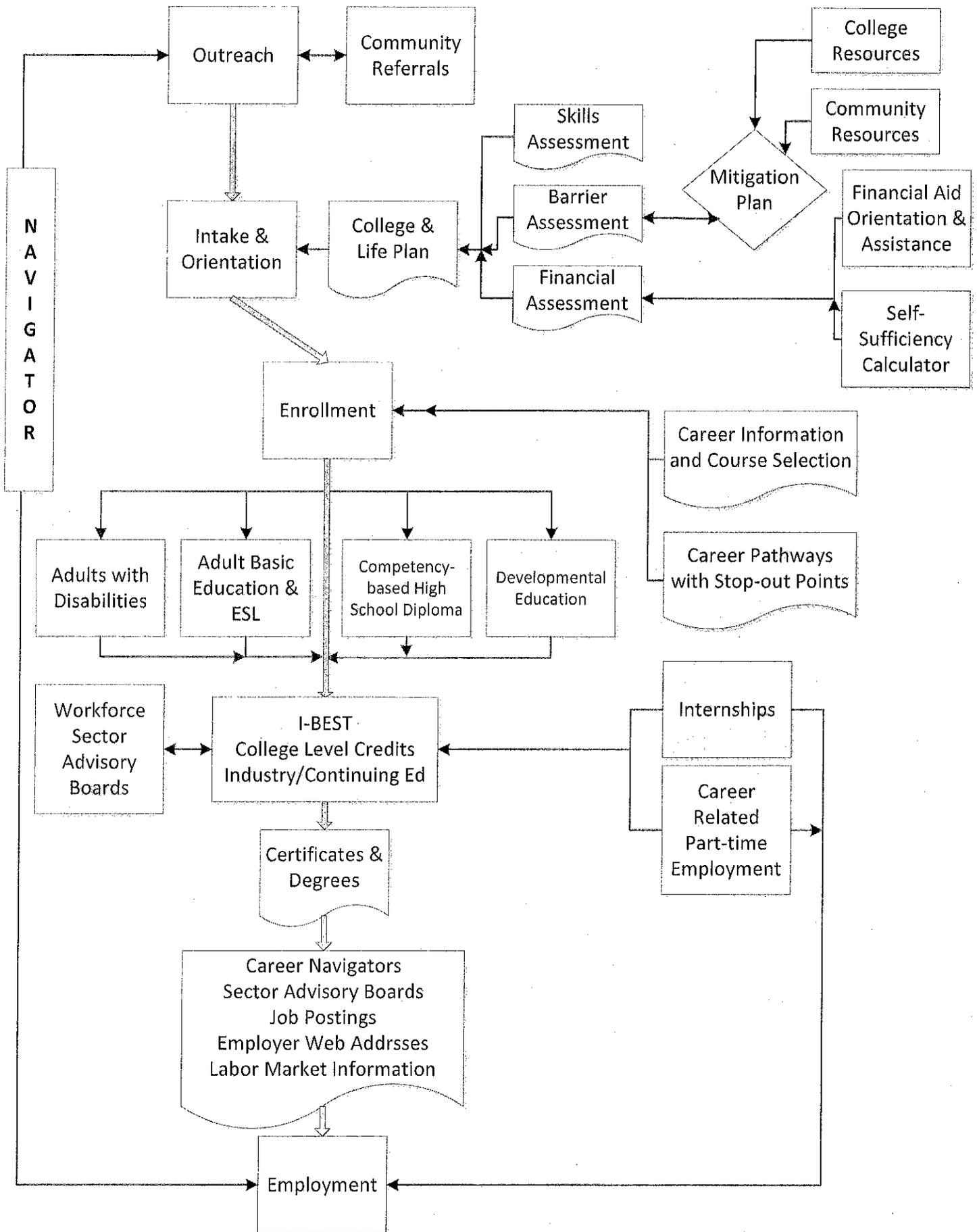


March 2013

Washington State Board For Community & Technical Colleges

Increasing Outcomes for Disadvantaged Populations

Youth 17 to 24 Years Old, Multiple Barriers, Low-income



Recommendations

1. SBCTC recommends that funding be provided to expand the "Start Next Quarter" program, currently offered in the Seattle College District, to all community and technical colleges in Washington State. Expanding this program will:

Increase disadvantaged youth's access to funding resources for education and training making it easier for student to navigate college processes by aligning workforce funding opportunities and student orientation/success workshops into one coherent experience. Workforce programs include: Worker Retraining, Basic Food Employment and Training, WorkFirst, and Opportunity Grant. The program would be extended to all training programs including those funded through the Workforce Investment Act and other youth oriented programs offered in the college's service area.

2. Increase disadvantaged youth's access to case management support (navigators) to resolve barriers and challenges, promote engagement and retention (persistence), and support program completion.

High school and college faculty and staff work harder to re-engage, retain, and support program completion for youth 17 to 24 years old. Colleges provide a broad range of youth programs most often in collaboration with secondary schools, government workforce training programs (city, county, and state) and community based organizations with services provided both on and off-campus.

Providing services to a larger number of youth, assisting them in accessing available resources/navigating through the system is the greater problem. A few colleges have navigator or transition staff that assist students through the system and support student success, however, funding is needed across the state to increase the capacity to engage a larger number of disadvantaged youth and support success at every community and technical college thereby providing more intensive support to disadvantaged youth.

Barriers that disadvantaged youth face when engaging and completing education and training programs

Over the past five years community and technical colleges have been reviewing college drop-out data and have found that the 17 to 24 year old age group is more likely to dropout when compared to other age groups. Community and student focus groups and individual interviews have been conducted to determine the reasons for dropping out with the resulting profiles of students who have dropped-out and strategies for engagement, retention, and successful program completion.

Following is a list of reasons students have given for dropping-out:

- Balancing family life (young parents), work, and school
- Lack of role models
- Lack of financial support for school, transportation, food, childcare, etc.
- Aging out of foster care with resources and a family support system disappearing
- Unstable housing
- Failure in traditional educational settings
- Learning disabilities and/or different learning styles
- Low basic skills (reading, writing, and math)
- English as a Second Language with low basic skills
- Dropped out of high school and/or college
- Little or no prior work experience
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Access to mental health services
- Criminal justice system issues

Values

To be successful programs designed to promote success for disadvantaged youth must:

- Be oriented to youth engagement
 - Be holistic in approach, including an assessment risk factors and potential barriers to success, and a plan for educational and wraparound services
 - Provide information that gives the student what they need to make informed choices
 - Include courses contextualized to career goals, integrated with real world work experience whenever possible
 - Incorporate instruction methods that address diverse learning styles
 - Lead to earning credits as soon possible
 - Lead to a certificate(s) or degree
 - Lead to a living wage job and a demand occupation
 - Include intrusive career counseling throughout the process
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Community & Technical College student engagement process

Outreach

Outreach and marketing directed at engaging youth is conducted prior to start of a program. Outreach includes providing information to:

- Community Based Organizations
- DSHS CSO staff
- Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Veterans organizations
- Youth services providers and advocates
- High school counselors
- Labor organizations
- Alternative school staff
- Website resources
- Presence at career fairs and community celebrations.

It is important that college collaborate with community based organizations (CBO's) who provide barrier mitigation services that encourage attendance and support student success.

Collaboration may be facilitated through co-location – on college campus, college presence at multiservice centers and WorkSource Centers, etc. Localized program examples:

- YWCA Young Women's Leadership
- Web resources like "Map Your Career"
- SoDo Inc. – Youth in Trades
- YouthSource
- High school career cluster academies
- nConnect
- Opportunity Skyway (career exposure to the aerospace industry)
- WIA youth employment programs
- High school career exploration programs like Try-a-Trade
- Inspire Washington
- Skill-Up Washington

Intake and Orientation

Orientation sessions occur prior to enrollment and/or shortly after enrollment and each quarter as the student progresses through their program. Initial orientations include a description of resources available at the college and in the community and a specific program orientation. Basic orientation components:

- Basic skills assessment - Initial basic skills assessment, pre-testing and quarterly or annual post testing. COMPASS used as the initial assessment for entering most college programs. For those who may be basic skills deficient, CASAS is used to assess reading, writing, and math skills, and for ESL students, listening and speaking skills.
- Barriers assessment - A variety of tools /forms are used to assess a youth's barriers to successful participation in college level courses. A learning styles assessment is important to varying teaching approaches and student success.
- Financial assessment – college Financial Aid staff often conduct financial aid workshops with group instruction and individual assistance. Many college programs encourage students to complete the Self-Sufficiency Calculator where students can get a clear picture of their financial resources and what it takes to be economically self-sufficient. The program indicates additional resources for which the student might be eligible and contact information.
- Engaging the student in developing a plan to mitigate barriers to participation and an incremental academic plan.

Improved access to programs that provide financial assistance like:

- Tuition waivers
- Opportunity Grants
- PELL loans and grants
- Foundation scholarships
- Financial aid counseling
- Veterans Administration loans, etc.

Other resources available to students:

- Workforce, Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET), Opportunity Grant and WorkFirst programs that provide tuition and fees (some programs provide supply assistance), job skills training, etc.

- College medical and dental programs that offer free or reduced cost services to students
- College automotive programs that offer auto repair at low cost
- Childcare resources
- Housing authority resources
- TRIO, FIPSE, Title III, and Title V programs that provide funding to engage hard to reach students, for the development of a web-based educational planning tools, focus on website redesign and Improved web delivery of course materials, etc.
- Veteran's Benefits, etc.

Programs like Running Start and Tech Prep that bridge the gap, provide career exposure opportunities, and effectively support secondary student transition to college.

Enrollment

Youth receive program/course enrollment assistance from CBO and/or college faculty and staff. Once a student has entered a program, for future quarters, most often enrollment can be completed online.

Developmental Education, Basic Skills Enhancement, Competency Based High School Diploma, College Level Credits, and I-BEST

When entering college it is important that students have the necessary basic skills to succeed, however, many youth lack those basic skills. It is important to improve basic skills and enroll in credit classes as soon as possible, moving students forward faster. Basic skills classes must be contextualized to the student interest, relate to real life as much as possible, and clearly lead to a credit course, certificate or degree. Some examples of programs that work to increase student success, improve basic skills, or facilitate immediate credit gains include:

- Adult Basic Education
- English as a Second Language
- On Ramp
- Summer Youth Employment (where college credit can be earned)
- High School Completion
- Competency based high school diploma
- GED programs
- Academic Developmental Education
- I-BEST and Academic I-BEST
- College navigator and transition staff
- Tutoring and mentoring programs
- Intrusive counseling

Certificates and Degrees

All community and technical colleges have workforce sector/industry cluster advisory committees to review demand occupation data, review Rapid Response layoff data and hiring data, survey local employer, and advise colleges on programs, certificates and degrees needed to prepare students to meet local workforce needs.

College programs must be in-demand occupations and have clearly delineated pathways with stop-out points – certificates that build up to degrees that lead to higher level wages. Pathway charts clearly indicate how certificates result in higher wages and lead to a degree including:

- Longer range degrees
- Shorter (stackable) range certificates - Example: Certified Nursing Assistance and Phlebotomy Certificates (stackable stop-out points) leading to a Licensed Practical Nursing degree.

- Course credits
- Course duration (number of academic quarters)
- Labor market wages at each certificate and degree level

Employment

All colleges have some form of a career center, WorkSource Center, or WorkSource Affiliate. Collaborative working relationships with WorkSource Centers and WorkSource Affiliates that are in some cases co-located on college campuses and/or college staff are located at WorkSource Centers and affiliates. Also, some campuses have collaborative/co-location agreements with CBO and Employment Security Department staff.

College faculty, counselors, and navigator-type positions provide employment assistance in the form of:

- Internships that may result in future employment
- Resume development
- Preparing students for job interviews and the work environment
- Labor market information
- Employer websites
- Posting job openings

For additional information about this document contact:

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