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***“When You Graduate, They Graduate”***

**Talking Points**

**Topline Message**

Each year, **one** in **six** young adults **drop out of high school**. That’s more than **1.2 million people**.[[1]](#footnote-1) And without a high school diploma, these individuals are more likely to experience higher rates of **unemployment** and **lower wages** in life.[[2]](#footnote-2) For the **children** of adults with lower literacy skills, outcomes are also less promising.[[3]](#footnote-3)

As part of their 15-year long ***Finish Your Diploma*** campaign, the **Ad Council** and **Dollar General Literacy Foundation** (DGLF) are introducing new public service ads (PSAs) to motivate and empower more **adults without a high school diploma** to pursue their **high school equivalency**. **Not just for themselves**, but for their loved ones.

Featuring the stories of real parents, caregivers, and their children, the new “***When You Graduate, They Graduate*”** creative aims to inspire adults to see that achieving a high school diploma can have a **positive ripple effect**, by opening the door to more opportunities for both the adult who graduates AND their loved ones.

Get started today—find **free and supportive education classes** near you at **FinishYourDiploma.org**

**Top Points to Hit During EVERY Interview:**

* **SPONSORS:** That’s why the **Ad Council** and **Dollar General Literacy Foundation** are partnering on a national *Finish Your Diploma* campaign with the key message: “***When You Graduate, They Graduate***”.
* **PSAs:** Ad Council research shows that adult learners want to inspire and make their kids proud, and our PSAs are built around these sentiments. Our new PSAs feature **real families**. The adults in the PSAs include parents, grandparents, caregivers, and role models who are joined by their loved ones to celebrate the hard work and incredible achievement of earning a high school equivalency. This strategy helps to show **the positive ripple effect** that parental literacy and achievement-oriented behaviors can have in the lives of their children, with parental literacy being one of the strongest indicators of how a child will do in life.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* **TARGET AUDIENCE:** Our campaign is aimed at young adults ages 25-45 without their high school diploma.
* **CALL TO ACTION:** When you get your GED, it increases the chances that your loved ones will also succeed through life. Take the first step towards completing your high school diploma—do it for yourself and your family.Go to [**FinishYourDiploma.org**](https://finishyourdiploma.org/), enter your zip code, and you’ll find free adult education classes near you.
* **HOW THE CAMPAIGN HELPS:** The zip code search tool is a simple first step offered by the *Finish Your Diploma* campaign. From there, adult learners are connected to FREE classes with supportive teachers, flexible schedules, resources for people who are still learning English, and other adult learners just like you.
* **EXTENDED MESSAGING OPTIONS (if time permits):**
  1. **OPPORTUNITIES and EARNINGS:** We know that opportunities can be limited for adults without a high school diploma. Finishing your high school diploma can open the door to new job opportunities and higher earnings. According to the National Center for Education Statistics[[5]](#footnote-5), “For 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year-round in 2019, **higher educational attainment** was associated with **higher median earnings**.”
     1. For example, within 2019, the median earnings of those with a master’s or higher degree were $70,000, some 26 percent higher than the earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree ($55,700).
     2. In the same year, the median earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree were 59 percent higher than the earnings of those **who completed high school\* ($35,000), and the median earnings of those who completed high school were 19 percent higher than the earnings of those who completed less than high school ($29,300).[[6]](#footnote-6)**
     3. This pattern of higher earnings associated with higher levels of educational attainment also held for both males and females, as well as for those who were White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian.”

*\* Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.*

**Broader Messages about *Why* this Issue is Important, *What* Our Message and Strategy Is, and *How* We Intend to Reach Audiences**

* **[why]** *Here’s the issue:* Each year, one in six young adults drop out of high school. That’s more than 1.2 million people.[[7]](#footnote-7) And without a high school diploma, these individuals are more likely to experience higher rates of unemployment and lower wages in life.[[8]](#footnote-8) For the children of adults with lower literacy skills, outcomes are also less promising.[[9]](#footnote-9) Nearly 30% of adults with household incomes at or below the federal poverty line do not have a high school credential.[[10]](#footnote-10)
  + Opportunities can be limited for adults without a high school diploma. To support themselves and their families, many people work multiple jobs with lower pay and less stability. In fact, those without a high school degree represent nearly 3 in 10 adults with household incomes below the federal poverty line.[[11]](#footnote-11)
  + But finishing your high school diploma, can you improve your outcomes in more ways than one. Finishing your diploma enables you to…
    - Help your family and your kids.
    - Open the door to new opportunities.
    - Earn more money.
  + Through this campaign, **the Ad Council** and **Dollar General Literacy Foundation** (DGLF) we want to motivate and empower **adults without a high school diploma** to pursue **their high school equivalency**, not only for themselves, but for their families as well.
  + This strategy helps to show **the positive ripple effect** that parental literacy and achievement-oriented behaviors can have in the lives of their children, with parental literacy being one of the strongest indicators of how a child will do in life.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* **[who]** Adults 25-45 without a high school diploma.
* **[what]** As an extension of the existing *Finish Your Diploma* campaign, the Ad Council and Dollar General Literacy Foundation (DGLF) ***“When You Graduate, They Graduate” PSAs*** motivate and empower more adults without a high school diploma to pursue their high school equivalency. Not just for themselves, but for their loved ones. Featuring the stories of real parents/caregivers and their children, the new “When You Graduate, They Graduate” creative aims to inspire adults to see that achieving a high school diploma can open the door to more opportunities and for both the adult who graduates AND their children.
* **[how]** The PSAs will run nationwide in English and Spanish across all platforms, in time and space donated by media. The creative and media strategy is designed to reach people without a high school diploma.
* **[CTA]** Go to [**FinishYourDiploma.org**](https://finishyourdiploma.org/), enter your zip code, and free adult education classes near you.

**Additional Campaign Background & “Tough Questions”**

* **[WHAT IS THE CREATIVE STRATEGY?]** The ***When You Graduate, They Graduate*** PSA campaign, a partnership between DGLF and the Ad Council, and developed pro bono by Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH) in New York.
  + The PSAs feature real families and stories. The adults in the PSAs include parents, grandparents, caregivers, and role models who have received their high school equivalency. This strategy helps to show **“the ripple effect”** that parental literacy and achievement can have in the lives of their children, with parental literacy being one of the strongest indicators of how a child will do in life.[[13]](#footnote-13)
* **[WHY THESE AUDIENCES?]** *The High School Equivalency* campaign was developed to reach adults 25-45 who do not have a high school diploma.
  + **We’re heading in the right direction, but disparities still exist:** According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (the Forum), “In 2019, about 94% of young adults ages 18–24 had completed high school with a diploma or an alternative credential, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. The high school completion rate has increased since 2000, when it was 86%.”[[14]](#footnote-14)
  + **Disparities between Black and White Americans:** According to the Forum, “During this period, the completion rate for Black, non-Hispanic young adults was lower than that for their White, non-Hispanic peers in every year except the past three years (2017 to 2019), when the rates were not measurably different between these two groups.”[[15]](#footnote-15)
  + **Disparities by Hispanic Origin:** According to the Forum, “The completion rate for Hispanic young adults increased 27 percentage points between 2000 and 2019, from 64% to 92%, although it was consistently lower than the rates for their White, non-Hispanic and Black, non-Hispanic peers during this period.”[[16]](#footnote-16)
* **[WHY PARTNER TOGETHER?]** The Ad Council and DGLF have a rich history of working together, bringing together DGLF’s expertise in the areas of literacy and the Ad Council’s ability to leverage the resources of the advertising and media industry to drive behavior change on a national scale.  
  + The Ad Council and DGLF’s *Finish Your Diploma* campaign has increased awareness of the need to finish your diploma since 2010. Since then, FinishYourDiploma.org has connected more than 2 million people with free adult education classes to help them earn their high school equivalency, so they can connect to a better tomorrow.

1. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.literacyforallfund.org/facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. National Council for Adult Learning (NCAL). Retrieved from: <https://www.literacyforallfund.org/facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Retrieved from: <https://www.literacyforallfund.org/facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2853053/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cba> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cba> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.literacyforallfund.org/facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. National Council for Adult Learning (NCAL). Retrieved from: <https://www.literacyforallfund.org/facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Retrieved from: <https://www.literacyforallfund.org/facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Aud, Susan, Angelina KewalRamani, and Lauren Frohlich. "America’s Youth: Transitions to Adulthood." National Center for Educational Statistics. Accessed March 14, 2001, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012026.pdf>. Retrieved from: <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-education-and-poverty-america#fn6> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://nclej.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2014PovertyStats.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2853053/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2853053/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/edu4.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/edu4.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/edu4.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)