

HPOG Program Summary



South Carolina Department of Social Services Project HOPE (Health Occupations Preparation for Employment)

Location:

Columbia, South Carolina

Program Goals:

- Enroll 575 participants into training and education programs
- Ensure that 404 of those enrolled complete training
- Enable 323 of those who complete training and education programs to find employment in healthcare

Health Professions Taught:

Successful Project HOPE participants earn certifications qualifying them to be a certified nursing assistant, EKG technician, phlebotomist, patient care technician, medical assistant, home health aide, pharmacy technician, emergency medical technician, medical office administrative assistant, medical record coder, health information technologist, or nurses' aide.

Approach:

Project HOPE is a collaborative response to problems created by a South Carolina poverty rate and funding cuts for agencies that serve Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other low-income people. It incorporates the idea of providing a continuum of services by collaborating agencies that are willing to flexibly share resources to provide unprecedented opportunities to Project HOPE participants. Partners include the State Technical College System, addressing training and placement; the South Carolina Workforce Investment Board (WIB), addressing local employability skills/placements; the South Carolina Department of Education, addressing referral and instruction; the State Office of Apprenticeship and the South Carolina Department of Labor, addressing placements; and hospital systems, addressing internships/placements.

Support services include case management during the four weeks of Boot Camp and throughout participation in the program that enables participants to focus on training/career plans, eliminate barriers to employment, and link participants to supportive services. Participant transportation, childcare, and housing costs are addressed, as needed. Mentors are paired with participants who complete Boot Camp and continue to work with them throughout training and early job placement. Participants also are issued five sets of scrubs for use during training.

The Project HOPE approach consists of five phases. Phase One includes referral of potential participants by DSS staff, science instructors, and guidance counselors. Project HOPE staff determine eligibility. Phase Two is a 4-week Boot Camp, an intensive and hands-on participant training conducted at four regional sites. Phase Three involves introductory courses that lay the educational foundation for entry into healthcare careers. Phase Four provides healthcare continuing education and academic degree programs taught by Technical College faculty. Phase Five provides participants with assistance for job readiness and placement. It also supports and encourages participants who seek continued college study leading to college degrees, higher wage jobs, and upward mobility.