowering educational support services to low-income students, allowing these students to achieve results that elevate educational and social achievement.