



Communities
In Schools®

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Alumni Activation & Resource Guide



**Join the Sept '22 Challenge
to engage 300 alumni on
boards and staff - page 6**

September 2021

QUICK START: HOW TO USE THE ALUMNI GUIDE

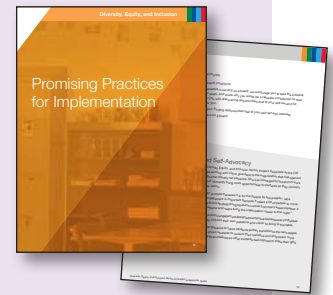
1. Everyone: Start Here!

Read Promising Practices for Implementation

Regardless of whether you have yet to engage with alumni, are thinking of activating an official program or have already established a program, this section provides information and insights on the goals CIS has set for the Network to engage alumni by September 30, 2022.

This primer section also includes:

- Tips for engaging alumni to join your Board and Staff
- Must-have coaching on how to promote ethical storytelling with students and alumni
- Insights into alumni data collection



2. Identify Your Level of Alumni Engagement

A. For Those WITHOUT any alumni programs

- Read pages 25 — 27
- Even if you're not yet ready to launch an official alumni program, you can still establish some form of engagement with alumni
- Discover foundational recommendations to stay connected to students post graduation

OR

B. For those WITH or READY TO LAUNCH an alumni program

- Read pages 28 — 33
- Learn from affiliates engaged in alumni work
- Find resources to:
 - Start an alumni program
 - Dedicate a staff member to oversee the work
 - Write job descriptions to attract a full-time alumni engagement coordinator

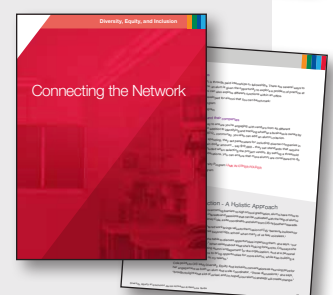
3. Explore Best Practice Case Studies

- Read pages 35 — 58
- Get inspired by affiliates in action
- Read best practices and quick tips from 8 affiliates who have launched alumni programs



4. Connect with Network Trailblazers

- Read pages 60 — 65
- Access contact information to connect with affiliates across the network who have alumni programs or are launching programs
- View a list of affiliates and state offices who have at least one alumni on their board
- Review the 2021 alumni survey results for greater insights





Welcome to the Alumni Activation and Resource Guide. This guide is designed to support your efforts to increase your engagement with the CIS alumni community.

Engagement may include adding alumni to your Board of Directors, supporting them to participate in community and civic roles, contracting with them as vendors and suppliers — the options are endless as are the benefits of continuing our relationship with students after high school graduation.

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This document contains live links to key articles and videos relevant to our work with DEI. Explore by clicking on resource titles. Clicking the table of contents items will help you navigate through the document.

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Introduction: **Alumni Activation & Resource Guide**

Introduction to the Alumni Activation & Resource Guide

History of the Work

Our journey with alumni has been a long one but has truly come into focus and intention over the last five years. In 2016, we launched our first alumni program to provide networking, personal and professional development, as well as storytelling training, to support our alumni to serve as ambassadors, advocates, and advisors to Communities In Schools™. While that work was critical to helping build the foundation of why continuing our work with alumni was important, we came to realize that this work was too narrow in scope to be meaningful to our alumni.

The Alumni Activation and Resource Guide was birthed in response to this feedback and as part of CIS National's strategic refresh goals that emerged in the summer of 2020. You may recall that during that time, we were all under COVID-19 closures and restrictions, and the Black Lives Matter movement was at the forefront of conversations around equity, sparked by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others.

During the heart of all this, in July 2020, our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Implementation Team hosted a convening and invited a group of alumni to discuss how the national office can better support graduates to be change agents in their communities. During these three days of conversation, our alumni courageously shared their honest and candid assessment of the opportunities available to the CIS network to better live out its mission to empower students to *stay in school and achieve in life*. While our organization is proven to keep students in school, these alumni voices helped us to see that following through to ensure their success "*in life*" was in need of greater focus and development.

By the end of the convening, three clear charges emerged:

1. To build out inclusive policies and practices within the national office to hire alumni, place them on boards, and engage them to tell their stories on our behalf.
2. To ensure we continue to provide resources and supports to our alumni post-graduation.
3. To empower and equip our national network to build out their alumni programs, realizing that graduating from high school is an important milestone, but not the final destination.

Most importantly, our alumni are experts of their own experience, so we committed to avoid repeating past mistakes where we created alumni programs without alumni input. Thus, the Alumni Work Group — a 24-person collaborative made up of alumni, affiliate, and national office staff — was born in October 2020. With the support of surveys, focus groups, and other modes of collecting input from additional voices, the group developed this guide and formulated our case for action and direction for this work, which is shared within these pages.

National Alumni Strategy: How You Can Support Achieving Two Goals by September 2022!

Following all of this groundwork, in January 2021, the national office officially launched a strategic plan refresh to ensure the last two years of our plan (2021 and 2022) reflect our current reality as impacted by the pandemic, racial injustice and economic instability. A Lifelong Commitment to alumni is one of six focus areas for CIS and is focused on strengthening and fulfilling our lifelong commitment to students as they move across community roles to achieve in life. Within the National Strategic Plan Refresh are two major milestones now attached to our alumni work that you can play a role in achieving by September 30, 2022, through the use of this Alumni Activation and Resource Guide. The milestones are metrics for our Lifelong Commitment and Social Justice priorities designated in the strategic plan:

- **Nationally: Engage 2,300 alumni (by attending events, participating in our online alumni platform and more)**
- **Locally: Engage 300 CIS alumni at the affiliate level for board and staff positions**

By accomplishing these milestones together by **September 30, 2022**, we will build the bridge to the next decade of Communities In Schools, with alumni being a critical foothold.

Beyond the next two years, our Alumni Work Group created a strategic road map to inspire us for the next decade and to ensure alumni are proud to call themselves graduates of Communities In Schools. Below is an articulation of the milestones for each year as we march forward in our alumni engagement journey:

Year 1 2021	Year 2 2022	Year 3 2023	Year 4 2024	Year 5 2025	Our Aspirations for the Decade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our alumni strategy through a collaborative process • Draft framework and roadmap • Create case for action • Define success and establish baseline data • Develop Alumni Activation & Resource Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch online alumni platform • Establish data collection strategy for alumni contact information • Recruit and train alumni interested in serving on boards • Implement inclusive policies and practices within national office • Support network capacity-building • 300 CIS alumni are actively engaged at local level, including roles at affiliates, boards, and state offices • Engage 2,300 alumni nationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue stakeholder engagement • Grow alumni community • Collect and analyze data to monitor & assess/report progress • Identify the desired changes for alumni • Continue implementing inclusive policies and practices within national office • Invest in network capacity-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to grow alumni community • Establish new baseline for alumni programming in the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to grow alumni community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni voice is valued and alumni are represented on every CIS board and at all levels of leadership across the network • Alumni have a peer network and access to partners and resources for postsecondary, career, life skills, and mental health resources to thrive as adults • Alumni are giving back to their community and changing systems of oppression through civic engagement: voting, community organizing, running for office • Affiliates are engaging with alumni meaningfully, through a definition of engagement that is unique to their community and their alumni's needs

To support the Network to meet these goals and milestones, the Alumni Work Group identified six areas of engagement that are critical to the development of our national alumni program. They are, in no particular order:

- **Building Community** — Create spaces for alumni to connect with each other, the national office and the network, and build a community that will harness their social capital, enhance their power to achieve their personal and collective goals, and foster an environment for peer-to-peer learning.
 - Check out pages 35-55 of this guide for examples of how our affiliates are building community with their alumni.
- **Civic Engagement** — Provide opportunities to develop and support alumni to expand their personal power and effect change in their communities, whether that be locally or nationally.
 - [Democracy Class](#)
 - [Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute](#)
 - [Congressional Black Caucus Institute](#)
- **Career & Workforce Development** — Engage alumni in tangible skill development, networking and other opportunities to set them up for success as professionals in their desired industry, as well as acknowledge the alternate pathways high school graduates can take.
 - [Get My Future](#)
 - [My Next Move](#)
- **Post-Secondary Access & Persistence** — Show alumni who are interested that college can be for them and provide support from the application process all the way through graduation day.
 - [College Advising Corps Virtual Advising Guide](#)
- **Life Skills** — Support alumni through additional skill-building opportunities, such as financial literacy, that are critical to setting up lifelong success.
 - [Our Money Matters](#)
- **Mental Health** — Support personal and mental health and wellness
 - [The Jed Foundation](#)
 - [Young Men’s Health](#)
 - [Center for Young Women’s Health](#)
 - [The Trevor Project](#)

Continue reading the Case for Action to learn more about where we are headed on this journey to set alumni up for success in life. There is much work to do, but we are proud to be taking steps to a new and sustainable future for our organization.

Case for Action

Alumni are the true measure of Communities In Schools' success. For our alumni, Communities In Schools holding itself accountable to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) means ensuring the CIS network is meeting its commitment to support students to achieve not just in school, but as our mission states, in life.

In 2017, we embarked on integrating DEI into the fabric of CIS, focusing on building our foundation of DEI practices within the network and national office to better reflect, understand and respond to the systemic barriers faced by our students of color and those living in poverty.

As this work continues, and our network and national office assess where they are plotted on a five-level DEI developmental continuum and how they can deepen their DEI practices, we've expanded our definition of DEI to include our alumni.

We define alumni as CIS students who received case-managed supports and graduated from high school. We estimate we have hundreds of thousands of alumni across the country.

At the close of every academic year, we graduate approximately 10,000 CIS students. That's 10,000 students who walk across the graduation stage and out of our lives. Our alumni have overcome trauma, obstacles, experienced racism, poverty, and other forms of oppression, and still they rise to great heights — often the first in their family to attend college, earn their bachelor's degrees, run for public office, attend graduate school, find fulfilling careers, launch their own businesses, and break generational cycles. It's our responsibility to redesign and rebuild the world alongside our alumni.

We know graduating students from high school is not enough. Forty-plus years ago when CIS was founded, a high school diploma could mean finding a job with a living wage. Now, a high school diploma is just a stepping stone. Added to that are the systems of oppression in terms of access to postsecondary degrees, careers, paths to promotions and equitable salaries. For example, we know only 40% of Black and 54% of Hispanic/Latinx college-going students graduate within six years as compared to 64% of their white peers.

While we know each of our students has potential to attend and graduate from a four-year college, this may not be their goal. As part of our support to ensure alumni succeed in life, we will redefine the picture of success, and the non-traditional paths to find personal and professional success that are just as worthy. We will lift up all alumni, fuel a continued relationship beyond high school and build the infrastructure for a powerful alumni community that harnesses the collective power of their social capital to make real change in their communities.

Our national office will lead by example by making sure, internally, we reflect the world we wish to see. That means placing our alumni in leadership positions within our offices and on our board. These powerful positions make decisions with long-lasting impacts on our primarily Black and Brown students and those students living in poverty — it's our responsibility to make sure their faces and lived experiences are represented.

“We want to witness our alumni flourishing in their personal, professional, and academic lives; and meeting and surpassing their goals...”

We want to witness our alumni flourishing in their personal, professional, and academic lives; and meeting and surpassing their goals. We want to see our alumni stopping the cycle of poverty for themselves. We want to vote our alumni into elected positions; thank them for serving in the military, cheer them on as they graduate from college, graduate school, and earn their trade certificate; and support their entrepreneurial endeavors. And most importantly, we want to build a powerful network of alumni who can harness their collective social capital to build a better world for each other and to create a future where the next generation does better than any other.

“We want to vote our alumni into elected positions; thank them for serving in the military, cheer them on as they graduate from college, graduate school, and earn their trade certificate; and support their entrepreneurial endeavors.”



Introduction to the Resource Guide

Letter from Rey

For me, focusing on our alumni is more than just part of the job — it's personal. I am a proud alumnus of Communities In Schools, too.

During my sophomore year at South San Antonio High School, I was introduced to my CIS site coordinators. But to me, they were just Ms. Bell and Ms. Reyes. While my parents gave me space to succeed in school, they didn't have the knowledge base to guide me to success on their own. It was Ms. Bell and Ms. Reyes who encouraged me to aim high and work toward possibilities that had, until then, seemed unattainable.

As we know, our stories don't end with high school graduation. My alma mater, Stanford University, was nothing like my high school. I wanted to go home after my first quarter, but I couldn't afford a plane ticket, so I stayed. How much easier would it have been if I had a community of my peers, or if CIS continued to be a presence in my life? I did stay and go on to graduate, but as a first-generation college graduate, I know I am one of the lucky ones. Then there was life after college.

The context in which Communities In Schools now operates is dramatically different than it was pre-pandemic, never mind 40-plus years ago when our organization was founded. Our mission is not changing by supporting alumni, in fact, it's always been there in black and white that we have an obligation to see our alumni through high school and to achieve in life.

And we know that to create a U.S. education system that works for our Black and Brown students as well as those living in poverty, we need our alumni in positions of power and support their continued success. When I returned to San Antonio, I knew I wanted to take my knowledge and lived experience to make a difference in my own community. And my vision is for alumni across the country to do the same — whatever their vision of success looks like.

This alumni guide is a critical piece to building toward the next decade of CIS, where we continue to strengthen and fulfill our lifelong commitment to students as they move across community roles and achieve in life.

While I hope this guide provides practical application to our collective work with alumni, I also hope it gives you hope. Hope in the future, hope in the direction of this work, and hope in the possibilities that lay ahead for our students and alumni.

Adelanté,

Rey



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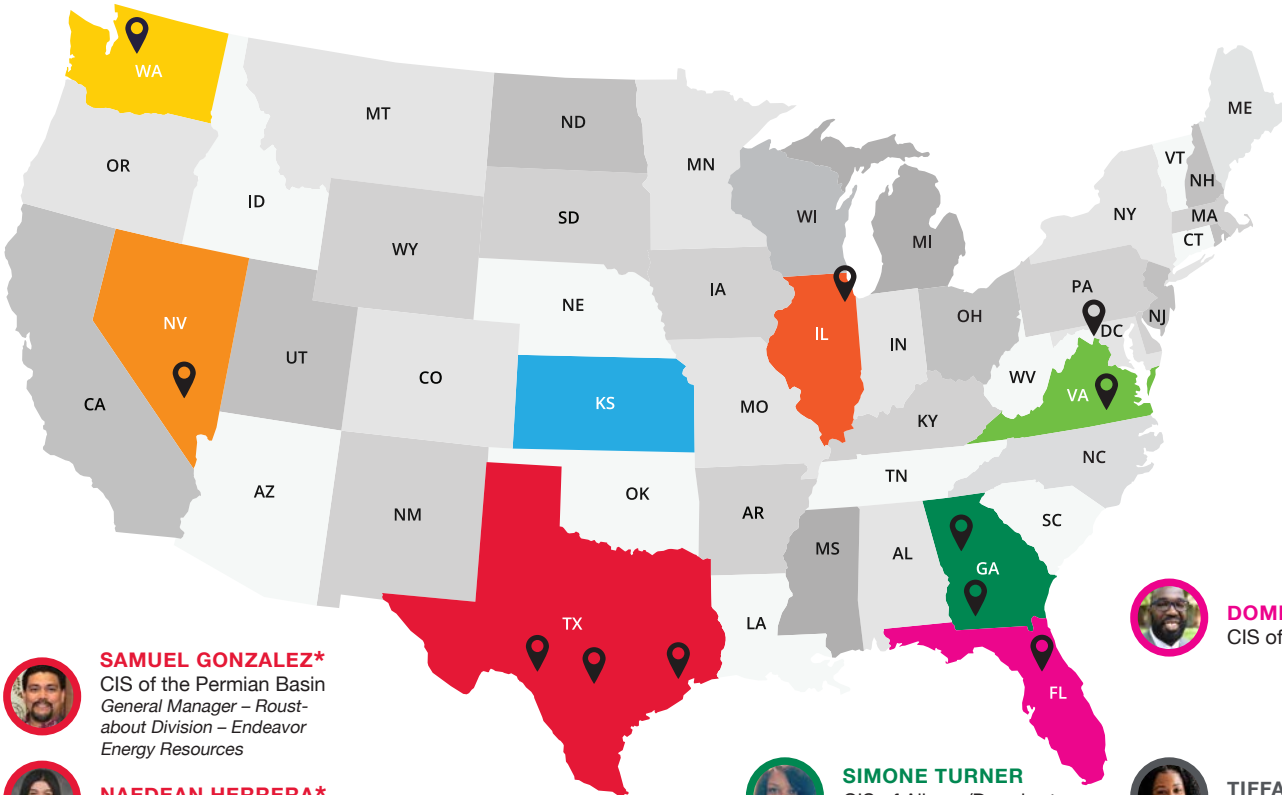
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***Alumni**

Acknowledgements

Communities In Schools would like to acknowledge the members of the Alumni Work Group, a collaborative team who advised, guided, and gave their hearts and souls to developing the Alumni Activation and Resource Guide. The group is made up of committed alumni and staff from 12 different states and the national office. The work they have done for the last seven months paves the way for building out more inclusive practices and policies for our alumni for the decades to come to strengthen our commitment as they cross community roles.

Executive Leadership

This work would not be possible without the support and leadership of the CIS national office board of directors and executive team, especially CIS President & CEO Rey Saldaña, and Chief Operating & Equity Officer Steven McCullough. We are grateful to our executive team and board members for their openness, their active listening, and their willingness to go where our students and alumni tell us we need to go.

Alumni Leadership Network

A special thanks and debt of gratitude go to our alumni, for their trust, patience, and confidence in CIS to build out this work with them in mind. In addition to the alumni in our work group, we must thank the group who participated in conversations with us starting in July 2020. To Talitha Halley, Jamal Tate, Whitney Cole, Tres'Rionna Whitlock, Cyril Jefferson, Dominic Cummings, Naedean Herrera, and Nadia Hernandez, thank you for your time, insights, and emotional labor.

We would also like to thank the following alumni who have donated their time and insights to these endeavors over the last year: Clayton Alvarado, Rod Brown, Jason Jackson, Raven Jefferson, Kenton Kelley, Celeste Ruiz-Chang, Christopher Tucker, and Gabrielle Williams.

And finally, a very special thank you goes to alum Brianna Gaetz who was instrumental in authoring and organizing this guide while serving as a Miliken Fellow at the National Office.

Change Often, LLC

Communities In Schools would also like to acknowledge Change Often — a social innovation consulting firm — for providing strategic facilitation, project development, and stakeholder engagement services for the CIS Alumni Work Group. Led by Principal Consultant, Cyril Jefferson (CIS Alumnus, c/o 2010), this group has committed tireless efforts, enthusiastic support, and countless contributions to the process of completing this guide. Many thanks to Cyril and fellow teammates, Tiffany Golphin and Clarice Sigsworth. Without their help, this guide would not be possible.

Our Network

We also owe a debt of gratitude to our network, especially those affiliates and state offices who completed our survey for us to better understand alumni programming across the network and then participated in follow up interviews. We thank the following affiliates for completing the survey: CIS of Athens/Family Connection, CIS of Atlanta, CIS of Bay Area, CIS of Baytown, CIS of Benton-Franklin, CIS of Berrien County/Family Connection, CIS of Big Country, CIS of Brunswick County, CIS of Burke County/Family Connection, CIS of Gatoosa County, CIS of Central Texas, CIS of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, CIS of Chesterfield, CIS of Cleveland County, CIS of Coastal Bend, CIS of Cochran/Bleckley County/Family Community Partnership, Inc., CIS of the Dallas Region, CIS of Delaware, CIS of Dodge County, CIS of Douglas County, CIS of East Texas, CIS of Eastern Pennsylvania, CIS of El Paso,

CIS of Fitzgerald/Ben Hill, CIS of Galveston County, CIS of Georgia of Albany/Dougherty, CIS of Georgia in Glynn County, CIS of Georgia in Henry County, CIS of Georgia in Marietta/Cobb County, CIS of Georgia in Troup and Muscogee County, CIS of the Golden Crescent, CIS of Greater Wichita Falls Area, CIS of the Gulf South, CIS of Hampton Roads, CIS of Hancock County, Inc./Family Connection, CIS Heart of Texas, CIS of Hidalgo, CIS of High Point, CIS of Houston, CIS of Indiana, CIS of Kalamazoo, CIS of Lake County, CIS of Laredo, CIS of Los Angeles, CIS of Memphis, CIS of Michigan, CIS of Mid-America, CIS of Milledgeville/Baldwin County, CIS of Nation's Capital, CIS of New Mexico, CIS of North Carolina, CIS of North Texas, CIS of Northwest Michigan, CIS of NOVA, CIS of Ohio, CIS of the Permian Basin, CIS of Petersburg, CIS of Pittsburgh-Allegheny County, CIS of Richmond, CIS of Robeson County, CIS of the Rocky Mount Region, CIS of San Antonio, CIS of South Central Texas, CIS of Southeast Harris and Brazoria County, CIS of Southeast Texas, CIS of Southern Nevada, CIS of Southwest Virginia, CIS of Spokane County, CIS of Tennessee, CIS of Wake County, CIS of Washington County/Family Connection, and CIS of Western Nevada.

We also give additional thanks to those affiliates who participated in follow up interviews and shared resources to help build our resource guide: CIS of Atlanta, CIS of Central Texas, CIS of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, CIS of Cleveland County, CIS of Houston, CIS of Los Angeles, CIS of Memphis, CIS of Mid-America, CIS of New Mexico, CIS of San Antonio, CIS of South Central Texas, CIS of Southeast Harris and Brazoria County, CIS of Southern Nevada, and CIS of Wake County.






DECA

 Communities
In Schools



Promising Practices for Implementation

Add CIS Alumni to Your Board

The Communities In Schools national office has set a goal for September 30, 2022, for 300 CIS alumni to be actively engaged in board service in their communities, including on local, state, and national CIS boards.

To support these efforts and to ensure alumni are ready for such important and prestigious positions, CIS National is committed to training alumni board prospects in Governance 101, gauging interest and readiness in board services, as well as sustaining a community for alumni board members to connect with each other. Please email alumni@cisnet.org for more information and to receive updates.

INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICIES FOR BOARD MEMBERS WHO ARE ALUMNI

The following policies are designed to support you to engage in inclusive and equitable practices around attracting, recruiting, and retaining alumni talent on your board. These practices will improve your overall board community when implemented. Some promising practices include:

- Talk often, openly and candidly about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and your board's role and willingness to commit to these principles. If you need help getting started, please refer to the [CIS National DEI Resource Guide](#).
- Have a full board discussion on the value of recruiting alumni — and make sure the conversation is about more than the value they bring to fundraising. Our alumni understand our programs and have hindsight to provide guidance on strategic direction. They represent the next generation of leaders and talent within the community.
- Make sure you have a candid conversation with your alumni board prospect about board roles and responsibilities, as well as understand what your alumni board prospect hopes to get out of board membership.
- Assign a board mentor to your board member who is an alum. This person is an unofficial guide to the board, providing guidance on what happens at meetings and between meetings. Be clear on roles and responsibilities.
- Set up quarterly calls between your alumni board member and your executive director, and assign your office's board liaison to meet regularly with your board member to surface any opportunity areas for growth or clarity.
- Establish a reimbursement policy if board meetings or duties require travel or other out-of-pocket expenses.
- Make sure your alumni identify a committee they would like to serve on. Challenge your affiliate's expectations for the alumni to be valued beyond a fundraising story, and instead, align your alumni's interests and talents with the affiliate's board work.
- Help facilitate calls between the board member who is an alum with board and committee leadership.
- Provide training to alumni board members. In addition to the governance training provided by the national office, utilize CIS' national membership with [BoardSource](#). BoardSource offers a wealth of free training and information for non-profit boards, and offers a [certificate of nonprofit board education](#) that is free to its members. All affiliates and affiliate board members have access to these BoardSource tools. You can request membership by emailing CISpoc@cisnet.org.

Resources for Affiliates

- **If Your Board Looked Like Your Community**

Resources for alumni who are seeking board positions:

If you're reading this as an alumnus who is interested in serving on a board, we encourage you to take the initiative to reach out to an affiliate and share why you would be a valuable contribution to their leadership. Below are a couple articles to support you with discovering opportunities that fit your skill set and for determining if board service is the best path for you:

- **Board Posting and Matching by Region: Finding opportunities that fit your skill set and interests**
- **Determining whether you want to serve on a board**



Nadia Hernandez
DEI Senior Project
Associate
National Office
and CIS Alum

Empowered Self-Advocacy

Nadia Hernandez, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Senior Project Associate at the CIS national office, started working with CIS to give back to the organization that has opened doors for her and helped her identify her passions. She is encouraged by the alumni work because she feels it will ultimately bring more opportunities to students as they connect with alumni across the nation.

“This initiative will yield success because it is for the people by the people,” says Hernandez. “Alumni engagement is important because it takes a lot of people to move something forward.” With this strategy bringing alumni voices from many areas together, it definitively identifies patterns and helps bring the organization closer to the “light.”

Hernandez advocates for alumni engagement designed to empower because every individual who has been served by CIS has their own passions and vision to bring to the table.

“I believe alumni can offer guidance to future students as they transition to the next stages of their lives. This work allows students to reclaim their narrative and empowers more students to share their gifts and talents so other students feel inspired to share their gifts and talents too.”

Hire Your Alumni

Inclusive Hiring and Vendor Practices for Alumni

Our alumni are ambitious, talented, and committed to the mission of Communities In Schools. They know our students the best because they were once in their shoes. Often times, they want to give back to the organization that supported them by way of working for Communities In Schools. While we estimate we have a large population of alumni serving as site coordinators — a noble and valuable position for alumni to connect with students they see themselves reflected in — we also know our alumni are interested in serving in central office positions.

We also know that for people of color, having a college degree is not a guarantee of employment. In fact, studies show that Black employees are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, regardless of their education level. (CITE)

We have the opportunity to change these statistics at Communities In Schools. At the national office, we have included alumni in our internal recruiting and hiring practices, and at time of publication have five alumni serving as national office staff.

Many of our alumni are entrepreneurial, and start their own businesses. At the national office, we've worked to open up our talent pipelines through direct hiring and vendor diversity programs.

We offer the following guidance for building your alumni talent pipeline.

Recommendations for Building an Alumni Talent Pipeline

- If you have an internal recruitment policy that shares job descriptions with internal staff first, consider including alumni in this process.
- Host a call with all interested alumni applicants and your affiliate's hiring manager so alumni can introduce themselves, learn more about the position, and make an educated decision as to whether to apply
- As an ongoing service outside of active searches, provide your alumni with tips on resume and cover-letter writing, as well as interview skills to ensure they are putting their best foot forward.
- If you hire a new alumni staff, depending on their work experience, you may want to consider matching them with a potential staff mentor.
- If you have multiple alumni on staff, consider creating space for an alumni affinity group to meet and discuss challenges they may navigate in the workspace as alumni.

The following articles will support you to recruit more alumni to your staff and leadership positions:

- **How Businesses Can Recruit and Develop More Young People of Color**

External Partnerships — Support alumni to take positions with other great employers

Our network often partners with employers within local communities to provide job opportunities for alumni. If you have the opportunity to build talent pipelines with the partners you work with, here are a few resources on how to do this:

- **Opportunity Youth**
- **Employer Engagement Toolkit: From Placement to Partners**
- **Creating an Education & Workforce Pipeline for Your Community/Region**

Offer Alumni Internships and Fellowships

Another opportunity for CIS to engage alumni is through paid internships or fellowships. There are several ways to structure these. In a true fellowship experience, an alum is given the opportunity to explore a problem of practice at CIS. Through an internship experience, alumni can also explore different functions within an office.

Following are existing Fellowship Programs developed for alumni that you can benchmark:

- **CIS National Milliken Fellowship Program**
- **CIS of Central Texas Fellowship Program**

Vendor Diversity Programs — Hire alumni and their companies

Vendor diversity programs are an intentional way to ensure you're engaging with vendors from all different backgrounds, experiences, and competencies. In addition to identifying and tracking whether a business is owned by a person of color, woman, or member of the LGBTQ+ community, you also can add an alumni criterion.

For example, when organizations track vendor spending, they set parameters for including diverse companies in their bidding process. For projects over a certain dollar amount — say \$10,000 — they set standards that require at least two bids from diverse ownership be included when selecting the project vendor. By setting a threshold for alumni to be included in these bidding considerations, you can ensure that more alumni are considered to do business with your affiliate.

- **Communities In Schools' Vendor Diversity Program**
- **Why you need a supplier diversity program**



Whitney Cole
CIS of Southern Nevada
Site Coordinator and
CIS Alum

Alumni in Action – A Holistic Approach

“Beyond the stories of overcoming barriers to high school graduation, alumni have more to offer, such as their own interests and passions that can be cultivated with the help of alumni engagement,” says Whitney Cole, a site coordinator and alum from CIS of Southern Nevada.

Cole knows alumni-centered work brings value to the mission of CIS “because it allows for a space to use our voices beyond high school when many of us feel voiceless.”

When alumni are not at the table to discuss opportunities impacting them, she says, “our story is being told for us.” When asked about what she’s looking forward to, Cole says she is committed to supporting alumni engagement for the organization, and at a personal level, “to creating a space to bring opportunities for more alumni, while also building a space to bring out more of my talents.”

Cole points to CIS’ early Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion conversations as a turning point for her engagement as both an alum and a site coordinator. “Those discussions,” she says, “brought to light what a lot of us feel, and I’m hopeful our alumni strategy will create change.”



Ethics of Storytelling

Engaging Alumni in Storytelling, Branding, and Fundraising — Promising Practices

Our alumni are powerful ambassadors for the work of Communities In Schools; they are proof that our mission works. While we need to share success stories to attract funding, publicity, and distinguish ourselves from other organizations, it's critical we don't do this at the expense of our alumni.

Due to the trauma that many of our alumni experience and continue to experience post-graduation, asking them to share their stories risks retraumatizing them, especially if we don't approach opportunities with compassion for their well-being first and with an end goal of leaving them whole.

When students and families give permission to share their images and stories of their experiences with CIS, they are trusting staff to utilize this information ethically while maintaining the family's dignity and worth. We must keep top of mind that they are whole people with lives outside of what we may know. They are the experts of their lived experiences, and we must treat them as such. Explaining media release and informed consent in language they can easily understand, ensuring they know they can say no, and giving them the opportunity to collaborate in the process are just a few ways we can ensure we are practicing in a respectful and ethical manner.

The following are recommendations for creating mutually beneficial opportunities for sharing and storytelling:

- **Practice Informed Consent** — make sure it's clear to alumni exactly how their story is going to be leveraged – are they speaking to staff, donors, community leaders, etc.? If they are contributing a written story, ask for consent each time you want to feature that story in an email or publication, particularly if it's being used for fundraising or appearing someplace more public like social media where it might be viewed by the alumni's friends and family. Let them know the platforms that you are sharing this information on, the purpose of sharing, and that participation is completely optional.
- **Consider Paying Alumni in Cash or Gift Cards** — much like you may pay to engage with a professional speaker, you also should consider paying alumni for speaking opportunities, particularly for a fundraising event. If there are any travel expenses associated with speaking engagements, also consider reimbursing alumni.
- **Ask Alumni How They'd Like to Benefit From this Opportunity** — oftentimes speaking opportunities place alumni alongside other community leaders who can help advance their personal and professional networks and ambitions. Have upfront conversation with alumni on what they can get out of this opportunity and help them make the most of it.
- **Acknowledge the Power of Healing Through Storytelling** — done correctly, for some individuals, providing testimony can be empowering and liberating, and is something to be explored when approaching alumni to share their stories.
- **Let Alumni Dictate Their Own Histories** — allow alumni to share as much or as little of their story as they'd like. Do not retraumatize alumni by asking them to recount painful events. Do not ask them to attribute their success to CIS. Do provide alumni with best practices on speaking or presenting to large audiences.
- **Be Intentional About the Stories You Tell** — how do we define success at Communities In Schools and

is that reflected in the success stories you're telling? Do you only tell the stories of your exceptionally high achievers? It's important to be intentional on how you define success for your students and alumni and make sure your stories reflect that definition.

- **Retire or Update Stories** — If you no longer can contact the alumni, or the story is more than five years old, it's probably time to update, archive, or retire the story.
 - **Ethical Storytelling**
 - **The Danger of a Single Story**
 - **Storytelling and Anti-Racism: Benefits of Storytelling**
 - **Naedean's Lunch & Learn [need link](#)**



Talitha Halley
Member of the CIS
National Board of
Directors,
Administrative Manager
for Planned Parenthood
Federation of America
and CIS Alum

Perseverance Is Key

Talitha Halley of CIS of Houston was elected to the CIS national board of directors in 2020 and has been a passionate member of CIS since she was a high school student. She is proud of the enriching experiences CIS provided her, which ultimately propelled her to be a first-generation college student.

Halley's strong connection to the organization has allowed her to be an integral part of the alumni strategy conversations since inception. She's advocated for the integration of alumni work throughout the CIS network "so the organization as a whole can better serve students' continued needs beyond completion of high school."

"This work is important because there has always been a need for continued services for students," says Halley who is a testament to the importance of alumni support as she went on to pursue higher education at Howard University after high school and specifies how mentorship helped her through that journey.

Halley places much value on the initiative for alumni continued support post-high school graduation because of the benefits alumni can offer students in the life lessons that come with the transition into adulthood. She notes: "Accomplishments vary from person to person, but you take life skills everywhere."

Halley says she "couldn't be prouder as a board member seeing the intentional involvement of alumni."

Data Collection for Alumni Programming Success

Collecting data and information as you launch an alumni program is necessary for multiple purposes. Accurate and updated information will help drive attendance for formal and informal engagement opportunities, as well as provide funders with data on the population of students you serve in order to stand out and appeal to them.

With informed consent via CISDM and CISNAV we recommend you collect the following:

- Name
- University (applied/accepted)
 - Scholarships (applied/accepted)
 - Financial Aid Award
- Race
- Gender Identity
- McKinney Vento
- Active in Foster Care
- GPA
- Email (non-school)
- Phone Number
- Emergency Phone Number
- Social Security Number (to accurately track post-secondary progress in the National Student Clearinghouse)



Kenton Kelley
2021 Milliken Fellow
and CIS Alum

Young Alumni Giving Back

Kenton Kelley, a CIS of South Carolina alumni and 2021 Milliken Fellow at the CIS national office, knows that now is the time to support young alumni as they transition to life after graduation.

As a Milliken Fellow, Kelley is one of a handful of young professionals hired to work alongside CIS national staff in a collaborative, cross-functional exploration of some of the most important and compelling issues facing CIS and its students.

“I have seen support and unity across the network to contribute to this alumni work. I want my peers to have space to connect with CIS — both to maintain the valuable relationships and to contribute to the program that supported them. Alumni are critical stakeholders, and have the perspective necessary to enact change due to being a part of the program.”




Communities
In Schools
South Central Texas

ALUM...

Start Here, Start Now: How to Engage with Alumni Without or Before Launching an Official Program

How All Affiliates Can Engage With Alumni

We understand that our network's primary focus is delivering our K-12 model of integrated student supports with high fidelity. We will continue to be a K-12 mission-focused organization, but our alumni work is a critical part of fulfilling the second part of our mission to ensure our students are achieving in life. We believe that regardless of your staff or budget resources, all affiliates can start their own alumni program. Here are five things every affiliate can do:

- 1. Root this work in relationships** — the most important relationship at CIS is that between students and their site coordinators. Consider how to broaden who your students think of when they think of CIS. Have they been introduced to your executive director or other central office staff? Do they know your affiliate or state office is part of a national network? Anecdotally, we hear from our alumni that they often didn't realize CIS is larger than just their site coordinator — or even that their site coordinator wasn't a part of school staff until much later in their relationship. Building relationships with additional CIS staff is important in creating a smooth transition to an alumni program.
- 2. Collect contact information for your graduating seniors and enter that data into CISDM or CISNAV.** In CISDM, there is a place for you to enter contact information for your graduating seniors. CIS national pulls this information at the end of each school year to invite students to be part of the national alumni network. If you would also like to create your own database, look to page 23 for recommendations of what data to collect. Remember to ensure that students consent and know where their information is going and for what purpose.
- 3. Send communications to alumni.** Now that you have collected alumni contact information, stay connected to them! Add them to your email list and keep them posted on what's happening at your affiliate, invite them to events, and share when you have job or volunteer opportunities. Or maybe you want to start an alumni Twitter, Facebook page, or Instagram. We also encourage you to set a goal for how often you'd like to communicate with your alumni.
- 4. Incorporate alumni into your existing DEI practices and policies.** Check out pages 16-22 for ideas on what this could look like. Many of these recommendations not only ensure your affiliate is inclusive of alumni but will help make sure your DEI practices are stronger in general.
- 5. Add alumni to your board.** The best way to ensure your alumni have a presence in your organization is to place them in leadership roles, such as on your board. Go to pages 16-17 to learn more about how to attract and recruit alumni talent to ensure you create a mutually beneficial opportunity for your affiliate and your alumni.

If you're ready to make the additional leap to launch your own alumni program, the following sections are designed to guide you on your journey.



Brianna Gaetz
2021 Milliken Fellow

“It takes deep trust for a student to tell their site coordinator: **‘I’ve been in the same clothes for a week, and I cannot focus in class’** or **‘I am feeling unsafe in my home’** or **‘I am battling with suicidal thoughts.’** The same trust and vulnerability that is needed for this transformational relationship to exist are needed when engaging with alumni.

“You can create the best programming, you can collect as much contact information as you like, and you can put numerous resources into this work, however, if we are not investing in building that same trusting environment with alumni that our students have developed with their site coordinator, alumni may not embrace our efforts to support them to succeed in life after graduation.

“We are working diligently to help alumni break through the odds stacked against them and to receive continued support to change the trajectory of their lives, but our ability to have our alumni strategy embraced by graduates rests in our ability to integrate our most important founding value into these initiatives — relationships.”



Ready to Launch Alumni Programming

1-2-3's of Starting an Alumni Program

If you're ready to start an official alumni program and aren't sure how to get started, here are some recommendations for developing the building blocks for your alumni program.

- **“For us, by us”** — it's critical to build in alumni input as you work to build out your alumni programming. Of course, it's also a delicate balance creating an alumni program with alumni input and without asking them to take on a lion's share of the work. While staff should be in charge of developing and owning your overall strategy, alumni should be invited often and early to provide their input and feedback.
- **Meet alumni where they are** — create an alumni program with the needs of your alumni rooted in its execution. For example, if your alumni are no longer local, perhaps you need to supplement in-person get-togethers with virtual opportunities. You may also find that you need to host events outside regular business hours in order to maximize alumni attendance and engagement.
- **Define what alumni engagement means for your affiliate** — this definition can vary based on what your alumni are telling you they need, as well as the trends you're seeing with your high school graduates and their paths post-high school. A good way to discover their needs is to conduct surveys and or focus groups with these stakeholders.
- **Executive sponsorship** — make sure your executive director and senior leadership team, as well as your board of directors, understand and agree to the importance of investing in your alumni. Their support and enthusiasm will go a long way to sustaining your initiative.
- **Meaningful resources** — provide incentives for your alumni, whether it be food, gift cards, or swag to encourage them to attend events. And if you are inviting alumni to participate in speaking opportunities or to help provide counsel and advice for strategic work, consider providing them a monetary stipend or hourly rate for their time.
- **Start small** — in the case studies on pages 35-58 you will see how some of our affiliates started small and tackled one area at a time when starting their alumni programming. For example, CIS of New Mexico provides scholarships for two of their graduating seniors, and CIS of Memphis provides internship opportunities. We believe even if you can only address one need for one alumnus, you are still making a difference in one life. And that's something.

Identify a Dedicated Staff Person

Selecting a point person to take ownership of the development of your alumni program is key to the success of your program. This person can be in a shared or designated role and needs to be dedicated, open, hardworking, non-judgmental — and prepared to change the lives of young adults.

A sample job description appears on the next page. If building your own unique profile, you may want to consider including some of the following skills sets and experiences:

- Prior CIS Site Coordinator Experience
- Detail oriented
- Operates from passion
- Experience with Mental Health Services and Supports
- Understands the Trauma-Informed Approach
- Inclusive of All Backgrounds and Walks of Life
- Maintains relationship with the following:
 - School Sta
 - HS Site Coordinators
 - Supervisor
 - Students/Alumni
- Educational Counseling Experience
- Social Work Experience
- Knowledge of the Admissions Process (College 2yr/4yr, Career, Trade, Military)
 - Career Counseling
 - Program Searching
 - Application Process
 - Essay/Resume assistance
 - Scholarship Search
 - FAFSA



Naedean Herrera
Former Site Coordinator
CIS of San Antonio
and CIS Alum

Continuity of Care

Naedean Herrera, CIS of San Antonio, is passionate about the difference the alumni strategy can make because “there is so much potential and power in our students and alumni.”

Herrera is a huge asset to CIS due to her dual experience as both alumni and staff. She explains: “Being a site coordinator at the high school I graduated from helped me put myself in my students’ position. It allowed me to identify some important growth opportunities surrounding alumni engagement.”

Collaborating across affiliates to develop this plan “brought a lot of hope” to Herrera. She explains: “We as alumni know what we need, we just need the CIS National Office’s support to achieve it.” She knows the holistic impact alumni strategy and support will have: “I know personally that being able to have some sort of continuity of care for those who need guidance and support is going to not only make students’ lives easier, but it will put site coordinators’ minds at ease, as well.”

Example Job Description for Full-Time Alumni Engagement Coordinator

If your affiliate is ready and able to hire a full-time staff person dedicated to alumni work, here is an example job description you can use from Communities In Schools of South Central Texas.

JOB DESCRIPTION: DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE AND ALUMNI INITIATIVES

GENERAL DUTIES:

The Director of College and Alumni Initiatives will provide intensive support to underserved high school students throughout the entire college admissions, financial aid, and transition process. The Director will demonstrate successful interventions revealing a functional knowledge of the fundamentals of career counseling and of the Texas and national higher education systems.

REPORTS TO:

The Director will report to the Executive Director.

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Solicit student referrals from school administrators, counselors, faculty, community, CIS staff, and the students themselves.
- Perform career counseling, case management, and other services to targeted high school students with the goal of motivating them to apply for college or career opportunities that may seem outside their reach.
- Refer to CIS or other area resources for therapeutic counseling and ongoing services as applicable and available.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with students, school administrators, and counselors as well as CIS staff at the sites being served.
- Maintain the philosophy that our students have the ability to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves and we will support their goals despite past performance.
- Must maintain confidentiality in all actions and relationships.
- Establish and maintain accurate and complete CIS participant information in files with appropriate and up to date documentation of services provided.
- Develop and implement special programs and activities appropriate to the Project Success mission.
- Maintain a cooperative working relationship with CIS staff in the administrative office, with community leaders and others.
- Build and sustain a college going culture.
- Maintain habits and skills associated with academic excellence, innovation, creative expression, problem solving, and encouragement of students to achieve goals higher than their circumstances.

- Facilitate college admission and financial aid knowledge to students and their parents.
- Actively support scholarship search, application, and award processes for students.
- Ensure as much as possible and practical that every senior student applies to a 4-year college, a 2-year college, a technical school, or the armed services as appropriate to his/her desires and interests.
- Ensure that students consistently receive the highest quality of services, that client needs are met individually and severally, and that each student makes satisfactory progress towards personal and program goals, with a positive focus on encouragement and success.
- Arrange work schedule to accommodate attendance at high school graduations and alumni graduations from colleges.
- Develop and maintain relationships with colleges and universities that offer the most potential for the students we are serving.
- Develop and support an alumni network.
- Maintain external relationships to bring services or opportunities to the school students.
- Serve as a role model and mentor for high school students.
- Be timely and organized in the work performed.
- Maintain and improve specialized knowledge and technical skills.
- Exercise positive and effective interpersonal skills.
- Exercise positive and effective communication.
- Exercise initiative.
- Accept direction from supervisor and agency.
- Be reliable and punctual.
- Accept and perform tasks as assigned by supervisor, even if not listed on this job description.
- Promote and maintain a positive image of CIS South Central Texas to the community and to varied, appropriate audiences.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Master's degree and counseling certification or licensure is preferred. Education and experience with college and career counseling is preferred. Experience working with high school and or college youth is required. The Director must possess strong professional collaborative skills as well as excellent communication skills. The Director must be able to function in a fast paced and rapidly changing environment, must remain flexible to meet the needs of students and the school schedules, and must be able to work well under pressure and adapt easily. The Director must maintain a positive and encouraging personality and most importantly, be able to develop positive and encouraging relationships with students that result in their positively changing behavior, thinking, and beliefs about themselves.

[LINK TO DOCUMENT](#)



Cyril Jefferson
Council Member,
City of High Point
Principal Consultant,
Change Often LLC
and CIS Alum

Creating Change for Generations

Cyril Jefferson has been involved with CIS in many capacities starting as a student of the organization (graduating in 2010) and transitioning to a volunteer post-graduation. He then served as an independent contractor which led him to become a site coordinator for several years. Today, Jefferson and Change Often — the social innovation company he founded — work regularly with CIS and were appointed the official consulting partner on the 2021 alumni engagement strategy.

Being involved in different areas of the organization for so many years gives Jefferson — and other alumni contributing to this initiative — the necessary perspective to help the national office ignite change. By sharing their experiences with the organization and their ideas to support students to succeed in life, alumni help improve programs and services for future generations of students and graduates.

Says an inspired Jefferson, “Alumni know the magnitude of the work and have the greatest yearning for us to get it right.” According to Jefferson, many organizations that assist students in high school miss the mark post-graduation.

“Organizations make assumptions as if a diploma fills the void of all of a student’s needs when in reality there are challenges after high school that are scarier than what students experience in K-12. In some cases, students need even greater support in the transition to the responsibilities of adulthood and yet in the majority of organizations there is no continuation of services.”

For Jefferson, the difference CIS makes over others is in how it manages students so powerfully through high school and is now actively filling the void of support post-graduation through the new alumni engagement initiative.

“This strategy comes at a time of need where CIS is proving there is an intentional culture to help people achieve their life goals. We are closing that gap in the transition to adult responsibilities whether that be helping students develop life and money management skills, continue their vocational or secondary education, find a job or apartment, enter the military, enter civil service — there are many paths they can take that we can provide support to accomplish.”

For Jefferson, one of the most powerful and proud moments of helping to lead the past year’s alumni engagement efforts has been sharing the focus areas of the initiative with fellow alums. “When I share the strategy and focus areas with alumni, I sense their excitement. These efforts give us all a sense of pride and satisfaction knowing our contributions provide an opportunity for CIS to get this programming right.”

Jefferson has been connected to the work of CIS for much of his life. He is proud of the contributions he has made and the impact his work on this initiative will make on millions of students for generations to come.





Affiliates in Action



Case Studies

CIS of Southern Nevada: The CIS Academy Program & CIS Alumni Family

CIS of Memphis: Workforce Development and College & Career Specialists

CIS of New Mexico: Scholarships, Internships & Graduation Celebration

CIS of Central Texas: Alumni Network, Fellowship & AmeriCorps Opportunities

CIS of Atlanta: The Atlanta Alumni Association & Wraparound Services

CIS of Mid-America: The Alumni Allies Network & Case Management

CIS of Houston: The Alumni Work Group, Service Projects & Support

CIS of South Central Texas: Project Success, Life Boot Camp, Alumni Mentoring Program, Leadership Camping Trips, Alumni Board & Other Supports

We have several affiliates who currently engage with alumni, and we have as much to learn from each other as we do from our alumni. This next section uplifts their leadership as examples of meaningful alumni engagement. Instead of individual contact information, we linked to the affiliate's website. We encourage you to either contact the affiliate directly via their contact information on the website or reach out to your national office point of contact for an introduction.





CIS of Southern Nevada started The Academy Program in 2012. This program is an elective class provided to high school juniors who have a six-credit deficiency and seniors who have a three or more-credit deficiency and are at-risk of dropping out. There are 13 teachers who are contracted to teach this elective class in 8 high schools. This course has four focuses: service learning, college/career readiness, life skills, and academic success.

The affiliate partners with their school districts to hire someone to teach the course along with the site coordinator. The affiliate's current Director of Academy used to be a teacher of the program for six years. After teaching that class, building those strong relationships, and seeing the need for students to have aid in the transition to adulthood, there became need for support long after graduation. So in 2018, CIS of Southern Nevada started building its alumni programming and other affiliates in Nevada are following suit and starting to host The Academy program starting the in fall of 2021.

The students who are case managed and take part in The Academy course will participate in a graduation ceremony to be inducted into the CIS of Southern Nevada alumni family and have continued engagement via:

- Workshops and Education — Financial advising, budgeting
- Virtual Career Fairs — Construction, cosmetology, medical field, culinary arts, etc., seeks out representation of people of color for the fairs to be presented to elementary, middle, and high school students
- Community Building Events — Hike, movies, water parks, etc., and in order to attend the fun events, alumni must attend an educational session or workshop
- Ways to Give Back — Alumni have the opportunity to speak at local middle and elementary schools about the transitions
- Professional Opportunities — Internship and seasonal position connections

Tips from Treasha Parker, Academy Program Director for CIS of Southern Nevada

- Be there before you lose them. You need to create the relationship and have their contact information before you lose them in the summer. At the end of the year before they graduate, I introduce them to what the alumni family is, discover what types of support they need, and conduct a Graduation Induction after that.
- As the Director of Programming, I make sure I am in schools, teaching some courses, bringing in presenters, and building that relationship. I make sure that I am in those classes, I am seen, and the students know who I am and who is facilitating the work after HS.
- In communicating with alumni, I personally call, email, and text them. Texting works better than anything else. Other modes of communication aren't as responsive.

CIS of Southern Nevada

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

330/year

Alumni:

63

High Schools:

9



Budget Range

\$200,000

The Academy Budget is \$14,500 per Academy session. Each session services 20-25 students. This overall \$200,000 annual budget covers teacher prep buy-out, site program costs, and Academy Director salary.

Partnerships

- EDC: Electric Daisy Carnival, job opportunities in promotion, event production, and operations

Funders

- Private Donors
- Sands Cares Foundation
- Electric Daisy Carnival

Tools

- [CIS Academy Curriculum Junior Year](#)
- [CIS Academy Curriculum Senior Year](#)
- [The Academy Syllabus Senior Year](#)

Measures of Success

- The Academy: Attendance, ACT scores, HS credit deficiency, GPA, Graduation Rate
- Alumni: Pathways (College: 2/4yr, Military: branch and ASVAB scores, Career Field)

“Be there before you lose them. You need to create the relationship and have their contact information before you lose them in the summer.”

Treasha Parker

Academy Program Director
for CIS of Southern Nevada

For more information: [CIS of Southern Nevada](#)



CIS of Memphis launched their alumni program in 2019. They are beginning to engage their alumni in two ways. First, they are providing paid internships at community organizations from a partnership with Workforce Mid-South to apply for funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Mid-South targets three areas: post-secondary, workforce, and military.

CIS of Memphis is also creating a pilot summer program as a bridge program for 50 seniors at two schools through a national office grant from the Annie E. Casey foundation. Their goal is to create a virtual network to support students during their post-high school transition through monetary incentives received after alumni complete a program milestone.

For example, they will receive incentives for attendance and participation; completing the FAFSA; submitting at least three applications to colleges and/or trade schools; and participation in post-secondary workshops hosted by CIS of Memphis. They also will administer a pre- and post- survey to understand and monitor how students feel about their post-secondary plans to gauge the effectiveness of the bridge program.

Finally, CIS of Memphis is supporting its students who decide to enter the military. Their college and career specialists host workshops that assists in researching branches of the military, supporting their preparation for the physical exam, connecting students with recruiters, and ensuring students have completed all necessary paperwork.

- Paid Internships — these create a launching pad for students (14-24 years old). Pays \$12/ hr for 8-10 weeks. Provides utility help, clothing, childcare, and other forms of assistance. CIS of Memphis also hired an intern to work at their affiliate.
- Care Coordinator — Through United Way, any adult with a school-aged child in Memphis can receive rent and utility assistance.

Tips from Teshanda Middleton, Director of Programs for CIS of Memphis:

- The biggest lesson learned so far is how important effective communication is between the diverse departments that help to make this project possible.

CIS of Memphis

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

58/year

Alumni:

1

High Schools:

6



Budget

\$192,568

Funders

- Annie E. Casey Foundation

Partnerships

- EDC: Electric Daisy Carnival, job opportunities in promotion, event production, and operations

Tools

- [College and Career Readiness Program Info Sheet](#)
- [College and Career Specialist Job Description](#)



“The biggest lesson learned so far is how important effective communication is between the diverse departments that help to make this project possible.”

Teshanda Middleton
Director of Programs
for CIS of Memphis

For more information: [CIS of Memphis](#)



CIS of New Mexico started engaging their alumni informally in 2018. Several ongoing endeavors have provided a foundation for a more comprehensive Alumni Program in the months and years ahead.

Their partnership with Future Focused Education and a private donor family has opened avenues for alumni to have support even after graduation. CIS of New Mexico serves a small community and engages their alumni during graduation season by hosting an inaugural event at the end of the school year. This affiliate hosts an annual graduation event for each year's senior cohort. The event includes a dinner/reception for the graduate and their family with awards and other recognition. In the future, they plan on inviting alumni to attend the graduation event to create a bridge for seniors to become CIS alumni.

CIS of New Mexico formed a partnership with a local nonprofit, Future Focused Education, to provide paid internship experience to CIS alumni. Site coordinators work closely to build a program that matches the unique interests of Communities In Schools alumni. This program is open to all students, whether they have a high school diploma, GED, and even those students who may have dropped out of high school.

In 2018, CIS of New Mexico partnered with a private donor to establish the Future Forward Scholarship Fund, providing two full ride scholarships exclusively to Communities In Schools students who plan on attending a four-year university in New Mexico. As they adjust to a post-pandemic world, they will investigate opportunities to convene together to develop new opportunities for alumni.

CIS of New Mexico's goal is to create a virtual network to support students during their post-high school transition via:

- Internship Opportunities — provide students with marketable skills, connect to local businesses, and help to navigate the transition into their new career goals.
- Full-Ride Scholarships — eliminate financial barriers so students can focus on graduating.

Tips from Ivan Cornejo, Field Operations Director for CIS of New Mexico:

- Get your hands in the *masa*. Relationships that you build with your students are forever. They last a lifetime. This will only last if there is a staff person to facilitate that relationship.
- Students just need someone to believe in them.
- Stronger relationships with the alumni = stronger alumni program.

CIS of New Mexico

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

25/year

Alumni:

6-15

High Schools:

1



Budget

\$70,000

Funders

- Private Donor Family Full Ride Scholarship

Partnerships

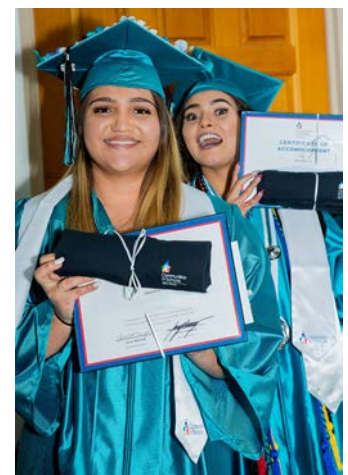
- Gear Up: Partners with Gear Up New Mexico to refer students who are entering college to support college access and persistence.
- AVID: Partners with AVID program in HS for college readiness and academic support.
- Future Focus Education: Internship stipend provider.
- Local Community Colleges: On-campus presentations.
- High School College and Career Center: On-campus presentations and FAFSA help.

Measures of Success

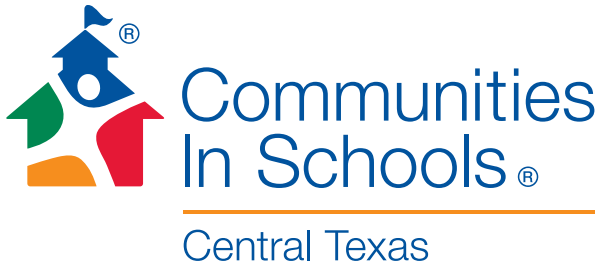
- Overall Wellbeing
- Post-Secondary Planning
- Increase in HS Graduation Rate
- Increase in College Graduation Rate

“Stronger relationships with the alumni = stronger alumni program.”

Ivan Cornejo
Field Operations Director
for CIS of New Mexico



For more information: [CIS of New Mexico](#)



CIS of Central Texas started engaging their alumni formally in 2018 after bringing a group of former students to the CIS Leadership Town Hall 40th anniversary event. Following the event, three staff members collaborated with five alumni to start the CIS of Central Texas Alumni Network. While they wanted to uphold the spirit of “for us, by us” and allow their alumni to play a significant role in the scope and mission of the work, they erred on the side of giving too much responsibility to their founding CIS Alumni Network members, who felt they didn’t have the experience to deliver on the affiliate’s ambitions. CIS of Central Texas took this feedback to heart and pivoted to provide more structure for the group in its second year. The affiliate started offering monthly in-person events, including professional development trainings, volunteer events, and socials.

When the pandemic hit, CIS of Central Texas pivoted once again, from in-person to virtual monthly events. One surprising effect of the virtual meetups was that it allowed more alumni to join them who otherwise wouldn’t be able to because of transportation barriers. While alumni meeting attendance has not grown significantly in the past few years, the participants who do attend have reported that they appreciate the connection.

In addition to CIS Alumni Network events, CIS of Central Texas has been working behind the scenes to build a robust alumni talent pipeline within their affiliate:

- They have an alum on their Board of Directors.
- The affiliate launched a three-year Achieve the Dream Fellowship Program for alumni to work full-time at CIS, with the goal of providing significant professional development and skill-building experience.
- They created a recruitment strategy to bring alumni in by way of CIS AmeriCorps positions which allow both high school and college graduates to gain work experience and professional development training while earning a stipend for their service.

CIS of Central Texas Alumni Network members had the opportunity to attend mentorship training so they may serve as mentors to students still in school, and they have volunteered as guest speakers at local schools, sharing their personal experiences and words of encouragement to youth. The affiliate communicates with their network of former students via quarterly newsletter updates, a Facebook group, Instagram account, and through email invites to events.

Getting new alumni involved is the biggest challenge faced by the affiliate. It is difficult to connect with the thousands of CIS alumni in the community that they lost touch with before they started their alumni program. Recent high school grads express interest in the alumni group but aren't always able to attend events due to transportation, or due to busy schedules.

CIS of Central Texas believes affiliates should first identify the why behind starting an alumni program or group, and ask your organization a critical question: what is the purpose of starting this work? How will this benefit alumni? CIS of Central Texas started the alumni program with three staff people working together in the effort. Currently one staff member coordinates the alumni network work, but they will be taking a committee approach with a cross-collaborative group of staff working on alumni engagement and support in the coming year.



Tips from Angela Wilborn, CIS Alumna and the CIS Communications Associate for CIS of Central Texas:

- Alumni work is going to start off slow. Don't give up. Small numbers ARE a big impact. Keep going.
- Alumni are just figuring their personal life out, give them time.
- Have a clear why.
- Alumni knew that on-campus the CIS room was a safe place they could go for help. Alumni are trying to recreate that same "CIS room" feel, in a network where everyone can feel included and safe.
- There needs to be a handoff from site coordinators to your alumni network/programming. You will lose the connection if there is not an intentional transition.

CIS of Central Texas

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

300/year

Alumni:

45

High Schools:

13



Budget

\$8,850

Resources

- [Achieve the Dream Fellowship](#)
- [AmeriCorps Opportunities](#)
- [Central Texas Alumni @ciscentraltxalumni](#)
- [Alumni Network Webpage](#)
- Newsletter Examples: [Feb. 2021](#), [Resume Workshops](#), [Aug. 2019, 2020](#)
- [CIS Alumni Blog](#) (Currently inactive but record of resources and activities)
 - [Public Speaking training / Presentation Skills](#)

Funders

- Alumni Work is a line item in the budget
- Canva: Graphic design tool to create social media posts
- Constant Contact: Database and tool for sending emails to 850 alumni network members
- Zoom: Monthly socials
- Survey Monkey: Assessment tool
- Facebook Group: About 45 Active alumni on this page

Measures of Success

- Alumni engagement and connection. Increasing the number of alumni attending CIS events, volunteering at CIS events, engaging with other alumni through the network, and sharing their experiences with students still in school
- Alumni feeling supported by affiliate
- Alumni recruitment into staff positions, an alumni employment pipeline

For more information: [CIS of Central Texas](#)



CIS of Atlanta's alumni program (CIS of Atlanta Alumni Association) began with the story of one alumni who expressed the need for post-secondary support upon her arrival to Howard University as a first-generation college student. While the student had strong academics, her attendance suffered due to her family being homeless most of her time in high school. During her matriculation through Howard University, CIS of Atlanta provided scholarship and tuition assistance, social and emotional support, basic needs for her dorm and apartment, in addition to assistance with applying for internships and career opportunities. With assistance from CIS of Atlanta, the student obtained her college degree in Computer Information Systems from Howard University and now is employed with Accenture working in the cybersecurity department of the Federal Services Division. Since then, CIS of Atlanta has created a post-secondary pipeline for graduating caseload students to participate in the Alumni Association program, which has grown over the years from supporting one alumna to 10, then to 50, and now slightly over 100 students.

The affiliate has a dedicated Program Manager to provide oversight of the alumni program, but often receives support from site coordinators to assist with student support and engagement. With this continued overall growth, the Alumni Association is now a division, and will have a full-time Program Manager and Alumni Engagement Coordinator, in addition to two-part time staff members to continue the work to ensure fidelity and success within the framework.

CIS of Atlanta has received corporate grant and foundation funding, as well as campaign funding to support its alumni work.

The Alumni Association's dedicated post-secondary framework was modeled after CIS' evidence-based K-12 programming. This framework focuses on the following:

- Enrollment — in an associate's or bachelor's degree program
- Enlistment — in the U.S. military
- Employment — through career pathway or trade programs
- Entrepreneurship — provide support for future business owners

With wrap-around support services in the areas of:

- Financial Support — such as tuition assistance summer fees, supplies, clothing, groceries, housing, technology support, etc.
- Social & Emotional Sustainability — as students navigate post-secondary
- Professional Mentoring & Coaching — to support students in getting one step closer to career goals, including exposure to speakers, workshops, connections, social media conduct, goal setting, etc.

- Resource Linkage — community of support through personal and professional resources, summer professional internships with corporate and organizational partners
- Opportunities to Give Back — Locker Room Leadership allows college athletics speak in the middle and high schools about the written and unwritten rules of a college campus
- College Excursions — Takes high school students for overnight trip to a university, corporate headquarters, and cultural excursions, including DC, NY, and LA)

When a CIS of Atlanta student graduates from high school, their site coordinator transitions the relationship to the Alumni Association. The alumni staff conduct a needs assessment to develop a post-secondary support plan for the alum, and the alum will have access to wraparound supports as they progress through their post-secondary plans.

The Alumni Association also focuses on developing four core competencies among its alumni:

- Professional Development — through personal and professional leadership trainings.
- Volunteerism — alumni are required to give back to their community.
- Leadership — alumni are equipped with tools to be leaders.
- Global Impact — the end goal for alumni is to be champions for good in society and advocates for students and families from low-income communities.

***“You come to me on Problem St.,
and I will take you to Solution Blvd.”***

Caleb Obumba
Program Manager
for CIS of Atlanta

Tips from Caleb Obumba, Program Manager for CIS of Atlanta:

- Know how to delegate and advocate. Meet them where they are at.
- There needs to be some type of preparation for them to show them that college is somewhere that they belong.
- Partner with local and state colleges
- Be intentional to the students.

CIS of Atlanta

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

375/year

Alumni:

108

High Schools:

27



Measures of Success

- Semester GPA
- Credit Hour Attempted v. Earned
- # Of Students on Track to Persist College
- Career Development in the Workforce
- Military Career Advancement

Budget Range

Not Available at Time of Publishing

Funders

- Coca-Cola
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- UPS Foundation
- Cummings Inc.
- Accenture
- Emergency funding Community Block Grant and Housing Urban Development
- Various Private Donors

Partnerships

- Gear Up — Partners with 2 yr. schools, helps students get jobs, and retention to receive Associates
- Year Up — A program to work on career certificates in cyber security
- Local Colleges — Atlanta Metro State College, Benedict College, Gordon State University
- Hotels for lodging

Tools

- Impact Report
- Needs Assessment
- Starting in Fall 2021, Salesforce Database: All student information, outcomes and supports will be tracked in the database for quarterly, end of semester, end of year reports
- Google Forms
- Communications: Zoom/ GroupMe/ Email/ Social Media/ Text Messaging

For more information: [CIS of Atlanta](#)




CIS of Mid-America started engaging their alumni informally in 2016 and hired a full-time staff person to undertake this role in 2020. They also recruited an AmeriCorps VISTA member to support social media activities for alumni. Their Alumni Allies Network (AAN) is a network open to all CIS alumni to continue direct services for support and resources to encourage self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, college and career readiness, and connections with the affiliate as well as with other alumni. AAN is a place for alumni to engage and lend support to their peers after high school.

Alumni will have the opportunity to network with mentors and receive support in skill development, enrichment programs, resume building activities, and referrals to community resources. There is a heavy focus on tools for alumni to thrive in stressful situations: breath work, mindfulness, and deeper inquiry of self.

CIS of Mid-America's goal is to create a virtual network to support students during their post-high school transition via:

- Individual support — monthly check-ins, create personal goal setting, community resource connections.
- Interactive Google site — serves as main informational hub for alumni. Contains links to college and career readiness, peer connection events and opportunities, workshops and information on independent living and important life skills.
- Educational workshops — monthly workshops on a variety of topics, such as mental health and resume-writing, to how to create a grocery list and budgeting.
- Peer connection — activities and events connecting with other alumni in their affiliate and nationally. Encourage to give back by volunteering or mentoring current CIS students.

Due to their funding by the Kansas Department for Children and Families, the AAN targets alumni who have either 1) demonstrated in-and-at-risk behavior, and/or 2) are 18-24 years old and are aging out of the foster care system.



CIS of Mid-America recruits alumni the winter of their senior year and hosts an inaugural event at the end of the school year. They also leverage four tools to evaluate their program's success:

- [DCF Self-Sufficiency Matrix](#) — A rubric that helps assess if students are in crisis or feeling empowered.
- [Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation Questionnaire](#) — A survey used to track how alumni are resilient, handle emotions in stressful situations, and capacity to achieve their goals.
- [ECOMap Toolkit](#) — diagram often used by social workers or nurses showing the social and personal relationships of an individual with his or her environment.
- [Alumni Welcome Packet](#) — Pre-Graduation plan data collection page, program checklist, Graduation Camp invitation, and more!

The role of CIS of Mid-America's site coordinators is to promote the AAN and activities to their students. The central office takes care of facilitating events and managing the relationship post-high school.



Tips from Jennifer Martin, Special Programs Coordinator for CIS of Mid-America:

- Site coordinators must know central office's vision, goals, and purpose for alumni work. Their buy-in is critical for a successful relationship handoff.
- Create a budget for incentives for alumni to attend events, shirts, prizes, etc.
- Take a trauma-informed care approach to conversations with alumni. Even though alumni are no longer being case managed, it's important to acknowledge the trauma that they continue to live through.

CIS of Mid-America

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

260–350/year

Alumni:

70

High Schools:

24



Budget Range

\$4,500 to
\$6,000

Partnerships

- An AmeriCorps Vista member: creates Instagram page content
- The Chamber of Commerce: community resources
- Mental Health Centers: referrals

Funders

- Kansas Department for Children and Families
- United Way

Tools

- [Alumni Allies Instagram @cismaalumni](#)
- [Alumni Program PowerPoint](#)
- [Virtual Graduation Camp](#)
- [Alumni Allies Google Site](#)
- Zoom: Workshops on College/ Career/ Life/ Mental Wellness

Measures of Success

- Mental Health Education
- Resilience
- Self-Sufficiency
- Registered Voting Status
- Monthly Check-In Attendance

“Focus on creating a safe and inclusive space for authentic listening when engaging with alumni.”

Jennifer Martin

Special Programs Coordinator
for CIS of Mid-America

For more information: [CIS of Mid-America](#)



CIS of Houston started working with alumni in 2013 in an effort to engage them with the Houston affiliate staff, board, and fellow alumni. In 2017, CIS of Houston's Special Initiative Manager worked with a group of six alumni to lead alumni programming efforts.

The purpose of the CIS of Houston Alumni Program is to foster a spirit of loyalty, giving back, and to promote the general welfare of Communities In Schools of Houston. The Alumni Program exists to support the organization's goals, and to strengthen the ties between alumni, the CIS community, and to support their personal and professional growth.

Alumni are one of Houston's greatest assets. Many institutions have cultivated alumni programs steadily and have a progressive outlook. Alumni relations is an important part of CIS' advancement for several reasons:

- Alumni are loyal supporters of CIS
- Alumni generate invaluable word-of-mouth marketing among their networks
- Alumni are great role models for current students and can offer practical support to students as they prepare to graduate
- Alumni are our ambassadors. They take their knowledge of CIS into their professional and social networks

CIS of Houston Alumni Program Structure

CIS of Houston's Alumni Program consists of four components:

Alumni Work Group

- Attend monthly meetings (in-person or virtual).
- Participate in bi-monthly check-ins with the Special Initiatives Manager.
- Assist with any alumni-related special initiatives such as a College/Career Readiness Toolkit.
- Receive support with personal and professional growth.
- External networking opportunities.
- Represent CIS at events.

Individual Alumni Support

- Designed for alumni who are unable to commit to attending monthly meetings but continue to receive support and one-on-one time.
- Participate in school events and community service.
- Speak to groups from CIS schools.
- Serve on panels and other CIS-related speaking engagements.
- Volunteer for CIS events at schools.

Alumni One-On-One Meetings

CIS of Houston holds bimonthly one-on-one meetings to create a space for alumni to catch up, discuss successes, challenges, and anything else that's on their mind. Most alumni check in weekly with the Special Initiatives Manager by phone call or text. When needed, CIS of Houston will meet with individuals. One-on-ones are held in the evenings during the work/school week and weekends to ensure high alumni participation. Each meeting lasts an average of 2.5 hours.

Service Projects

To promote investing into their community, CIS alumni participate in campus-based volunteer opportunities, drives, career fairs, and other special projects.

For their alumni work, CIS of Houston's goal is to create an in-person and virtual network to support students during their post-high school transition. Originally, there were two monthly social meetings happening — one geared toward the newer class of alumni and the other geared toward more mature alumni. During the pandemic, CIS of Houston formed a workgroup of alumni to better understand how to support the alumni network during the pandemic. The alumni work group was responsible for creating monthly meeting agendas and lead the strategy around this work.

In addition, they have the following practices to engage their alumni:

- One on One Relationship — Bimonthly meetings with alumni to check in on their goals.
- Alumni Work Group — Consisting of 11 alumni, with focus on creating and implementing a user-friendly College and Career Toolkit to pilot at a CIS High School in the Fall of 2021 and assisting in the CIS messaging.
- Volunteer Opportunities — Alumni are invited to participate in the following: Career Days, School Drives, Panels, Mentoring, and representing CIS at area-wide functions.
- Peer Networking Events — Topgolf, bowling, going out to eat.
- Alumni Annual Retreat — Alumni who are heavily involved in the working group are invited to travel.

In spring 2021, CIS of Houston appointed its first board member who was also an alumnus to their Board of Directors.

Tips from Cecilia Lee, Special Initiatives Manager for CIS of Houston:

- Alumni must have control of the work that is happening.
- Build the relationship.
- Alumni need to know that we are here for them because we believe they are capable to achieve. They can overcome anything. They just need to put in the work.
- The goal is to equip alumni with the tools and support for them to grow professionally and personally.
- We don't want them to forget their duty as a leader and the example of success they set for Black and Brown students.

CIS of Houston

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

600/year

Alumni:

30

High Schools:

30



Budget

\$20,000

Funders

- A line-item in budget: \$20,000
- Covers: Town Hall travel, Annual Alumni Retreat, Topgolf socials, Food for get togethers

Tools

- Alumni DEI Survey
- Slack: communications between alumni
- Zoom: monthly get togethers

“We know that there are even more challenges in adulthood, and we want them to understand the importance of having a community.”

Cecilia Lee
Special Initiatives Manager
for CIS of Houston

For more information: [CIS of Houston](#)



Back in 2006, CIS of South Central Texas began to see that their high school graduates had no plans after high school. With the hiring of designated staff to help them plan for post- high school, they raised the bar from high school graduation to beyond – to include military, college, technical school, and careers. CIS seniors in six different high schools, who are case-managed, have the opportunity to attend Project Success. This program aims to prep students for their goals after high school from October to May every two weeks during study halls, lunches, and times when students can be excused from class. Often times when the bar is raised beyond the high school graduation stage, students who are at risk of not graduating high school go beyond and achieve their goals. The program has two full-time staff members to meet the needs of students in high school and alumni.

After Project Success, there was a need for summer programming to prepare first-generation college students, military, or professionals. One student had a full ride to attend a university – but never made it to fall semester because they did not have a \$300 summer deposit. Recognizing this gap in services, CIS of South Central Texas began to maintain contact with high school graduates during summer months so that if there was a potential barrier, it could be overcome more effectively. In addition to programming to ensure students not only were accepted into post-secondary education but had the grit and resilience to finish, CIS of South Central Texas launched Life Boot Camp in 2012, where recent high school graduates could learn life skills and critical elements for adult success alongside paid alumni Boot camp leaders/camp counselors and alumni volunteers.

Alumni voiced their desire to form an association and with the support of CIS leadership, they created a code of expectations for membership in their Alumni Association. The code included requirements for volunteering as well as payment of alumni dues annually depending on ability.

Wilderness and adventure therapy are key techniques that are used to create a shared experience with alumni. Camping trips are a place for alumni to share their story, build trust, form lifelong bonds, and have a chance to work through trauma of all forms. After summer programming, all CIS graduating seniors who submit consent forms can request an alumni mentor. These mentors are trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid, leadership, mentoring, and are taught ways to engage and support newer alumni.

CIS of South Central Texas refers to the older alumni in their family as Elders. The Elders did not have time to plug into this work as they started families, careers, and graduated college, so there was a need for an Alumni Board to engage the Elders, create methods of tracking alumni data, and take communications to the next level in 2020. The structured Alumni Board meets once a month and consists of four committees with an alumni director heading each committee.

These programs were created by alumni for alumni and with people who emphasize relationships. By demonstrating to high school students that the affiliate and their peers believe in them, it motivates them to new heights, and ensures an inclusive and accepting environment.

CIS of South Central Texas Alumni Program Structure

CIS of South Central Texas' alumni program consists of:

Project Success:

- In-person Transition from Site Coordinator to Director of College and Alumni Initiatives / Alumni and Project Success Coordinator
- Building relationship and trust
- Career exploration, program exploration
- Applying to college, college field trips led by local alumni
- FSA ID creation, FAFSA completion, FAFSA parent completion
- College holds/ modules, first resume, personal statement, how to get letters of rec, scholarship search, orientation items, military, work force expectations
- Consent Forms to work with them after HS, data collection
- Boot Camp Application

Life Boot Camp:

- Outhiring of 5-6 Alumni to facilitate
- 2014 Boot Camp Curriculum
- Training facilitators begins a month before Boot Camp
- College expectations, resilience work, group experience, professional expectations
- 7 Decisions Camping Trip Curriculum: 7 Decisions is the philosophy of alumni. After this trip, there is a tremendous shift and group bonding who alum who attend.

Alumni Mentoring Program:

- Mentor Application
- Mentors are trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Alumni Mentor Handbook
- Mentor/ Mentee Camping Trip: recent HS graduates have the opportunity to be mentored. During this camping trip, mentors and mentees have activities and create a plan of communication
- Must complete monthly paperwork
- Must meet or talk to mentee at least one time a month, has monthly mentor engagements both in-person and virtual

Alumni Leadership Camping Trip (rotate every year/ new mentors must attend):

- Kindling the Spirit of the Leader Within (Hueco Tanks)
- The Unstoppable You (Palo Duro Canyon)

- Mindfulness: Becoming a Transformational Leader (Big Bend)
- The Greatest Among You (Fort Davis Mountains)

Alumni Board (12 – 15 members) meets monthly:

- Board Application
- Alumni Association Bylaws
- Communications:
 - Runs Instagram @cissctalumni
 - Arranges photography
 - Creates Newsletter Summer of 2021
 - Alumni Board Website
- Accounting:
 - Tracks volunteer hours via Google Forms
 - Tracks mentor data via Google Forms
- Membership: Plans virtual and in person events and fundraisers for new and old alumni
- Board Development: Onboarding, recruitment, HR, Sends Zoom link and meeting notes

Other Supports:

- Mental Health Support: One-on-one counseling
- Engagement Activity: Varies from month to month, Linked In Mixers, Jacket Drives, Motivational Quotes Campaign for middle and high school campuses, Virtual Scavenger Hunts,
- Big Annual Events: Family Reunion Camping Trip, Winter Get Together
- Giving Back at CIS Fundraising Events: An Evening Under the Stars, Dining with the Stars, Wurstfest
- Scholarships

Tips from Chris Douglas, Chief Executive Officer for CIS of South Central Texas:

- To ensure all CIS students understand that CIS is a family. At every grade level, students should understand the breadth of CIS employees who care about them at all schools served, in all affiliates, across the country.
- To encourage secondary education opportunities, students need to see themselves in college. It is important that you take them to university campuses, and it is even better when you have alumni leading the students through the field trip to answer their questions.
- Students need to be able to see the bond that your local alumni have with each other. Once the students see that interaction, they will be able to understand the connection alumni have to one another and this will encourage them to want to be a part of that family.

CIS of South Central Texas

Students Served

Graduating Seniors:

195–300/year

Alumni:

387

High Schools:

6



Partnerships

- Texas Outdoor Family

Funders

- Texas Parks and Wildlife COOP Foundation
- Caterpillar Foundation
- Private Donor Families
- In-Kind Donors

Tools

- [Research Brief](#)
- Texas State University
- St. Mary's University
- [2020 Impact Report](#)

Measures of Success

- Number of Students who attended Project Success 4x or more
- Percent of Students accepted to College, Trade schools, Military
- Number of Project Success prep services
- Number of HS grads who attend Life Boot Camp
- Number of Alumni Mentors
- Monthly Mentor Activity Paperwork via Google Forms
- Number of Volunteer Hours via Google Forms

“To ensure a continued relationship with alumni, it must be started in high school.”

Chris Douglas
Chief Executive Officer
for CIS of South Central Texas

For more information: [CIS of South Central Texas](#)





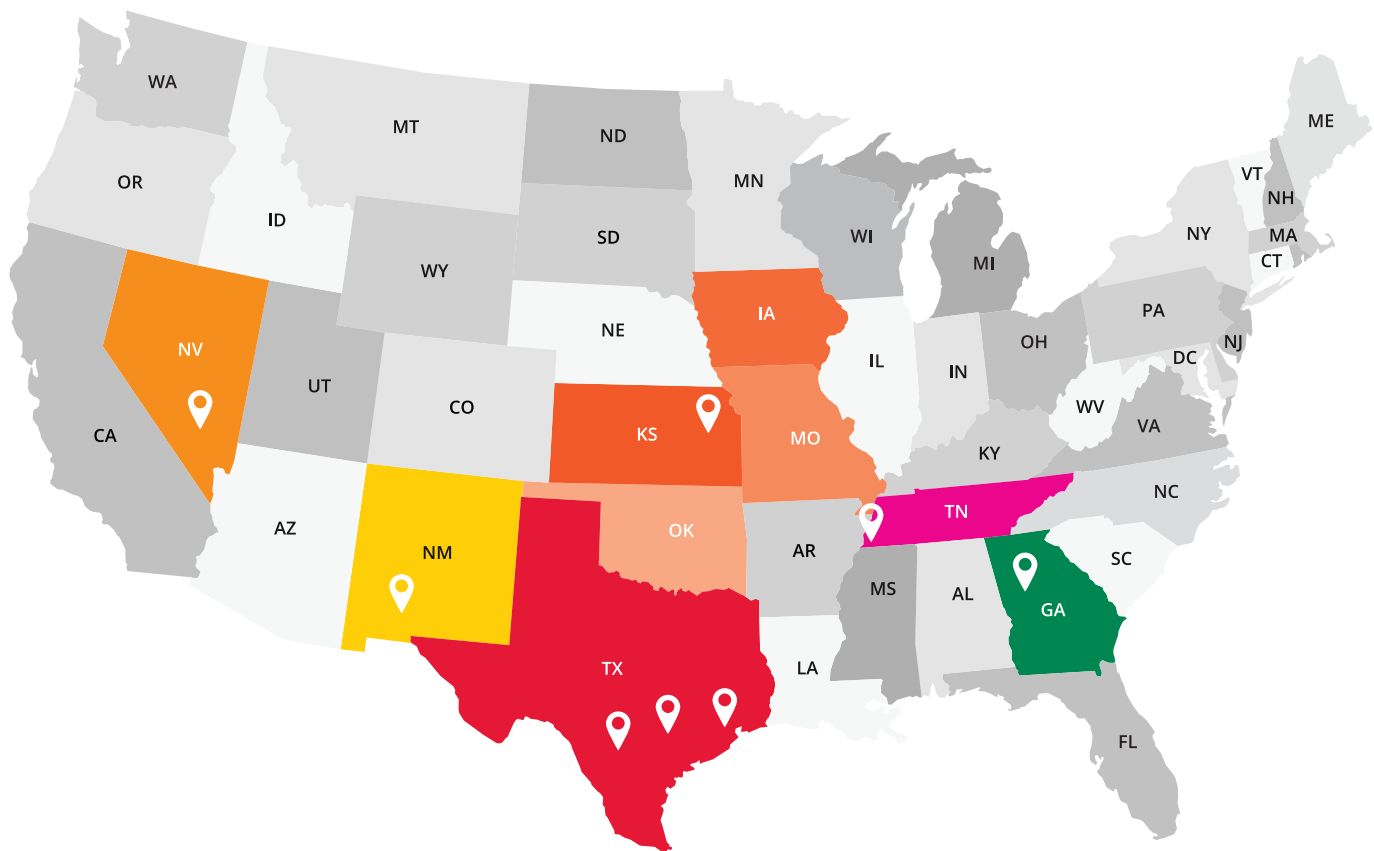
Connecting Across the Network



Affiliates with Alumni Programs

The following affiliates are trail blazers in 2021. It is important to note that some listed are in the planning stages of building out programs and brainstorming at the time of our interviews, while others are only a few years into actively engaging with alumni. Even so, we believe each affiliate has a unique lens and are responsive to their alumni's needs. We encourage you to reach out these affiliates as you consider engaging with alumni, whether informally or through programming.

In addition to the list below of affiliates with alumni programs, we encourage you to explore and join the [Alumni Engagement](#) community on Yammer. It gives you a places to ask questions, problem-solve, celebrate wins and share resources and lessons learned with other staff engaged in the work.



Georgia

- [CIS of Atlanta](#)

Mid-America: Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma

- [CIS of Mid-America](#) (based in Kansas)

Nevada

- [CIS of Southern Nevada](#)

New Mexico

- [CIS of New Mexico](#)

Tennessee

- [CIS of Memphis](#)

Texas

- [CIS of Central Texas](#)
- [CIS of Houston](#)
- [CIS of South Central Texas](#)

Local Affiliates and State Offices with Alumni Board Members

Below is a list of affiliates and state offices that have at least one alumni participating on their boards.

California

- [CIS of Los Angeles](#)

Georgia

- [CIS of Fitzgerald–Ben Hill County](#)

North Carolina

- [CIS of Southern Nevada](#)
- [CIS of Charlotte-Mecklenburg](#)
- [CIS of Wake County](#)
- [CIS of Cleveland County](#)
- [CIS of North Carolina](#)

Texas

- [CIS of Central Texas](#)
- [CIS of Houston](#)
- [CIS of San Antonio](#)
- [CIS of the Permian Basin](#)

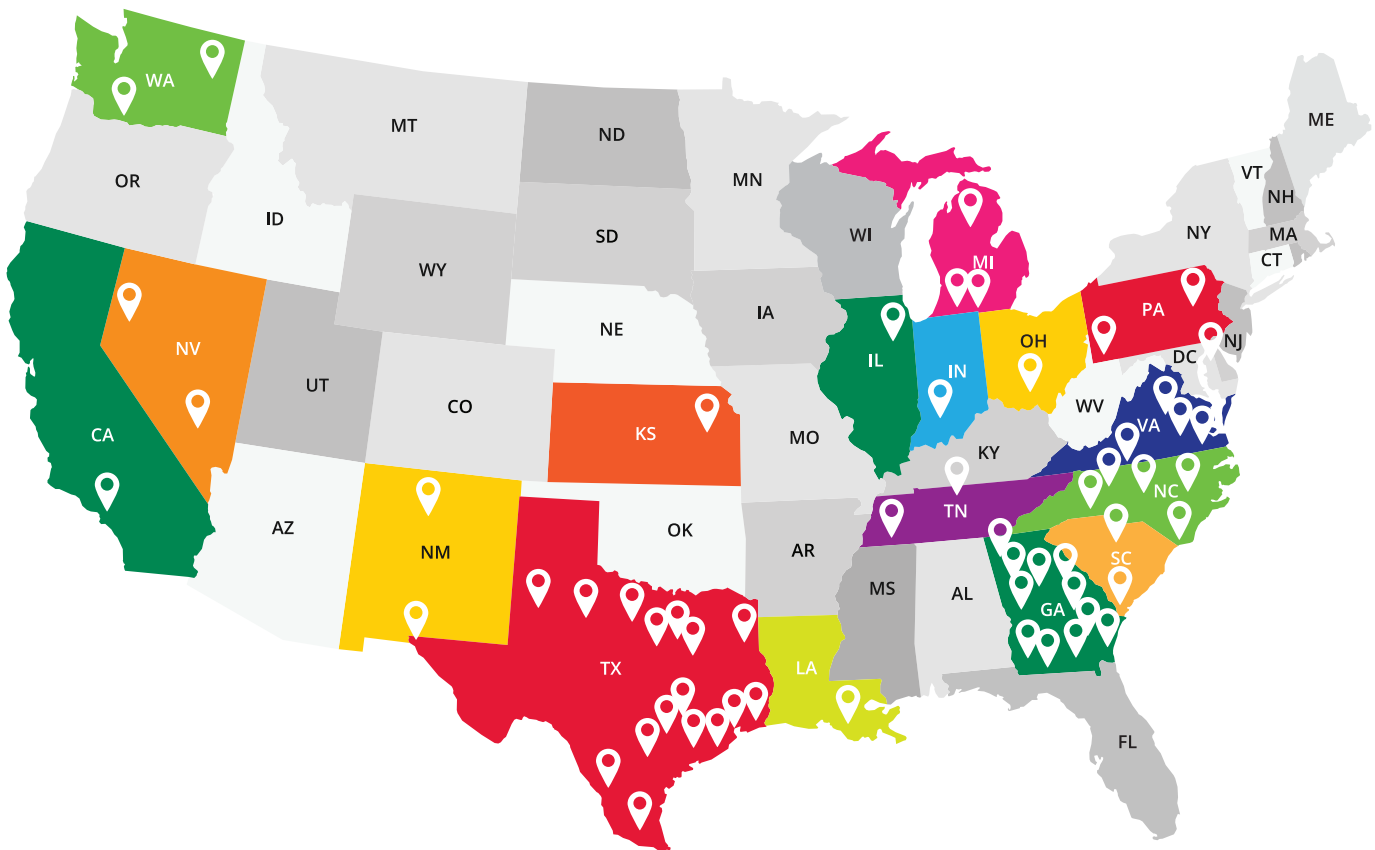
As you activate alumni on your board, please contact CIS National at alumni@cisnet.org so we can update your status and showcase your affiliate.



Network Survey for Developing a Baseline on Alumni Engagement

To develop the Alumni Activation & Resource Guide, we conducted a survey to inquire about alumni programming. An overview of the survey results appears below, and the overall information gathered has been used to inform this Guide and the pages that follow.

The following Affiliates completed the survey: 81 respondents, 72 of 123 affiliates (effective 2021)

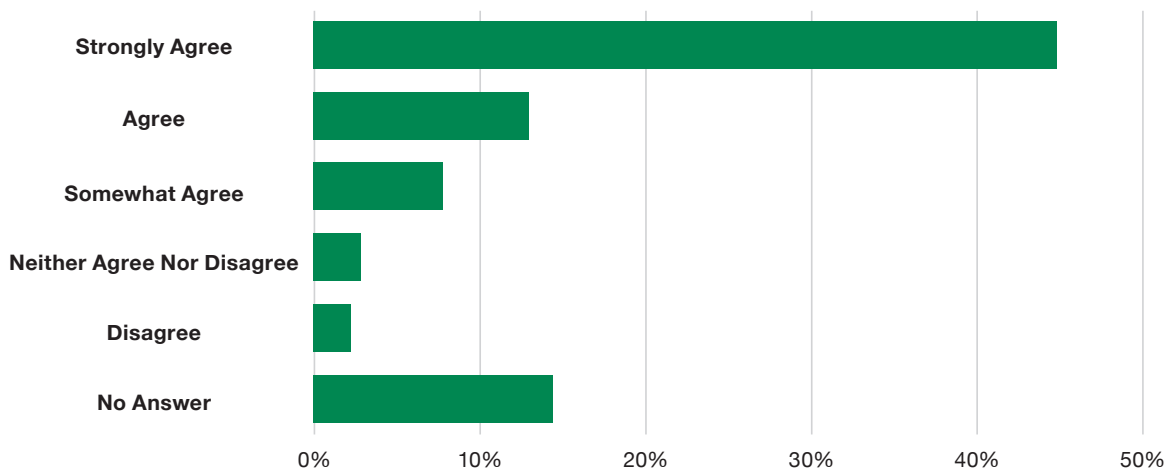


- Graduating Seniors Range: 2 – 950 Students
- Three affiliates who responded do not work in High Schools
- 51% Collect Data from Graduating Seniors
- Biggest Barrier for Programming: Dedicated Staff Time

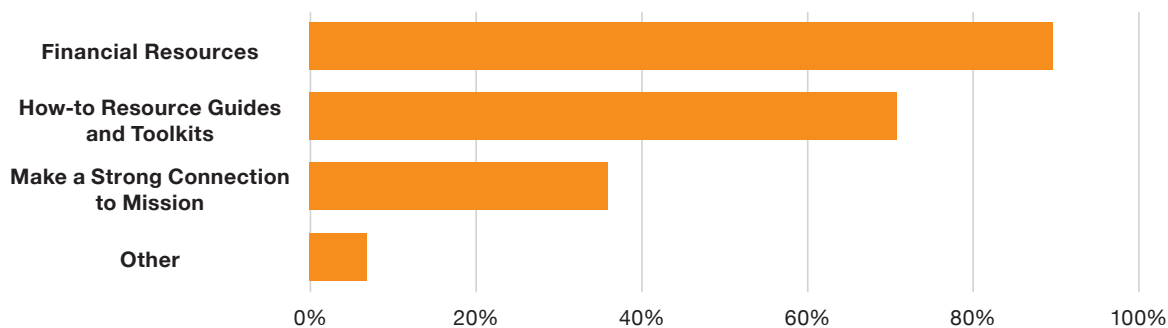
We also asked our affiliates in the survey to tell the CIS national office their needs to build out their own alumni programs. Here are their responses:

- A Road Map/ Model/ Central Resource/ Framework
- Training/ Coaching/ Hear from other Affiliates
- Personnel to take on Project
- Funding/ Incentives
- Brand Identification

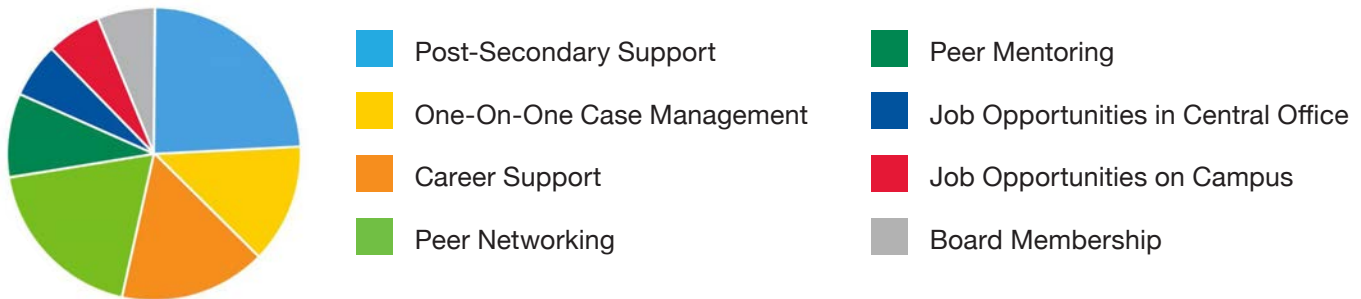
If our affiliate had the financial resources and staff capacity, we would consider engaging with alumni for the purpose of supporting and improving their postsecondary and career outcomes a strategic imperative.



What kind of support could CIS national provide to help affiliates build their own alumni engagement work?



Supports and Opportunities Provided to Alumni



More Research:

[BASELINE FOR ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT POWERPOINT \(2021\)](#)

[USC CONSULTING AND CIS OF LA: PLAN FOR ALL ASPECTS OF ALUMNI PROGRAMMING \(2021\)](#)

[ALUMNI CONNECT: HOW TO ENGAGE A CIS ALUMNI NETWORK EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BRIEF \(2014\)](#)

[INNOVATION BRIEF: ALUMNI NETWORK ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES \(2013\)](#)

[SUCCEED IN LIFE STUDY \(2020\)](#)

