

Annual Report 2014



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About Project Discovery

It is important to know who we are and what we do.

Section

1

Project Discovery is a community-based program that addresses the problem of unequal access to higher education by low-income and/or potential first generation college students. Program activities (primarily academic support, counseling, goal-oriented workshops and campus visits) help low-income junior and senior high students set goals for their lives, increase self-esteem, and become the first in their family to go to college. Approximately 2,750 participants are served each year.

High school participants in Project Discovery's College Option Orientation Program visit three to seven college campuses, and participate in workshops about life planning, study skills, admissions procedures, financial aid, and choosing a college. By participating in Community Services, students learn the importance of community. They attend cultural enrichment activities, receive SAT and college application fee waivers, and attend a graduation/recognition banquet.

Junior high students join "Discovery Groups," which serve as an early intervention catalyst for disadvantaged sixth to eighth graders who have been identified as having potential but needing special attention. These students become part of a peer support group and participate in activities that include campus visits, cultural events, career education, and experiential workshops on topics such as life planning, communication skills, and choosing high school courses.

A key to Project Discovery's success is the active involvement of individuals and institutions working together to provide enriching experiences for the students. Colleges furnish meals, lodging, and workshop leaders; local churches, businesses and community groups support the program through cash and in-kind donations; public school systems cooperate by referring students to the program and sharing resources such as transportation. Parental involvement is also a vital part of the program: parents attend special informational workshops, receive updates on their children's progress, and act as chaperones on out-of-town trips. This pooling of talents and contributions from a variety of sources enables young people who have been "turned off" by traditional education to get "turned on" to their potential for attending college.

Many local programs now work with elementary students, offering curricula designed to start the thought process early during the students' educational experience.

History

Project Discovery was launched as a pilot program in 1979 by Total Action for Progress (formerly Total Action Against Poverty), the Community Action Agency based in Roanoke, Virginia, in cooperation with Roanoke College and the Roanoke City Public Schools. Incorporated in 1985, Project Discovery has been funded since July, 1986 by the Virginia General Assembly through the Virginia Department of Education.

Structure

Project Discovery, Inc., is organized as a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit Statewide Community Action Agency, governed by a Board of Directors representing the public, private and low-income sectors. The Central Administration staff is headed by a Chief Executive Officer and is located in Salem, Virginia.

Individual Project Discovery Partner Agencies in the Commonwealth are run by local community action agencies, government agencies, and in the past, Boys and Girls Clubs. These programs are administered and monitored by Project Discovery, Inc.

Outcomes

Positive outcomes are measured by a student's continued educational pursuit, whether the student enrolls into traditional 2 and 4 year college institutions, trade or technical schools, enters the military or enters the work force.

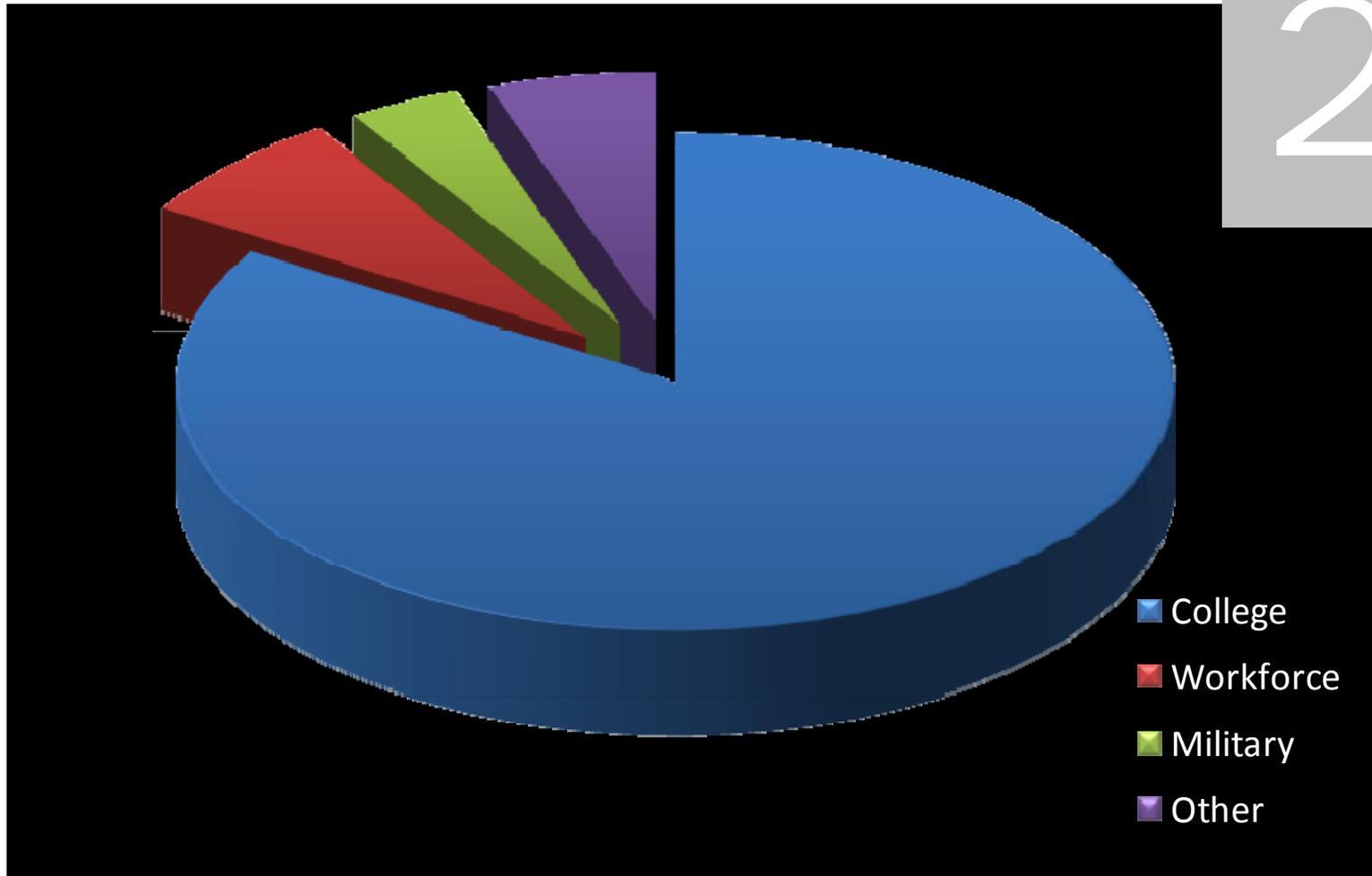
Project Discovery, offered in local schools and guided by local community leaders, has proven to be an effective motivating mechanism to encourage low income students to remain in school and to pursue higher education after graduation.

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Project Discovery allows today's students to achieve their highest potential to become productive citizens in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

2013 - 2014

Section

2



609 Graduates – 510 College Bound – 44 Workforce – 22 Military – 33 Other

Project Discovery Program Year 2013 - 2014

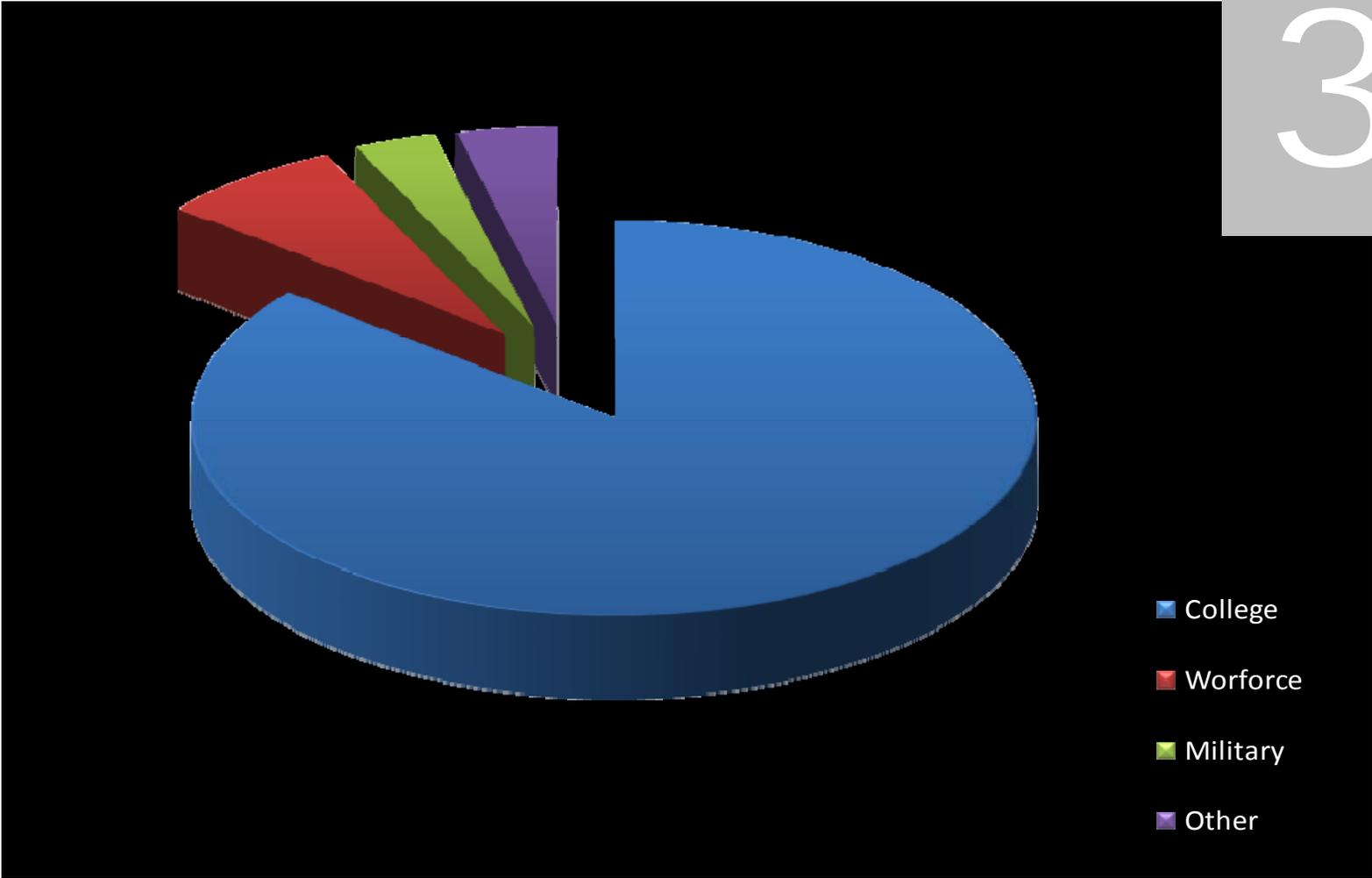
In 2013-2014 Project Discovery's students are:

- 64% female; 36% male
- 63% Black; 22% White; 8% Hispanic; 7% Other
- 92.17% are under income, first generation, or both
- 83.74% of graduating seniors in the Class of 2014 enrolled in Post Secondary Education at graduation.

1997 - 2014

Section

3



10011 Graduates – 8578 College Bound – 705 Workforce – 311 Military – 384 Undecided

Project Discovery

From 1997-2014 Project Discovery

- Served 40,545 students, 4th – 12th grade
- Had 10,011 participants graduate from high school
- Saw 85.69% (8,578) of graduates enter post secondary education
- Saw 3.11% (311) of graduates join our country's armed services
- Saw 7.04% (705) of graduates enter the workforce

- Overall positive outcomes for the last seventeen years . . . 96%

Educational Attainment

Return on Investment

- Associate degree = \$7,300 higher salary annually. On average, a person with an associate's degree earns \$7,300 more than a person with a high school diploma and \$16,800 more than a person without a high school diploma.

- Bachelor's degree = \$21,400 higher salary annually. On average, a person with a bachelor's degree earns \$21,400 more than a person with a high school diploma and \$30,900 more than a person without a high school diploma.

Section

4

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Top College Picks in 2014

Old Dominion University*
Southwest Virginia Community College*
Virginia Commonwealth University*
John Tyler Community College*
Piedmont Virginia Community College*
Radford University*
Virginia State University*
Norfolk State University*
Northern Virginia Community College*
Thomas Nelson Community College*
Danville Community College*
NOVA - Annandale*
George Mason University*
Eastern Shore Community College*
Virginia Western Community College*
Wytheville Community College*
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College*
Tidewater Community College*
Central Virginia Community College*
Longwood University*
Virginia Union University*
Ferrum College*
Germanna Community College*
James Madison University*
Shaw University*
Virginia Highlands Community College*
Blue Ridge Community College*
Emory and Henry College*
Mary Baldwin College*
Richard Bland College*
Liberty University*
Lord Fairfax Community College*
Lynchburg College*
Virginia Tech*
Virginia Wesleyan*

Section

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*Denotes Virginia Post Secondary Institution