

## Graduate Memphis Opens Monday

By Ken Hall, Special to My Life

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Leadership Memphis and the Memphis Public Library have announced the opening of Graduate Memphis, a college resource center for adults seeking advice on how to return to college. Graduate Memphis has been funded by a \$1.7 million grant from Plough Foundation which funded the creation, staffing, and operations of the center, designed to increase post-secondary attainment among adults.

The Center is on the ground floor behind the periodical display area. Led by Center Coordinator Lisa Mann, advisers will be available to meet individually with people who began college but did not obtain a degree. In addition to three Graduate Memphis staff advisers, the Center will benefit from college advisers loaned to the center by local colleges and universities.

"From the very beginning," Mann said, "we will have highly experienced college advisers who know the territory and will be able to make a big difference in the success of our adult learners."

The Center will be open Monday through Thursday from 3-7 p.m., and Friday through Sunday from 1-4 p.m. Services are provided free to prospective students.

There are four major components:

Counselors to meet individually with prospective returning students at the library.

Telephone counselors will be available who can help adults explore college credit for work and career experience.

Workshops on topics relevant for adults returning to school will be offered on the first Tuesday evening of each month at the Benjamin Hooks Library beginning in August. The exact schedule of topics and dates will be announced by mid-July.

[graduatememphis.org](http://graduatememphis.org) provides links to resources focused on the needs of adults returning to college.

The mission of the two-year-old Memphis Talent Dividend: College Attainment Initiative is to increase the number of college graduates in the Memphis metropolitan area. The specific goal of the initiative is to increase college attainment in the Memphis area by one percentage point over five years. To do so would generate about 8,000 additional college graduates which in turn would produce a \$1 billion

dollar annual economic impact on the area.

An estimated 200,000 adults in the Memphis area, age 25 and older, have started but never completed a college degree.

"Without guidance counselors, information on scholarships, assistance with forms and deadlines, this population — seemingly the low hanging fruit for raising the attainment rate — is not likely to return and finish college," said Fred Turverey, director of the Memphis Talent Dividend and Graduate Memphis.

Graduate Memphis has been funded by a three-year grant from Plough Foundation. "We believe the impact of increased college attainment is good for every sector of our city. It means that our citizens can have access to better jobs and careers. It also means a stronger workforce that can help attract more business and industry to our community, as well as grow our existing businesses," said Scott McCormick, Plough Foundation Executive Director.

"This is a huge win for Memphis. It is one of only three centers similar to it in the U.S. and is the result of leaders working together to shape a vision and being determined to see it come to reality," said David Williams, Leadership Memphis President & CEO. "What was just a dream will now be a dream come true, thanks to Plough Foundation."



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