

# NUDGES, NORMS, AND NEW SOLUTIONS →

Evidence-based strategies to get  
students to & through college

For Immediate Release

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## Behavioral Science Can Help Students Get To and Through College With Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions Guide and Hotline

*Student success guide and hotline launch in partnership with Michelle Obama's Reach Higher college initiative.*

NEW YORK, May 2, 2018 — Behavioral science meets college-bound student success in *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* (<http://nudge4.ideas42.org>) - the all-new, hands-on guide and hotline for educators helping students enter and successfully complete college. The open-source guide and free hotline provide solutions to the hidden barriers preventing students from succeeding beyond high school.

Funded by the Heckscher Foundation for Children, *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* is a collaboration between the Nudge<sup>4</sup> Solutions Lab at the University of Virginia and ideas42, a nonprofit that applies behavioral science to today's toughest social problems.

*Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* addresses three challenge areas—access to college, college life and academics, and student finances— and supports educators with evidence-based behavioral innovations as well as guidance on associated costs and staffing requirements to implement these strategies.

The accompanying free Nudge Hotline provides another layer of support at no cost, allowing practitioners to engage directly with behavioral design experts on how to customize the guide's innovative tactics for their own student community. Educators can contact the hotline through multiple channels:

Web: <http://nudge4.ideas42.org/>

Phone and text message: 434-233-0165

Email: <mailto:hotline@nudge4.org>

"We wanted to develop a resource that provides educators with concrete, actionable direction on how to effectively implement behavioral approaches to improve students' postsecondary outcomes," said Ben Castleman, Founder and Director of Nudge<sup>4</sup>. "The result is *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions*, both an easy-to-access written guide on how to apply these strategies and a free hotline that

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educators across the country can contact for behavioral design support to implement nudge strategies with their students and in their communities.”

On the surface, behavioral innovations can seem simple and easy to implement—a reminder about a financial aid deadline, a prompt for students to plan which courses to take in the coming semester, or student testimonials about their college experiences. But subtle shifts in the tone, timing, and framing of these messages can make the difference between an approach that helps students achieve their college dreams and one that is ineffective or even backfires.

“The obstacles facing counselors, educators, and college administrators today are numerous and complex,” said Ethan Fletcher, Managing Director of ideas42. “Our *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* resources help break down that complexity by adding a few proven innovations from the behavioral sciences to their toolkits, empowering them to make a significant impact on helping students get to college and thrive there.”

“The launch of *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* is an exciting example of our venture philanthropy approach to funding programs and innovations that address key inflection points in the lives of underserved youth,” said Peter Sloane, chairman and CEO of the Heckscher Foundation for Children.

*Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* has been in the works since 2016. At that time, after working on 16 studies in postsecondary education, ideas42 released a report, *A Practitioners Guide to Important Proven Behavioral Interventions in Post-Secondary Education*, which uncovered numerous subtle and often invisible barriers that hinder students’ progress at each step of their journey to a degree. In parallel, the Nudge<sup>4</sup> Solutions Lab at the University of Virginia conducted numerous studies demonstrating the impact behavioral solutions can have on improving college access and success when combined with technology.

In addition to uncovering surprising insights about some of the hidden barriers preventing students from graduating, this collective research demonstrated the potential for behavioral science to create a better higher education journey for students.

The team behind *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* is proud to partner with former First Lady Michelle Obama’s Reach Higher Initiative, to launch the guide and hotline nationwide today, in conjunction with College Signing Day. This event — hosted around the nation by schools, organizations, community leaders, and celebrities — is a chance to rally around students who have committed to higher education and inspire others to follow in their footsteps. The guide and Nudge Hotline help advance the Reach Higher mission to improve postsecondary access and completion for economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students in our country.

Find out more about *Nudges, Norms, and New Solutions* by visiting: <http://nudge4.ideas42.org>

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### **About Nudge<sup>4</sup>**

The Nudge<sup>4</sup> Solutions Lab at the University of Virginia partners with public agencies and organizations to design and test scalable strategies to drive educational and economic opportunity for all Americans. Nudge<sup>4</sup> projects harness a unique combination of behavioral economics, data science, and interactive technologies to identify people most in need of support and provide these individuals with highly tailored pathways to educational and workforce opportunities that position them for economic success. Learn more at: [www.nudge4.org](http://www.nudge4.org)

### **About ideas42**

ideas42 has a clear mission: to use our unique experience as a nonprofit at the forefront of behavioral science to change millions of lives. We create innovative solutions to tough problems in economic mobility, health, education, safety and justice, consumer finance, energy efficiency and international development. Our approach is based on a deep understanding of human behavior and why people make the decisions they do. Working closely with our partners from government, foundations, NGOs and companies, we have more than 80 active projects in the United States and around the world. Learn more at: [www.ideas42.org](http://www.ideas42.org)

### **About Heckscher Foundation for Children**

For nearly 100 years, the Heckscher Foundation for Children has worked to level the playing field for underserved youth, principally in New York. We support innovative, results-driven programs and partnerships, and focus our giving on education, including college access and persistence, workforce training and jobs access, and arts education that improves achievement in the classroom. Our venture philanthropy approach uses three principal funding strategies—catalytic giving, strategic partnerships, and targeted problem-solving—that look for inflection points where our funding has the potential to change the course of a young person’s life at a key juncture. Learn more at <http://www.heckscherfoundation.org/>

### **About Reach Higher**

Reach Higher, an initiative started by Mrs. Michelle Obama, is centered around providing encouragement and activating educators, counselors, and other adults to help young people see college as an option, whether at a traditional 4-year college, a 2-year community college or through an industry- recognized training program. Reach Higher focuses on four components: college affordability, exposing students to college, academic and summer planning and supporting school counselors. Learn more at: [www.bettermakeroom.org/reach-higher/](http://www.bettermakeroom.org/reach-higher/)

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