Complete Florida is the state’s degree completion initiative that serves the more than 2.2 million working-age Floridians who have some college credit but no degree.¹ This degree attainment initiative ensures that the state’s talent pipelines are filled with up-to-date, skilled employees to keep the economy of our state flourishing.

Florida’s current rate of postsecondary educational attainment is 49 percent, but the Florida Legislature’s Sail to 60 goal is to raise that to 60 percent by 2030.²

Complete Florida is helping contribute to this goal through partnerships with 20 colleges and universities throughout the state that offer more than 200 degree programs that are 100 percent online. All pathways lead to certificates, associate and bachelor’s degrees in Florida’s most high-demand fields:

There are 36 million Americans with some college credit but no degree, which is more than 20 percent of the working population.

¹. Source: American Community Survey, 2018 1-year estimate
². Source: Florida College Access Network

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2.2 MILLION working-age FLORIDIANS HAVE SOME COLLEGE AND NO DEGREE
What Our Coaches Say

“There are a lot of pathways to graduation, and we are here to highlight the best one. It has to be based on students’ past experiences and goals for the future. Listening is important and so is asking questions.”

Coach Janae

“It doesn’t matter about their age or how long they have been out of school, if they are serious about completing their degree, we can help them get there, every step of the way.”

Coach Akilah

“I retired after 20 years in the U.S. Air Force so I understand the challenges of being an active duty military member and a college student. I look forward to helping others make the transition to civilian life.”

Coach Sal

“When students first get in touch, they have a lot of concerns that could make them hesitate to start school again. That is why Complete Florida coaches are here. We can help resolve all kinds of issues and set their mind at ease so they can accomplish what they set out to do.”

Coach Matt

Key Outcomes

2,565 students enrolled in 2018-2019

70% retention rate between 2017-18 and 2018-19

1.6 million awarded in scholarships

1,754 graduates since 2014

61,984 coaching interactions per year

1.6 million awarded in scholarships
Critical initiatives of Complete Florida involve reducing time and costs required for adult learners to earn academic credentials. Notable this year is a focus on:

Expanding the number of academic partners from 15 to 20 state universities, colleges and private institutions. As a result of this expansion Complete Florida now offers more than 200 fully online degree programs. New partnerships include: Broward College, Florida Atlantic University, Lynn University, Saint Leo University and Seminole State College.

Growing our business partnerships to align workplace needs with higher education efforts to help students optimize professional development and experience, scholarships and tuition assistance. Two new business partners are Navy Federal Credit Union, which has a workforce of more than 8,000 employees, and Broward County with a workforce of more than 6,000 employees.

Implementing Salesforce as our new customer relationship management (CRM) system helps us improve and customize students’ interaction with coaches during the entire student lifecycle. Students have their own personalized portal to engage directly with their coach through multiple channels, including texting.

Conducting stop-out campaigns on behalf of partner institutions. Through these campaigns we worked with partners to identify and re-enroll existing students who had stopped-out for more than three consecutive semesters. With our partner institutions, we will continue to support the 29,168 potential re-enrollments who are part of the 2018-2019 outreach campaign as we collaborate to re-engage and retain returning adult learners.

Launching the Complete Florida Network. This series of monthly virtual networking opportunities brings together education professionals to discuss challenges and share best practices for working with returning adult learners. This group began with representatives from Complete Florida institutions but has grown to include representatives from other Florida and out-of-state institutions, organizations and national education foundations. Examples of topics discussed include: navigating military education benefits, completing the FAFSA, working with transient students and navigating accelerated mechanisms.

Collaborating with other statewide agencies to meet students where they are. An example is our collaboration with The Children’s Forum to provide additional tuition support and coaching services to recruit and retain eligible students in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program.

Exploring how various accelerated mechanisms options at partner institutions (free CLEP prep courses, credit by challenge exams, and portfolio reviews) can help students earn college credit efficiently and affordably.

Continuing to fine-tune Complete Florida coaching strategies to focus on transcript reviews of previous credits earned, completion of admission forms, development of focused pathways to graduation at all our partner institutions and regularly scheduled appointments to offer assistance and encouragement as well as to pass on messages about workforce skills and engagement opportunities.

Dr. Michelle Horton
Director, Complete Florida
What We’ve Learned About Returning Adult Learners

Our annual student survey provides a snapshot of the obstacles and challenges associated with the decision to return to college. The results of our survey help us understand how to meet students where they are and provide vital services that lead to not only enrollment, but also to retention and completion. This initiative requires continuous support beyond an invitation to return and the offer of a scholarship. Here are the significant findings from our annual student survey completed by 601 enrolled, not enrolled and graduated adult learners.

- 75% of respondents are employed and most work full time.
- 60% of respondents make less than $50,000 per year in household income.
- 59% of respondents are first generation in college.
- 48% of respondents typically take one or two classes a semester.
- 50% of respondents have children younger than 18.
- 35% of applicants have undergraduate debt of more than 10,000 dollars.

Source: 2018-2019 Student Survey conducted by Complete Florida
The Complete Florida degree completion model has been recognized with invitations to share best practices for supporting returning adult learners in Florida. Here are a few of the highlights from the year:

Complete Florida was one of seven finalists selected for the Jobs for the Future $1 Billion Dollar Wage Gain Challenge. We presented a proposal to integrate workplace training with academic programming to address wage stagnation. The proposal required an idea that would raise the annual wages of at least 100,000 workers by $10,000 or more by the end of 2021.

Complete Florida was one of 26 organizations chosen out of the more than 200 who were invited to apply for The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Intermediaries for Scale grant. We participated in events to address equity in education by reaching low-income and minority students and gleaned valuable information about extending our work to a broader audience.

Complete Florida was selected as part of the Florida team for the Lumina Foundation State Policy Agenda Retreat. Leaders from each state collaborated on best practices and identified ways to attract and spend resources so more Americans can afford postsecondary credentials with workplace value.

Complete Florida co-presented on a panel discussion at the Florida Chamber of Commerce Future of Florida Forum called “Going From Learners to Earners.” The topic covered developing talent pipelines by helping bridge the gap between academia and the workforce.

Complete Florida coordinated a student and graduate discussion panel at the Florida College Access Network (FCAN) Annual Summit. The topic at the standing room only session was “Finding the Finish Line: What Adult Students Want You to Know.” It was a frank discussion that led to brainstorming and problem solving and the sharing of best practices from the returning adult learner point of view.

Complete Florida co-presented with CLEP and the University of Memphis Finishline program at three different national conferences during the last year: Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE), the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Complete College America (CCA). The presentation was “Unlocking the Door to Degree Completion: Key Strategies to Transform the Returning Adult Student Experience.”

Complete Florida shared best practices at the Salesforce national conference with the presentation “Through the Students’ Eyes.” The message was about the importance of keeping the student experience at the center of all re-designed workflow processes.
“After Coach Matt helped me figure out the best way to use the numerous credits I had already earned, I was on my way. He provided that last push I needed. One of my main motivations was that we were using government assistance, and that is not something I wanted to depend on as a way of life. Finishing my education was a vital part of making that change and showing my children they have options.”

Keturah, 36
Florida International University

“It is a fantastic program that proves you are never too old to reach your academic goals. Having a Complete Florida coach takes all the uncertainties out of taking the plunge and beginning the journey of finishing up your college degree.”

Susan, 54
Florida State College at Jacksonville

“I was thinking I needed to major in psychology to do what I wanted to do, but my coach suggested the supervision and management degree, which turned out to be perfect for me and wasn’t something I had even heard of before.”

Ginger, 35
Polk State College

“In the financial sector, there is a lot of competition and a vast amount of emerging technology. Continuing your education is definitely a way to keep on top of things and set yourself apart.”

Yayson, 33
St. Petersburg College
Coaching is the Core of Our Work

Our Complete Florida personal coaches help students every step of the way from initial interest to graduation, and it is this individualized attention that leads to persistence and graduation.

• During our most recent annual survey of students, coach guidance ranked equal to financial support in the students’ decision to return to college.

• 93 percent of students feel a strong sense of support from their Complete Florida coach.

• 90 percent of students indicated they were able to easily access resources through Complete Florida.

• Our coaches explore accessible, accelerated mechanisms to graduation with each student. Coaches also explore opportunities for earning credit for prior learning that could have occurred though professional development or military training.

• All these approaches allow us to meet students where they are in their educational and career journey and find the best pathway to success for them.

“My coach sends me emails and reminders about FAFSA, scholarships and enrollment deadlines so that I don’t have to worry about missing any of those important details. I can just concentrate on schoolwork.”

Kittie, 37
Indian River State College

“I feel like I have a liaison to the entire campus. Any time I have a question about a class, about finances about deadlines or whatever, I call her. I always get a detailed explanation that addresses the issue.”

Kerri, 41
Florida State College Jacksonville