

About MDRC

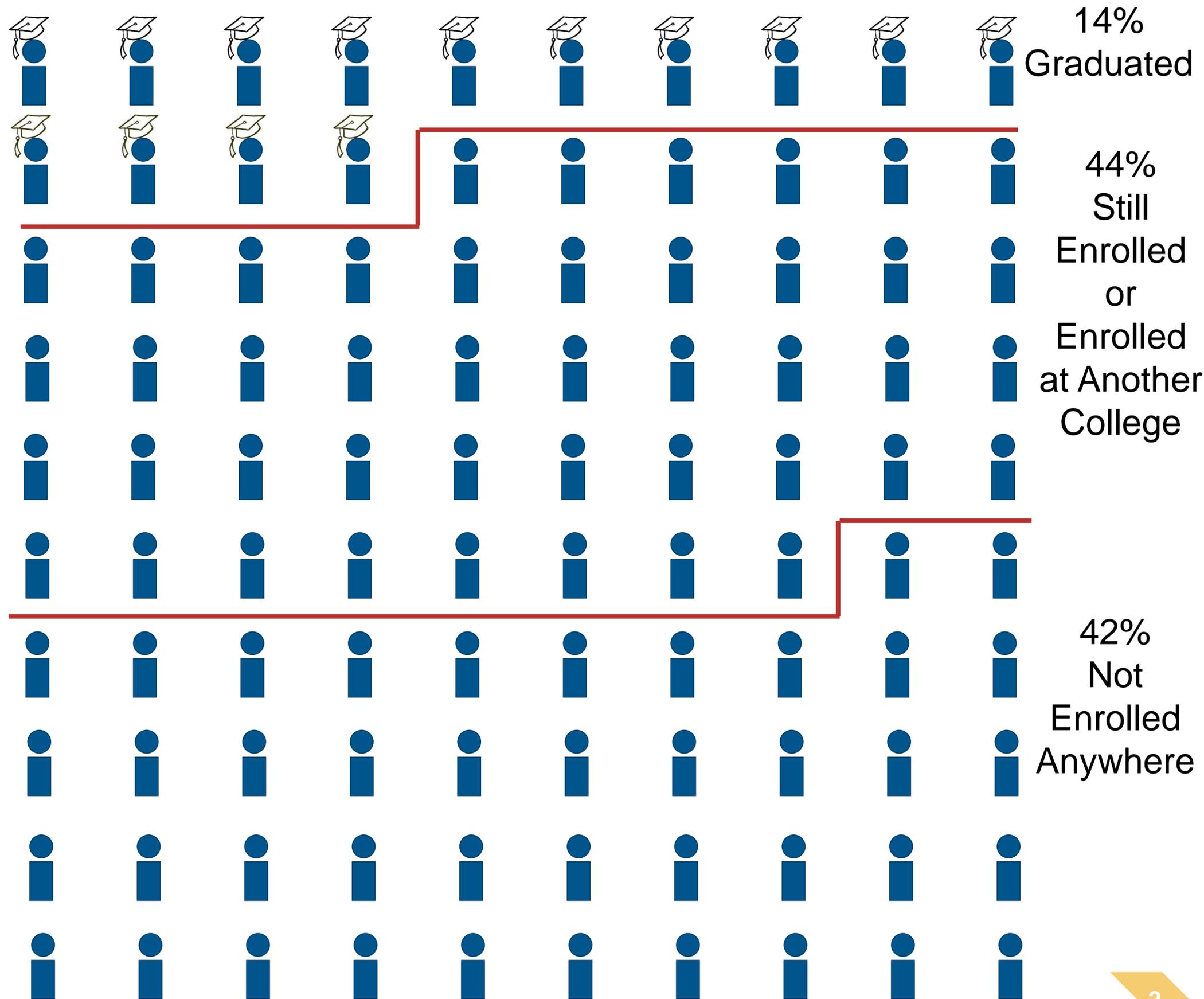
Dedicated to **finding solutions** to some of the nation's most challenging problems.

- **Design** promising new interventions.
- **Evaluate programs** and policies across the country using the highest research standards.
- **Provide technical assistance** to help schools, programs, and organizations improve their work.



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Three Years After Matriculating at Public, Two-Year Institutions



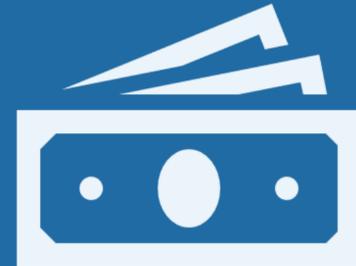
Source:
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016137.pdf>

What's causing the problem?

Academic
Challenges



Financial
Barriers



Work-Life-School
Balance



Lack of College
Know-How



Institutional
Barriers



College Promise Programs

Scholarships can increase affordability and access, but may not be enough to improve graduation rates.

Potential for success increases with structured student supports once students get to college.

Goal: Access AND Success

MDRC's College Promise Success Initiative

Provides technical assistance to Promise and free college programs interested in promoting success in college by implementing evidence-based student support practices.

- ❧ Detroit Promise
- ❧ Flint Promise
- ❧ Los Angeles College Promise
- ❧ Portland Community College
- ❧ Rhode Island Promise at Community College of RI
- ❧ Richmond (CA) Promise



Figure 1. Detroit Promise Path

SCHOLARSHIP



Covers tuition and fees after financial aid for students enrolled full time and assists them with summer tuition

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OTHER SERVICES AND BENEFITS



Offers campus coaching and requires each student to meet with a coach twice a month



Offers \$50 each month for expenses not covered by financial aid, such as bus passes or books, to students who meet with coaches



Engages students in the summer by encouraging enrollment or connecting them to local initiatives such as summer job programs



Uses a management information system to track student participation and automate appointments and financial incentives for better monitoring

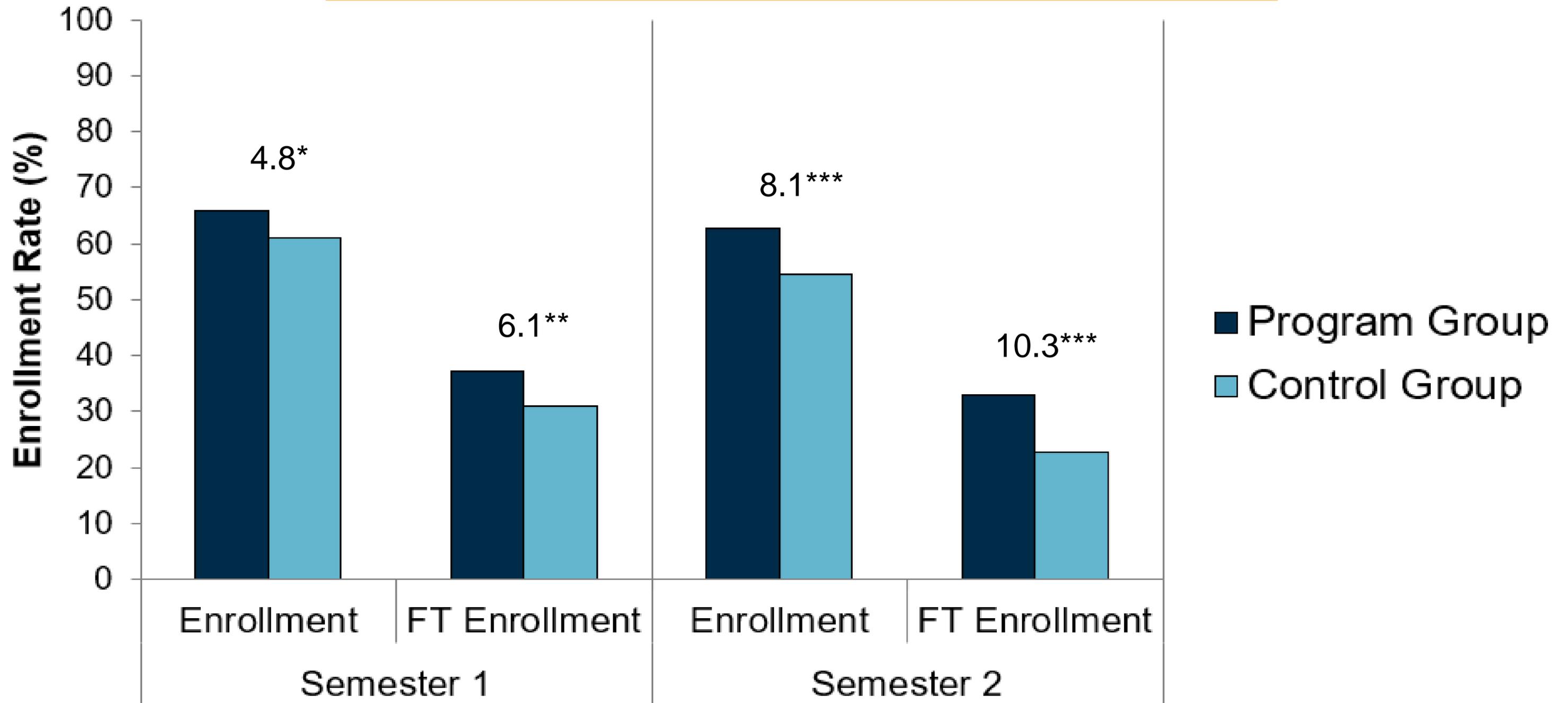
The Detroit Promise Path Study

- ❧ Study population: entering students in fall 2016 & 2017
 - ❧ Study includes only community college students
 - ❧ Control group students still receive the scholarship
- ❧ Total study sample: **1,268** students
- ❧ Random assignment allows us to distribute spots fairly and to assess the impact of the program

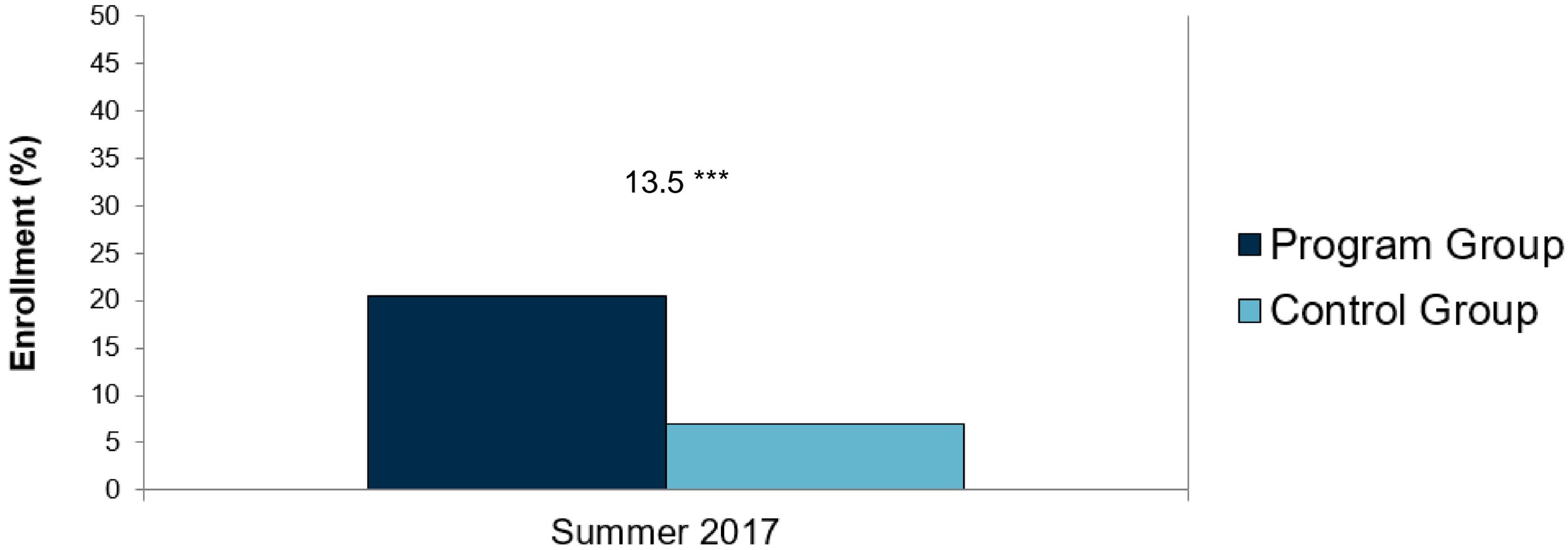
Student Characteristics

- ∞ 80 percent do not live with a parent who earned a bachelor's degree
- ∞ 80 percent identify as African-American and 12 percent identify as Latino
- ∞ 59 percent are women
- ∞ Average age is 18
- ∞ *This is a high-poverty population*

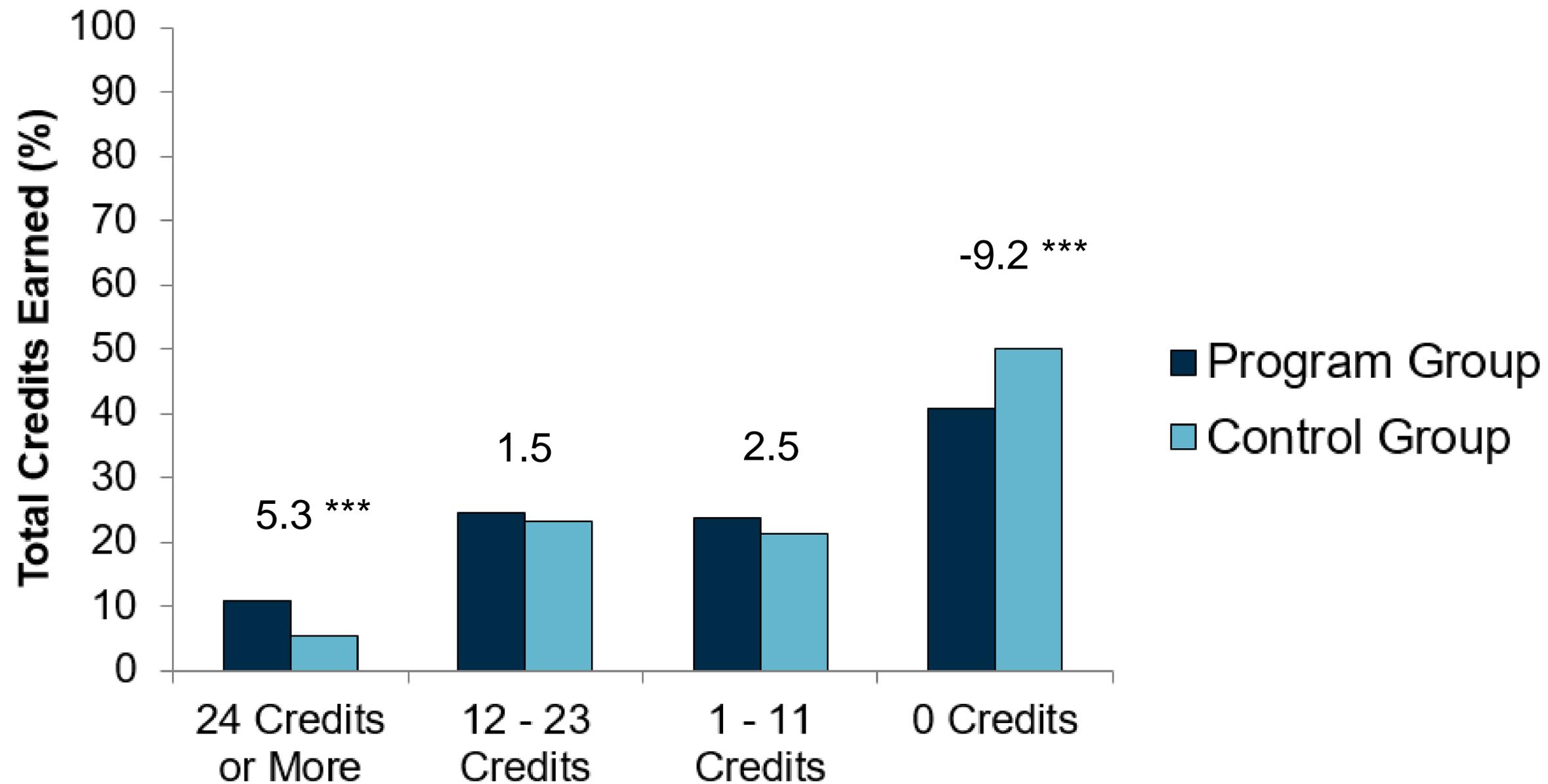
DPP Impacts Enrollment Rates



DPP Nearly Triples Summer Enrollment



DPP Students Twice as Likely to Complete a Full-Time Course Load in the First Year



Students Value DPP

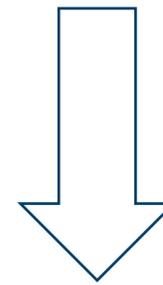
- ∞ The vast majority of program group members report that participating in the program has been valuable or very valuable
- ∞ In the student focus groups, program participants reported that the coaching was the most valuable part of the program to them, though they also appreciated the monthly financial support
- ∞ As one student said, “[coach] keeps you on track and reminds you that you’re trying to do something positive with your life.”

Students Better Understand College Processes

- Program group members were **much more likely** than control group members to report having a good understanding of college processes, including:
 - financial aid,
 - academic requirements, and
 - course selection.

About half

of control group respondents indicated high level of understanding of college processes



About three quarters

of program group respondents indicated high level of understanding of college processes

Students' Financial Challenges Remain

- Program participants continue to struggle financially:
 - Students need to work to support themselves and their families
 - Multiple students indicated food & housing insecurity while in program
 - Financial incentives were used primarily for food, transportation, books & supplies

#1

*Students report **nonacademic reasons** as their number one reason for dropping out of school*

What do we know?

- ❧ Program design matters
 - ❧ FT/PT enrollment
 - ❧ 2-year/4-year enrollment
 - ❧ Support vs. windfall
- ❧ Simplicity benefits students and administration
 - ❧ Eligibility criteria
 - ❧ Clear messaging
- ❧ Data helps identify holes and improve programming
 - ❧ Are students being retained?
 - ❧ Are programs equitable for students of color and other subgroups?

What do we not know?

- ❧ Long-term impacts of Promise
 - ❧ Are beneficiaries making family-supporting wages?
 - ❧ Are beneficiaries staying in the same city, state, or region?
- ❧ How to design programs for subpopulations
 - ❧ Are programs meeting the needs of low-income, first-generation, and/or students of color?
 - ❧ How should programs be altered to meet the need of nontraditional students, adult students, part-time students?