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The block you live on could affect how long it will take you to finish college



By Julie Zeglen

Where you live might matter more than you thought when it comes to educational success.

A University of Pennsylvania study focused on the West Philadelphia-based [ACHIEVEability](http://www.achieveability.org/index.php) (<http://www.achieveability.org/index.php>) program recently got some attention from **The Atlantic**. ACHIEVEability encourages participants to work at least 30 hours per week and be enrolled in postsecondary education in order to receive subsidized housing.

In the study, titled “The Effect of Microneighborhood Conditions on Adult Educational Attainment in a Subsidized Housing Intervention (<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10511482.2015.1107118?journalCode=rhpd20>),” researchers found that 84 ACHIEVEability participants’ “microneighborhood environments” — aka their blocks — affected how long it took them to complete postsecondary education credits. The poorer, more violent and less educated participants’ blocks were, the longer it took them to earn college credits.

“Our results suggest that the micro environments immediately surrounding residents of subsidized housing matter, even if they are situated within broader contexts of spatial and personal disadvantage,” researchers write in the paper’s abstract (which is only available for paid reading).

“For example,” **Alexia Fernández Campbell** follows in The Atlantic story, “those who lived in city-block clusters where 15 percent of residents lived in poverty earned an average of 27 college credits after two years; those who lived in clusters where 45 percent of people lived in poverty only earned an average of 18 credits.”

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