



OFS' OPTIONS PROGRAM

Reengaging Madison's young adults in high school education

How is Options Unique?

The Options Program is the only program in Madison that proactively reengages young adults, ages 18 to 24, in their high school education. Options seeks out young people who fell through the cracks of the public education system and helps them see a way forward to a brighter future and a career.

Does Options Work?

In that last two years, Options has served a total of 157 young adults in Madison. 49 of those Options participants have earned their high school diploma or GED/HSED and 51 are still enrolled in credential programming. Options has had approximately a 70% success rate over the last two years.*

*excluding 10 participants who moved from the area

A High School Diploma is a Necessity in Today's Job Market

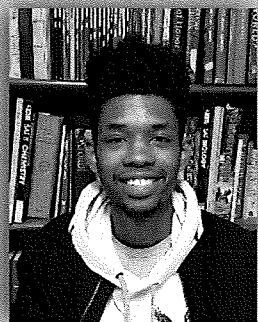
Job prospects for high school dropouts are grim. In 2016, **31.9% of recent high school dropouts* were unemployed** compared with 13.1% of recent high school graduates*¹.

Options Participants Succeed



Yasmine dropped out of high school to try to support her disabled mother and siblings. When Options contacted her she was homeless and unemployed. Now she has her high school diploma, a stable home, and works as a literacy tutor and teacher at Kennedy Heights Community Center. She plans to go to college for Special Education.

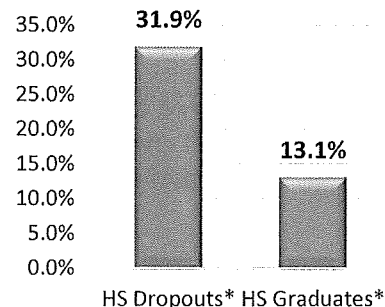
"I was homeless and a high school dropout. Then I saw a flyer for Options. I wouldn't be here today if that hadn't happened. It changed my whole life around. Everything worked out for the good."



Alwayne was hanging out on his mom's couch with no plan for his future. Traditional high school hadn't worked for him and he didn't see a way forward. Over several months, Options' persistence and genuine interest in Alwayne and his future finally helped reengage him in his education. Today Alwayne is a high school graduate and a student in the Biotechnology Bridge Program at Madison College.

"I probably would have been selling drugs or something [if Options hadn't called]. Once [Options] contacted me, I started to understand what I needed to do. [Options] really made an effort to reel me in and it worked."

2016 Unemployment



This is a jobs issue. Obtaining a high school diploma is an essential first step to finding a living-wage job.

Plus, it affects our entire community. High school dropouts:

- are **six times more likely to be incarcerated**
- are **almost twice as likely to live in poverty**
- on average, **cost tax payers \$292,000 over a lifetime**²

*16-24, not enrolled in school

¹Statista Inc.

²PBS Frontline

Letter from a current Options parent and participant

11/16/17

The Options program has been a success for my daughter Abigail. Abby was not very engaged in high school, frequently skipping school and had no goals for the future. She was a very defiant teen making poor choices that caused her to fall far behind her class in credits necessary to graduate. Once she realized how far behind she was she became anxious and unable to attend school, feeling there was no way she could ever catch up and be successful. Due to her behavior she did not graduate on time with her class. She expressed feelings of failure and did not know where to even start to pick up the pieces.

Abby met with Shannon from the Options program and Shannon was able to show her what she needed to do, broke it down in to steps and supported her in meeting with the right people to start her journey toward her HSED. It was helpful because it was not coming from a parent or someone from the school where she already had a lot of negative experiences, it was a fresh new start, focused only on her and exactly what she needed to do.

Abby got the one on one help and encouragement that she needed to realize a high school diploma was not out of her reach. She successfully registered for her first three tests and has passed them all. Two more to go! She is determined now and motivated. Shannon pointed her in the right direction and gave her enough of a push and she has succeeded in the follow through. She is proud to tell Shannon when she passes a test and has a plan for completing her HS diploma before 2018.

Abby would have been a teen who "fell through the cracks" She lacked the confidence to move forward and felt overwhelmed about what to do next. Options cleared that up for her, made it seem possible and gave her the confidence she needed to move forward and succeed.

Sincerely,

Nancy and Abby Anderson