



Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG)

Compendium of Promising Practices

August 2014



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



Building Pathways to a Brighter Future



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Washington, DC 20447 www.acf.hhs.gov

August 2014

The [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) program was created by the Affordable Care Act and prepares low-income individuals for careers in healthcare that pay well and offer opportunities for advancement leading to self-sufficiency. HPOG grantees offer services and work with a range of community partners to meet the needs of the whole person, in and out of the classroom.

The [Office of Family Assistance](#) is pleased to share some examples of unique or innovative practices that are being implemented by HPOG grantees. This *Compendium of Promising Practices* includes a wide variety of approaches that resulted from each of the 32 grantees identifying a practice that has been effective in helping them meet the needs of participants and local employers in the healthcare community. They are a diverse set of stories focusing on expanding community partnerships, building long-term sustainability, improving services for program participants, fulfilling program goals and much more.

I encourage you to read these *Promising Practices* to learn about the common and unique challenges HPOG grantees are facing and how they are addressing them. They may stimulate discussion within your organization, with your community partners or HPOG grantee peers. They describe approaches for you to consider and organizations to contact when looking for ways to strengthen your own work.

We look forward to continuing to work with all of the HPOG grantees and are grateful for the rich and dynamic approaches they have shared through this *Compendium*. Their work and experiences can help us all find and implement strategies that are most effective for helping TANF recipients and other low-income individuals build a better pathway to the future.

Sincerely,

/s/

Earl Johnson
Director
Office of Family Assistance

Introduction

The [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) program provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and other low-income individuals with education and training for well-paying, in-demand healthcare occupations. The HPOG program is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, [Office of Family Assistance](#).

Grants were first awarded in September 2010, and grantees are now well into their fourth year of a five-year program. HPOG awards were made to 32 entities located across 23 states, including four State government bodies, nine local Workforce Investment Boards (three of which are also one-stop operators), 12 institutions of higher education (one university, nine community colleges, and two community college districts), and two community-based organizations. Five awards were given to tribal applicants, including one tribal council and four tribal colleges.

The HPOG program is continually implementing and seeking to identify promising and innovative practices to help TANF and low-income individuals along a career pathway. In addition to providing education and training, grantees provide many critical support services to participants, such as case management, child care, and transportation. Grantees also build strong partnerships in their communities to successfully recruit and retain program participants, such as with State and local TANF agencies, State and local Workforce Investment Boards, the Federal and State Offices of Apprenticeship, and others.

This *Compendium of Promising Practices* captures unique or innovative practices that grantees have successfully employed to best serve TANF and low-income individuals. They are indexed by grantee, state, community, type of organization, and practice component.

The HPOG program is a demonstration project designed to build and share knowledge. Sharing these promising practices helps create a learning community in which information and lessons learned can be shared. A comprehensive evaluation of HPOG is also underway that will provide more information on program implementation, systems change, outcomes, and impact. The evaluation will help expand the base of evidence for improving outcomes for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals.

These *Promising Practices* were collected by ICF International, the technical assistance provider for the Office of Family Assistance. To access this document and other supporting documents, examples, and related information about these practices electronically, please visit the HPOG Community Website at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/hpog>.

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College Instructors as Job Developers

Alamo Community College

The Alamo Community Colleges' Healthcare Professions Training Initiative (HPTI), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) funded project by the Office of Family Assistance has adopted a job placement strategy that utilizes college instructors to act in dual roles as life skills trainers and job developers.

In June 2013, the reorganization and transition of the HPTI program warranted a critical focus on job placement because the numbers of students obtaining employment were very low. The job placement numbers three years into the HPOG grant were at seven, while the number of students who had completed the training by that time was 236.

With a limited number of Alamo Community Colleges staff, the program opted to maximize the existing four staff to focus on job development, job retention and placement along with working as the job skills and remediation instructors for the HPTI program. Since the instructors were in the classroom for the entry Life Skills portion of the curriculum and the later part of the job skills preparation training, they knew the strengths and weaknesses of the students better than anyone.

The first step was for the instructors to begin working with externship placements, mentoring their student externs, and coordinating with the job sites. Instructors were able to develop relationships with the job sites and establish rapport for future externship sites as well as identify job vacancies.

This combination of externship fieldwork and classroom training has produced a new knowledge base for the instructor that is critical to improving job development efforts. Employer feedback and student performance data has also facilitated a better match between employer's needs and students' capacities. Employers present profiles of ideal candidates to HPTI and the job development -instructors match those needs with the students who are ready for employment. This instructor-job developer approach has improved staff's knowledge and communication with each other and employers. This has resulted in higher placement rates and

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better employer satisfaction. An additional benefit is that the new process has allowed quick intervention on the job site should students encounter other problems or challenges.

This practice was built out of necessity and has proven to be quite effective in Alamo's community college system. Better communication with the medical providers in San Antonio, Texas has allowed the college to improve its medical training and create better employment opportunities for graduates. Today's placement numbers are more than eight times higher than before the switch to dual function instructor-job developers.

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Client Relationship Management Software Implementation

Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium at Bergen Community College

In January 2014, Bergen Community College (BCC) implemented a new Client Relationship Management (CRM) tool—Salesforce—to track and manage students' activities in a manner that is proactive and responsive to their training, employment and retention goals.

Generally, the CRM is thought of as a business strategy that enables businesses to:¹

- understand the customer;
- retain customers through better customer experiences;
- attract new customers;
- win new clients and contracts;
- increase profitably; and
- decrease customer management costs.

Salesforce is primarily utilized by BCC's job developers/specialists to help clients find the right occupations that suite their skills and interests. Using select criteria, the system is customized to compare available jobs with students' skills and certifications to promote job compatibility. The results are then listed and the job developer/specialist can screen and finalize them before accepting matches. Once verified, the system will send an automated email notification to all former and current students selected by the job developer/specialist.

Benefits associated with using CRM tools are important to the [Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium](#) (NNJHPC) and can help them: further their goals to attract students;

¹ Decomier, R.A. (n.d.). *Chapter 3: Customer relationship management strategies for business markets* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from: <http://www.csun.edu/~vcmkt002/442%20PowerPoint/442%20PowerPoint/ch03%20Cust%20Relationship%20Mgmt.ppt>.

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understand their needs to reduce barriers to training and employment; manage their funds efficiently; and sustain program activities after federal funding ends.

BCC has started rolling the software out to their other community college partners and expect that all sites will have the software in place by the summer of 2014. BCC is part of the 10-partner NNJHPC, which is a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) recipient from the Office of Family Assistance.

Thus far, four community college partners have begun using the system while three are in the installation process. The partners are using the system to track all student activities, but particularly around employment and retention. Partners using the system are also using it to efficiently inform students about employment opportunities, additional training opportunities and available community resources. Feedback from community college users has been positive. For example, one partner reported being “ecstatic” about the fact that she is now able to alert students of new employment opportunities without having to load email addresses each time. Salesforce provides users the ability to send and track personalized emails to each student with just one process. Furthermore, the system allows community college partners to track every participant touch point—from pre-testing to employment and retention—which is especially helpful when fulfilling internal and external reporting requirements. Also, given the amount of data that the system tracks about each student, program staff will be able to leverage this information to make enhanced data-informed decisions, including assessing how resources were used and whether they were effective and efficient.

All in all, automating the process of tackling student support activities through Salesforce will increase efficiency across all the community college sites, as well as provide data that can help inform decisions about resource allocation, student needs and sustainability activities. Overall the NNJHPC anticipates that the automated process will impact the close to 1,200 (525 enrolled, 366 completers and 262 employed) participants that they currently serve. Looking forward, it is anticipated that the process will impact approximately 1,000 students that the NNJHPC plans to enroll each year.

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Issksiniip Behavioral Health Aide

Issksiniip Project at Blackfeet Community College

[Blackfeet Community College's](#) Issksiniip project, a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) initiative funded by the Office of Family Assistance, offers students the opportunity to acquire advanced mental health certifications. The project is part of the Tribe's efforts to address the long-standing lack of mental health services in the community – there is currently only one local mental health facility located in Browning, Montana's Indian Health Service organization. First implemented in the summer of 2013, the Issksiniip Behavioral Health Aid (BHA) training is a two-month, summer training program that instructs students on counseling and mental health basics, first aid, child development, behavior management and testing fundamentals. After completing the program, students receive a BHA Certification, a credential recognized throughout the Blackfeet Reservation as a viable health profession certification. Blackfeet Community College (BCC) also supports job advancement for behavioral health aid certificate holders through a number of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with local agencies. These MOUs document that upon graduation from the BHA program, individuals will receive a pay increase with their current employer.

The implementation of the BHA program was driven primarily by the lack of trained mental health service providers within the Blackfeet Reservation as well as local levels of unemployment that approach 70%. In recognition of these needs, the BCC Issksiniip Project met initially with local Head Start programs to discuss implementing the certificate program and to seek volunteers from among the organization's incumbent workers to serve as the first cohort within the planned training program. The BCC Issksiniip Project conducted assessments of Head Start's mental health employment needs, as well as the skills and interests of the first volunteer cohort, to identify the types of courses and training needed in the BHA program's curriculum. Outlined in an agreement with Head Start, this first wave of BHA graduates are negotiating pay increases from their current employers. In support of the program, the BCC Issksiniip Project also established a Mental Health Advisory Board, which includes University of Montana and BCC faculty as well as community leaders, to guide program development, connect with community resources and ensure the curriculum reflects actual employer needs. During the early stages of curriculum development, the BCC Issksiniip Project also elected to offer two different types of BHA certificates – the two-month, summer option, focused strictly

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on tribal entities, and a longer, one-year option offered during the academic year at BCC. The BCC Issksiniip Project is currently working with the Browning Montana Public School District to make BHA services available to a group of teacher's assistants.

Implementation of the Behavioral Health Aid program has resulted in positive outcomes relating to training activities completed and rates of graduates placed in employment. In 2013, the BCC Issksiniip Project exceeded its goal of the number of students completing education training activities while also nearly exceeding 1,000 graduates placed in healthcare occupations – both outcomes were significant improvements from their 2012 numbers. Employers also routinely submit positive feedback on Behavioral Health Aid graduates placed within their organizations.

While the BHA program has been very successful to-date, initially there were a number of challenges in marketing the program and identifying specific populations most in need of mental health services. There were also initial struggles in working with the state to recognize the validity of licensed practitioner services billing via the Medicaid program. BCC found that a targeted and carefully planned public relations approach, which includes numerous career fairs, was needed to effectively build community knowledge of the BHA program.

For other organizations looking to replicate the BHA program, in addition to implementing a comprehensive community approach early during the program's development, BCC Issksiniip Project also recommends that programs ensure their curricula are state, federal, and/or tribally recognized to ensure that billability to Medicaid, workplace duties and job advancement are clear and agreed upon by all partners.

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Adapting Service Delivery Based on Local Labor Market Information

Buffalo and Erie County Health Professions Collaborative at Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium

Demand-driven workforce development programs need to have the flexibility to adapt training and respond quickly to changes in employer needs and requirements. Local healthcare job markets can be volatile. To treat employers like customers, programs need to respond rapidly when changes in local economic conditions impact training needs. Programs and course offerings should be informed by ongoing analysis of occupational projections, the supply of graduates entering the workforce, the availability of clinical work sites, and the skill sets required by businesses. The Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium (WDC) is a grantee of the [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) program funded by the Office of Family Assistance. In the [HPOG Buffalo](#) program, WDC uses employer input and labor market information (LMI) to adapt its HPOG Buffalo program to changing conditions so that employers' needs are served and program participants can find jobs.

WDC had relationships in place with major local healthcare employers at the outset of the HPOG Buffalo program. WDC surveyed these employers on their workforce needs over the coming years. The survey results, along with LMI and input from program partners, were used to determine the six occupations initially targeted by the HPOG Buffalo program:

- Direct support professional
- Medical billing clerk
- Pharmacy technician
- Medical office assistant

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- Licensed practical nurse
- Health information technician

As the HPOG Buffalo program began, it implemented strategies to continue engaging with local employers. Project staff included a business services specialist who focused on creating and maintaining employer relations by communicating directly with local employers about their needs and placing individuals in jobs. The program engaged new employer partners through phone calls, convening breakfast clubs, and mailing announcements that described programs and available internships. A Project Advisory Committee was established to convene employer representatives, program staff, and program partners on a quarterly basis.

WDC and its Project Advisory Committee have adapted the HPOG Buffalo program when labor market information indicated the need for adjustments in targeted occupations. In addition, Committee members have provided employer-specific input on the skills, abilities and competencies required or expected of new hires. The combination of closely monitored LMI with validation and feedback from local employers has enabled WDC and its education partners to strengthen the HPOG Buffalo program and improve outcomes. Program staff knew that even when the right occupations are targeted for training it takes a well-rounded training program for individuals to be prepared to enter the healthcare profession. As a result of employer feedback and insights from employer roundtables, the program is now giving more attention to soft skills training and workplace readiness.

As a result of these efforts, relationships with employers were strengthened in the opening year and many successful job placements were made. However, new challenges were emerging. The local economy was changing in ways that affected the healthcare job market, making placements for some occupations difficult.

In the second program year, new strategies were developed to improve job placement rates, strengthen relationships with employers and improve the overall effectiveness of the program. To better understand the current job market, local labor market information was reexamined and presented to employers. Based on an understanding of the new environment, enrollment targets for some occupations were reduced while new targeted occupations were added. The program added certified nursing assistant/home health aide training to better serve individuals on the first step of the healthcare career ladder. Health-related Individual Training Accounts (ITA) were also added to the training menu to give participants more flexibility in choosing training programs. Participants used ITAs for training as registered nurses (RNs), surgical technologists, sterilization process technologists and physical therapy assistants, among others.

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Overall, the program is now putting more focus on RN, which has the highest projected annual openings for healthcare occupations in New York's western region. In addition, the program continues to reach out to new employer partners, especially targeting new and small to medium-sized establishments. As of March 2014, 61 individuals have enrolled in classes using ITAs. The majority of these ITAs were issued for training lasting up to two years. Nine of these students are already employed and many more placements are expected.

As the HPOG Buffalo program looks to the future, it continues to emphasize the comprehensive role of the business services specialist as critical to placement success. Lessons applied include using LMI with the most specific geographic area possible and engaging with all types and sizes of healthcare employers. Programs need to work to ensure employers understand the support services provided to participants, such as transportation and childcare, as well as the many additional benefits of working with an HPOG program. WDC continues exploring new ways to work with employers to ensure participants can find jobs.

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Eventide Employer Partnership

Next Steps Project at Cankdeska Cikana Community College

In spring 2014, [Cankdeska Cikana Community College](#) and [Eventide Senior Living Communities](#) established a partnership that provides healthcare employment and leadership development opportunities for certified nursing assistant (CNA) students graduating from Cankdeska's [Next Steps](#) project, a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) initiative funded by the Office of Family Assistance. Eventide manages assisted and independent senior living communities while also providing rehabilitation and nursing care. The organization employs approximately 1,000 healthcare professionals and is based in Moorhead, Minnesota and three sites in North Dakota – Fargo, Jamestown, and Devils Lake, the site closest to the Cankdeska Cikana Community College. While the agreement does not specifically reserve job openings for Next Steps graduates, Eventide indicated verbally that, due to their healthcare workforce needs, they would be willing to hire any qualified Next Steps CNA graduate. In May 2014, after establishing the partnership agreement, Eventide interviewed and hired their first Next Steps CNA graduate. Next Steps staff anticipate placing approximately 15 additional Next Steps graduates in 2014-2015.

The foundation for this partnership began with Eventide's participation in Next Steps' 2013 Year Three Healthcare Workforce Development Workshop in Moorhead, Minnesota. After establishing mutual interest during this event, the Next Steps Job Development Specialist and Next Steps Principal Investigator (PI) met with Eventide personnel to discuss their healthcare workforce needs. During the course of this meeting, the Job Development Specialist learned of Eventide's efforts to position the company as an employer of choice through investing in the personal and professional development of staff. Based on this discussion, the Job Development Specialist and PI recommended that Next Steps and Eventide collaborate and apply for a Frank L. Wedge Trust Fund grant offered through the North Dakota Long Term Care Association. The Trust Fund awarded Next Steps and Eventide with a \$10,000 grant to develop the "Collaborative Essential Leadership (CEL) Initiative" – a program that will offer healthcare leadership training for newly hired Next Steps graduates.

Next Steps and Eventide staff are currently in the implementation stages of developing the CEL Initiative. The two organizations are investigating different types of potential CEL trainings and

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curriculum while also considering how CEL graduates can incorporate their new leadership skills at the workplace. While the partnership has been a success to-date, Next Steps staff are still challenged by student's reluctance to consider employment outside of their local community. The agreement with Eventide involves job placements at any one of their sites though there is some resistance from students to relocate to Fargo and other comparatively distant sites. Next Steps staff will investigate options for encouraging students to accept employment at any one of the Eventide sites.

Next Steps staff recommend that other programs explore joint funding opportunities with healthcare employers as a way to establish mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships that open up new employment opportunities for training program graduates.

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Employer Panels

Project HELP at Central Community College

[Central Community College's](#) (Central) Project HELP, a [Heath Profession Opportunity Grants](#) program funded by the Office of Family Assistance, began implementing a series of employer panels to **create stronger employer and student connections** and **increase health profession job placements**. Project HELP arranges for employers to speak with graduating nursing assistant and medication aide classes to allow students to interact directly with prospective employers. Participating employers provide information on their organization, hiring practices, interview tips, application information, and characteristics of a successful employee.

Prior to implementing the employer panels, Project HELP staff sought to build buy-in and knowledge of this opportunity by speaking to each of Central's three campuses and medication aid and nursing assistant instructors to gauge their interest in connecting students with employers. As part of their outreach strategy, Central's community liaison connected with employers across more than 25 counties in the state to explain the purpose of Project HELP and to describe the benefits of hiring its graduates.

Since implementing the employer panels approach in May 2013, Project HELP has seen an increase in the number of nursing assistant and medication aide job placements among their graduates. For example, in 2013, Project HELP placed 132 students in nursing assistant positions, well exceeding their original target of 80 placements. Students report that the panels provide them with a better understanding of what employers are seeking and valuable tips on how to interview successfully. Employers are also responding positively to the opportunity to connect with prospective employees. Rather than having to solicit employers to participate in the panels, Project HELP reports that employers are calling them to share job openings and inquire about the next employer panel opening. In addition to improving employment outcomes and the job readiness of students, the panels have also resulted in stronger relationships with employers in the community.

Employers and students have reaped significant benefits from this effort, but, Project HELP has also encountered some challenges in implementing the employer panels. Nursing assistant students must dedicate 76 hours to classroom training. Given this rigorous schedule, it becomes challenging to find time for employer panels, if instructors do not plan for these

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meetings well in advance. In situations where there is insufficient classroom time for employer panels, Project HELP has held these meetings over the lunch hour. Attendance is optional for students with refreshments provided free of charge. Another challenge is managing expectations of students and employers who may envision the panel as a recruitment opportunity. The panels are intended to serve as educational opportunities only, though employers are not discouraged from telling students about upcoming job opportunities and describing the process of applying for these positions.

To implement employer panels, Project HELP advises organizations to first investigate state regulations regarding the number of hours students are required to be in the classroom. Next, they should check with instructors to see if they would be willing to plan additional hours to accommodate the employer panels. Project HELP has found that students are more likely to attend the panels within a classroom setting rather than over a lunch period when attendance is not mandatory.

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Invite-Ask-Listen-Respond: WATCH Strategies for Engaging Employers

Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit WATCH Project

Partnership with employers is a centerpiece of the [WATCH Project](#), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) funded program of the Office of Family Assistance. Program staff reached out to local health care employers through meetings, surveys and evaluations and the use of employer panel presentations in an effort to learn what employers are looking for in a health care employee.

Though the previous strategies had been excellent for garnering employer feedback, WATCH was interested in a truly collaborative partnership with its local employers. To do this, WATCH developed an employer-focused, four-step engagement strategy:

Invite: WATCH Project staff reached out to a variety of healthcare providers, including a broad base of employers. Staff intentionally focused on small employers as well as larger healthcare systems. They found that the smaller employers often had the greatest needs but were seldom invited to engagement events. By doing so, the project gained several new enthusiastic, dedicated partners.

Ask: WATCH Project staff designed activities that promoted idea-sharing and dialogue rather than rely on only on closed ended questions. Specifically, employers were asked if WATCH Project data was reflective of their hiring needs. As a result, WATCH Project staff learned the importance of being flexible and adaptable by keeping questions and activities focused on employer-identified needs and tossing out items inconsistent with employer interests.

Listen: In addition to actively listening to employers, WATCH Project staff were willing to hear the inconvenient and hard truths from employers about what programming worked well for them as well as what didn't. In so doing, WATCH Project staff demonstrated a commitment to creating a mutually beneficial relationship to address the needs of local employers.

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Respond: This is arguably the most important step in the WATCH Project employer engagement strategy. Inviting enhanced employer engagement, asking relevant questions and listening to needs and issues must be followed up with a timely response. The WATCH Project staff operationalized the respond action step in several important ways, by:

- Providing program information in-person instead of email or brochure mailing whenever possible;
- Conducting special on-site information meetings about specific program offerings, like the certified nursing assistant apprenticeship, when requested;
- Making program data and labor market information available and easily accessible to local employers for their own needs;
- Inviting new employers to make presentations to program participants; and
- Posting job listings to the project's participant network when asked.

WATCH Project staff successfully used this strategy to engage 13 regional healthcare employers over the course of four regional meetings throughout central Pennsylvania. Administrative, human resource and supervisory staff from large and small health care employers including home health programs, long-term care and rehabilitation facilities, private physician groups, hospitals and health care systems attended the events. The meeting agendas were carefully designed to encourage discussion among nurse educators, human resource professionals, nurse managers and LPN/RN supervisors. WATCH Project staff provided information about the program and data that reflected progress toward 5-year goals. Local workforce development partners delivered regional labor market information. Nurse educators described their programs and curriculum being used to prepare students for nursing careers.

As a result of applying the four-step process, WATCH Project staff realized an unprecedented level of engagement with local employers. For example, employers identified leadership as an essential and often missing skill for nurses entering the workforce. When new nurses are hired, they are usually placed in or quickly promoted to supervisory positions. Consequently, employers need new nurses to come to the job capable of leading a unit, managing conflict and maintaining a focus on customer-patient relations.

Armed with this new information from local employers, WATCH Project staff responded by hosting a three-day leadership development series for incumbent workers. Forty-eight (48) supervisors, managers, and human resource professionals from eighteen (18) regional health

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care employers participated. As a direct outcome of the employer leadership development series, WATCH Project staff added a leadership development training into its LPN and RN participant requirements. Additionally, several local employers have volunteered to help develop the content and deliver the training to WATCH Project participants. Though the leadership curriculum is still in development, the WATCH Project anticipates improved marketability and leadership skill of its students resulting in increased job placement rates, job retention, and employer satisfaction. By using the 4-stage engagement process, WATCH has cultivated a diverse, inclusive, and committed group of employers committed to the long-term success of WATCH.

The Invite-Ask-Listen-Respond approach to employer engagement helped to establish the WATCH Project as a trusted collaborative partner for local employers. For other grantees interested in WATCH's employer engagement strategy, establish a foundation for meaningful engagement by applying the four steps described in this promising practice brief to build collaborative partnerships beneficial to local employers, employees and students.

Promising Practices

Informational Sessions for Potential Nursing Assistant Students

CNA to RN Career Ladder Program at College of Menominee Nation

The [College of Menominee Nation's](#) (CMN) CNA to RN Career Ladder Program (Program), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) funded initiative by the Office of Family Assistance began providing group informational sessions to potential participants in October of 2013. These informational sessions offer students critical information needed to make informed decisions before registering for CMN's Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. This approach also best utilizes staff time by presenting information to groups of potential participants.

The purpose of these informational sessions has been two-fold. The first purpose has been to **prevent student attrition** by providing students an overview of the nursing assistant course and the program's expectations, prior to registration. CMN has found that this is helpful for potential students to have a clear understanding of what the program is and what its requirements are before signing up. A total of 300 certified nursing assistant students have begun training and education courses to-date, of which, 90% have completed these activities.

The second purpose has been to **better utilize staff time**. Providing group information sessions on a weekly basis allows staff to present the information once to multiple students rather than several times each day as students come into the office. Before students attend information sessions, they are also asked to fill out a simple worksheet, which instructs them to answer questions with the first thoughts that enter their minds. Staff use responses to help determine if health care is a suitable professional route for each potential student.

To implement this approach, program staff developed an informational session curriculum, which utilizes PowerPoint presentations and program information packets. The PowerPoint reviews each step of the career ladder, beginning with CNA and ending with registered nursing. Informational sessions also cover the pros and cons within nursing, clarify misconceptions

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students may have regarding health care and discuss overall course loads, including the hours required for class, lab, clinical instruction, and a refresher class prior to state testing. Emphasis is also placed on how program staff remain with and encourage students throughout state testing.

During these sessions, students are also provided detailed information regarding eligibility requirements, such as information about background checks, including which offenses can prevent them from entering clinical instruction and which are acceptable with additional information. Staff also discuss time management, the importance of commitment to the course and the penalties for unexcused absences. Session instructors share information on professionalism, explaining employer expectations and how these principles are carried throughout the training program.

At the end of each session, participants can ask questions and there is time to assist students with applications. If interested participants complete their application, they can set an appointment with the Support Services Coordinator to review their application and qualifications.

Informational sessions have been widely successful on CMN's Green Bay campus, but, sessions on the Keshena campus are poorly attended. Staff make reminder calls the night before to interested participants, but attendance has not improved. Despite this, Keshena staff plan to continue to consistently provide informational sessions. Students at the Keshena campus face unique challenges and typically needed more guidance and support to encourage their follow-through with school requirements. Even though attendance remains low at the Keshena informational sessions, the Program's goals have still been met. Attrition is low in the Keshena CNA training course, due in part, to students having the information they need upfront to make informed decisions about course enrollment.

Promising Practices

Use of Cohorts

CareerAdvance® at Community Action Project of Tulsa County

With support from the [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) funded by the Office of Family Assistance, the [Community Action Project of Tulsa County](#) uses a cohort model for training in its CareerAdvance program. The cohort approach – a foundational strategy since the beginning of the program four years ago – is used to identify a group of participants who are all seeking the same type of credential (e.g. CNA). The use of cohorts is important because the interpersonal relationships that peers develop in the cohort are a foundation of their academic learning, emotional and psychological well-being, and ability to broaden perspectives. Cohorts provide interactive and dynamic settings for students to improve their knowledge and skills. They also build community, foster creativity, build leadership skills, and encourage greater progress. When they identify as part of a cohort, students are likely to experience mutual care and shared purpose in the program. Focus group data indicates that the cohort model is associated with reduced rates of attrition and an increase in completion and graduation rates. In sum, cohort students are more successful as they make their way through their individual programs, and graduates are more successful once they begin to practice in their new careers.

Each cohort begins their training with a course referred to as “CORE.” CORE is a four-week course that covers basic computer literacy, study skills, conflict resolution, writing, time and stress management, as well as soft skills, all of which are important for positive work behaviors. The CORE class prepares participants for entrance exams, helps them learn college readiness skills, and sets the stage for higher completion rates. Along with regular occupational training, each cohort group meets outside the classroom throughout their time in training in structured “Partner Meetings.” Partner Meetings occur weekly during the first semester of training, twice monthly during the second semester and monthly beyond the first year of training. The cohort supports participant retention among students who share a common thread of experiences.

Other programs can adopt the cohort model for their participants as they move up the career ladder in nursing. They can set up similar classes for a cohort and track them as they move from certified nursing assistant (CNA) to licensed practical nurse (LPN) and registered nurse (RN). Providing tutoring and group study for the cohort as supplements to their regular classes can also build more group support.

Promising Practices

Engaging Tribal TANF as Partners for HPOG Student Success

Health Professions Opportunity Grant at Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC)

[Cook Inlet Tribal Council \(CITC\) HPOG](#), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance, has leveraged its extensive network of individual and family support services located within the CITC umbrella of programs to help low-income, Native Alaskan/Tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients complete the necessary training and certifications to compete for well-paying healthcare jobs within the greater Anchorage area.

Cook Inlet Tribal Council is the Tribal TANF administrator in partnership with the state of Alaska to deliver TANF services to Alaska Native/Tribal families. The CITC HPOG program works very closely with Tribal TANF case managers to ensure direct and timely TANF referrals to the HPOG program for students interested in healthcare careers. CITC HPOG and TANF staff use a joint case management approach to help HPOG students meet their Tribal TANF obligations as they progress along one of the HPOG-sponsored healthcare career ladder programs.

The collaborative relationship and shared case management between the HPOG program and Tribal TANF case management staff have produced consistently strong rates of participation among TANF recipients. Sixty percent of CITC HPOG participants have been referred from TANF.

Before TANF recipients are admitted to the HPOG program, they are referred to a life skills training to ease the transition to the HPOG orientation and job shadowing components required of all HPOG participants. Once accepted into the HPOG program, the TANF case manager includes HPOG career ladder goals within the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP). Doing so provides an added incentive for TANF recipients to complete necessary requirements and maintain identified goals. HPOG staff also meet regularly with TANF staff to continue to promote the HPOG program and to ensure TANF case managers remain aware of the array of supports available to HPOG students, including tuition assistance and money for supplies.

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The CITC HPOG-TANF partnership is strengthened by the co-location of services with the existing one-stop center that provides convenient access to other CITC programs for which participants may be eligible. CITC HPOG leveraged the requirements and benefits of both programs to strengthen results for TANF recipients by helping students navigate the requirements of both programs. This included help managing life circumstances that might jeopardize timely completion of HPOG training through the provision of emergency supports to address housing needs, child care subsidies and transportation breakdowns.

Generally, this approach has worked exceedingly well however, one of the challenges encountered by CITC Tribal TANF case managers was the length of the Medical Billing and Coding program. Specifically, the eleven-month training course didn't match the timelines outlined in the FSSP. CITC Tribal TANF case managers had to ensure TANF recipients were able to balance allowable training hours with required employment searches. HPOG program staff reached out to the [CITC TANF Supportive Work Experience program](#) to ensure HPOG graduates gained the necessary work experience requirements in fulfillment of their self-sufficiency plan goals.

The values of interdependence, resilience and mutual accountability are deeply embedded within the culture of the Cook Inlet people and the organization overall. These values are also reflected across all programs offered within CITC. Working together, HPOG and TANF staff address participant needs as they arise by providing fast access to an extensive array of support services available within the agency's integrated service delivery model in one location.

As a result of the integrated staffing and joint case management provided by HPOG and TANF staff members, 35% of TANF participants from the Certified Nurse Assistants and Medical Coding and Billing programs enrolled and successfully graduated. In addition, several licensed practical nurse/registered nurse HPOG students receiving TANF benefits when they enrolled in HPOG, were no longer eligible for TANF benefits because they became employed full-time as CNAs during their training. CITC HPOG has received 13 referrals for the CNA program and an additional nine for the medical office assistant program for the coming fiscal year.

For other programs interested in a joint case management model with TANF staff, the co-location of the HPOG and TANF program has been invaluable. Likewise, having HPOG educational goals embedded within the FSSP provides an added incentive of follow-through and continued focus among TANF recipients. The ability to check-in and follow-up quickly on student needs for services saves time, energy and the potential frustration and stress for HPOG students.

Promising Practices

Employer Engagement

Project HOPE at Eastern Gateway Community College

Since the October 2010 launch of [Project HOPE](#), an Eastern Ohio based [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) funded project by the Office of Family Assistance, engaging employers to hire HPOG participants and become active partners has been a major goal of the program. Developing an effective employer engagement strategy, however, has taken time, careful strategy and attention.

The first step was to discover what qualities employer partners were looking for in new employees. To find the answer, the Project HOPE program administrator volunteered on a local health system's employee education committee. Through the program administrator's participation three key points became extremely clear: employers want to **save money, time and energy**.

Armed with an understanding of what employers are looking for, the Project HOPE recruiters and job placement specialists began engaging the Human Resources departments of local employers. Project HOPE staff visited employers once a month with hopes of establishing relationships. Employers were given information regarding the project.

Having established a network of employer partners, Project HOPE focused on how to save employers money. Program staff developed an internet-based resume database that is accessible from the Project HOPE website. Each employer partner is given a password and can freely search resumes of graduated students listed by educational specialty. This searchable resume database decreases or eliminates the cost of advertising for new employees.

Next, the focus was shifted to saving employers' time. Employers struggled to provide new hires with adequate training given the amount of time they could reasonably put toward that effort. Therefore, Project HOPE designed an On-The-Job Training (OJT) contract that reimburses employers for the employer instructor's time providing additional on-site training of newly hired Project HOPE graduates. The OJT contract helps to ensure new hires are well-trained, while reducing employee turnover.

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Finally, Project HOPE focused on how to save their employer partners energy. Employers expressed the importance of employees understanding how to apply customer service skills in a clinical setting. Project HOPE now conducts monthly training for all students in the key principles outlined in the Great Employee Handbook by Quint Studer. Mr. Studer's handbook is currently utilized by health care organizations across the country.

Engaging employers to be active partners in Project HOPE took time, but the effort was worthwhile. After two years of strategic engagement, Project HOPE has built strong relationships with approximately 40 employers and over 600 students have been placed in healthcare positions. Their experience has taught them that a successful employment strategy is based on understanding employers' specific needs and addressing those needs with real solutions.

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Targeted Email Recruitment Using Community Partners

Creating Access to Careers in Healthcare (CATCH) at Edmonds Community College

Since the inception of [CATCH](#), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance, the local workforce investment board (WIB)—[Workforce Snohomish](#)—has been a key partner. In the fall of 2013 they provided CATCH with the opportunity to participate in the pilot of a new, targeted email system with the local employment agency, [WorkSource](#). When individuals register with WorkSource, they select occupations that they have worked in or have interest in pursuing, and the system links their selections with [O*NET](#) codes. Using a database that is populated with information from registered job seekers, WorkSource is able to then send targeted emails to individuals with experience or interest in occupations associated with O*NET codes.

Using this system, the CATCH program has been able to send brief, positive recruiting messages that directly target individuals throughout Snohomish County who are interested in a healthcare career. The short messages focus on the benefits of the program, including key phrases such as “all expenses paid.” To date, CATCH has taken advantage of this system three times: October 2013, November 2013 and March 2014. Each time approximately 2,500 to 3,000 individuals looking for work were sent a recruiting message with details about the CATCH program. The O*NET codes targeted were selected by WorkSource, and the first two mailings focused on healthcare-related codes, while the third was targeted at entry-level positions. This targeted approach has produced excellent results, at no cost to CATCH, and the next email is planned for May 2014.

The October 2013 mailing to five O*NET codes resulted in 105 contacts for additional information. The CATCH recruitment navigator responded to each request via email with additional program information, a CATCH application, and contact information. After the recruitment navigator’s follow-up, CATCH received 15 applications, which resulted in nine assessments. Following the assessment, four individuals became part of the active treatment group, two were placed in the control group, and three were determined not ready for the

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program. These numbers represent approximately 20% of the CATCH program's treatment and control cohort goals.

The November 2013 email was sent to individuals expressing experience or interest in jobs related to seven O*NET codes. CATCH received 100 phone replies, which resulted in 20 applications and 14 assessments. Following the assessment, eight individuals became part of the active treatment group, four were placed in the control group, and two were determined not ready for the program. The March 2014 resulted in 75 replies, which ultimately led to eight applications, four assessments, and four individuals placed into the active group.

The October and November 2013 emails were more successful than the March 2014 mailing, although all led to enrollments in the CATCH program. It is possible that because the October and November mailings were so close together that some individuals received the message twice and were therefore more likely to request information. Additionally, WorkSource ultimately selected the O*NET codes that were targeted and this could have had varying results.

In using this approach, the largest challenge CATCH faced was lack of direct control of the system, particularly the O*NET codes that were targeted. To overcome this challenge, the CATCH program recruitment navigator has volunteered to be trained in and authorized to run the software for future mailings.

Overall, this approach highlights the value of technology in recruitment efforts and the broader network that can be built through partner relationships. This approach relied on CATCH having a strong relationship with Workforce Snohomish that made CATCH feel comfortable giving up some control and taking a chance on a new technology. As other agencies try new strategies, especially with technology, it can pay to volunteer to be the beta tester.

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Employer Engagement

21st Century Healthcare Works at Full Employment Council

The [Full Employment Council](#) (FEC)'s 21st Century Healthcare Works program, a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) provider funded by the Office of Family Assistance, has developed a comprehensive series of best practices to work directly with employers. FEC staff representatives negotiate and place training graduates into jobs in local medical facilities. This is accomplished by establishing long-term relationships with area employers, associations, and suppliers who represent the needs of the medical community.

The employer community is key to any medical training program that aims to provide employment opportunities and to improve the health of community members. A best practice is to leverage employer relationships by meeting with them on a regular basis and staying connected. By frequently engaging employers, FEC has been able to develop new partnerships, improve hiring processes, and obtain important feedback from employers.

These new partnerships have resulted in some hospitals adding FEC as a referral source in online applications. This establishes a connection between the employer and FEC. This connection also allows employer human resource departments to produce weekly reports that notify FEC that their graduates have submitted an application and the results of that experience to date. As a result of these partnerships, FEC has developed 170 business relationships with long-term care facilities and medical providers in the Greater Kansas City area.

FEC convenes roundtables, focus groups, and job fairs to educate employers and FEC business representatives about available employment opportunities. During these events, FEC business representatives are able to discuss with employers FEC's training programs and medical trends, as well as upcoming employment opportunities for FEC graduates. These events have positioned FEC as a valued resource for medical talent. Fifty-one percent of the Missouri Acute Care Facilities that are located in Kansas City now utilize FEC services for talent acquisition.

FEC has also implemented several other practices that help engage employers and be responsive to community and student needs. For example, FEC senior staff participate in the Missouri-Kansas Hospital Association's quarterly meetings, which provide staff an opportunity to network with hospital administrators and healthcare providers. FEC staff share program data

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and outcomes with association members to market FEC's training services. FEC has also forged a partnership with St Luke's Hospital, which has spawned innovative pilot programs, Preparados en Salud (PeS), to offer bi-lingual training and a customized career pathway in nursing for the growing Hispanic population in Kansas City.

The Full Employment Council has developed the partnerships and techniques described above to leverage its resources and meet the needs of FEC's community health care partners. This variety of innovative partnerships and pilot programs has provided opportunities for low-income residents to achieve self-sufficiency through employment. Since this employer engagement program began in 2012, outcomes have improved by 20%. Replication of this approach requires significant time and effort, but the long – term results will provide an excellent return on investment.

Promising Practices

Intensive Case Management

Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) at Gateway Community and Technical College

Workforce and training programs intended to help Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and other low-income persons transition from public assistance to economic self-sufficiency must provide more than educational opportunities. Case management is essential to student success. [Gateway Community and Technical College's HPOG program](#), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance, has demonstrated this with their intensive case management service for HPOG students. Gateway HPOG case managers are side-by-side with HPOG students from the moment they are accepted into the program until they graduate and move on to their first job.

The heart of the HPOG case manager's job is to motivate, empower and support students as they progress towards their education and employment goals along their pathway to a healthcare career. Student exit interview data revealed that 63% of those interviewed rated case management as the most beneficial service leading to their success completion in the program. Additionally, case management is consistently the most highly rated service provided to students through Gateway HPOG.

Once the student's application is approved for the HPOG program, a case manager is assigned. Through intensive case management students can access a broad range of services that provide a comprehensive and dynamic set of supports to help students acclimate and thrive within the college campus. Case managers help students understand their educational assessment results and match students with the right programs; prepare for certification exams; navigate class concerns and academic performance issues by connecting to tutoring and other study skills resources; and model important self-advocacy skills within the classroom. In addition, case managers conduct workshops on topics that students find beneficial, such as time management and stress reduction. They also recruit speakers for issues such as financial literacy, student skills and critical thinking. Most importantly, HPOG case managers help students access assistance with tuition, books, and supplies, emergency assistance funds for unexpected breakdowns and challenges with housing, child care and transportation. Case managers maintain a working knowledge of additional social services at the college and in the community-at-large to keep students motivated to stay the course to completion. The case managers engage

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HPOG student instructors to identify student challenges early on in the classroom and work together to address behavioral and/or academic concerns.

HPOG case managers use a variety of tools to maintain contact with students as they enter and proceed along the career training program. In addition to traditional face-to-face, phone and email contacts, staff rely heavily on Facebook to maintain a connection with students and to make sure they stay on track with program requirements. Staff routinely have hundreds of contacts with students across the various strategies utilized over the course of a month. Preliminary student feedback suggests that strong, caring relationships matter and are important success factors for Gateway HPOG's target population.

Despite the volume of contact case managers have with students, maintaining the connection with students once employed beyond program graduation has been a challenge. Ideally, Gateway HPOG would maintain contact to conduct regular placement check-in and information gathering on wage and career advancement. However, once students move into jobs it has been difficult to sustain a connection that is manageable for staff and helpful for the former student. One strategy that is yielding a degree of success is to lengthen the transition time from case manager to the job developer/employment specialist. Essentially, both staff work with the student concurrently during this transition to allow the job developer/employment specialist time to build trust and rapport with the student.

As a result of the intensive case management approach at Gateway HPOG, HPOG nurse aide students who made at least one contact with case managers were significantly more likely (10%) to be eligible to take the Kentucky Nurse Aide Testing (KNAT) exam than those who did not make contact with case managers at all. Likewise, the more HPOG service contacts nurse aide students received from staff, the more likely they were to complete the course and be eligible to take the KNAT test and then actually take and pass the exam.

From these results, Gateway HPOG is learning that intensive case management services are important components to academic achievement. They see what TANF recipients or other low-income students with significant barriers to academic achievement and employment can do with the right opportunities, right supports and right resources.

For other programs interested in an intensive case management approach, Gateway HPOG has learned that hiring the right people for the position is key. HPOG case managers not only need a thorough knowledge of the each training program's requirements, but the campus and community supports as well. Most students have complex of needs and barriers that can easily knock them off course. The case manager is literally the frontline lead coach, navigator and

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support system. As such, the case manager must be adept at wearing multiple hats, being several places at once (at least virtually), and most importantly, demonstrate in the day-to-day interactions with students that they care about student success.

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Employer Roundtables

Health Profession Opportunity Program at Gateway Technical College

The [Health Profession Opportunity Program \(HPOP\)](#) at Gateway Technical College, a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance, began implementing roundtable breakfasts for local employers as part of a multi-faceted employer engagement strategy in the Fall of 2012 as a way to increase job placements for graduating HPOP students. The employer roundtables are promotional opportunities for the HPOP program, specifically offering information about recent or upcoming graduates. However, they are also valuable forums for employers to share information and learn new information that can improve their organizational culture and practice. Each roundtable event includes peer-facilitated small group discussions along with a keynote speaker from a local employer with expertise on the designated topic. In addition to the employer roundtables, Gateway HPOP connects to local employers through an employer newsletter, a web-based resume database, and HPOP-coordinated employee recruitment events.

Since Gateway HPOP started hosting the employer roundtable breakfasts in the fall of 2012, awareness among local employers about the HPOP program has increased significantly. As a result of the value employers have gained from their participation in the roundtables, the program is now receiving more inquiries about graduating students seeking employment. Even more important, employers have increasingly been calling HPOP staff seeking candidates for open positions before posting them. In addition, they are telling staff to make sure HPOP graduates make note of their HPOP training on their resumes, applications, and in the interviews.

The employer roundtables are the responsibility of Gateway HPOP's outreach specialist. The outreach specialist is the primary coordinator for all activities leading up to and following the employer roundtable events including: identification of engaging and relevant topics for the roundtable events, securing a location, identifying local speakers, promoting the event, and disseminating roundtable themes and lessons learned to local employers afterwards. Gateway HPOP sponsors an employer roundtable once per semester and has just recently started rotating the venue between the urban and rural campuses. The foundation setting work of the outreach specialist before and after the roundtables is an essential key for success.

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Though Gateway HPOP has received great feedback from local employers about the roundtable breakfasts, one of the greatest challenges they've confronted is getting consistent numbers of employers to come to a breakfast for two hours. Scheduling these events during times when busy healthcare professionals can attend has been difficult. The outreach specialist has learned the importance of regular and frequent updates prior to roundtables as well as providing a meeting summary afterwards. Hosting the roundtables first thing in the morning has helped with this. Also, having a standing schedule that allows employers to miss one and re-engage at the next roundtable is beneficial. Lastly, offering food helps. No matter how interesting the topic HPOP has found that offering food during the morning time slots improves attendance.

Another challenge encountered with the employer roundtable breakfasts has been finding appropriate expertise locally and selecting a current hot topic within healthcare. These issues require consistent and frequent visits, updates, and check-ins with local employers. The outreach specialist is able to maintain a working knowledge of relevant issues and local experts that have information on data, strategies, or resources to address shared concerns among local employers. It has been invaluable to have the outreach specialist focused on the employer engagement activities, like the employer roundtable breakfasts, on a full-time basis.

The employer roundtable breakfasts have been a very successful channel for connecting Gateway HPOP with local healthcare employers. Local employers view the Gateway HPOP program as a viable resource for prospective employees and as offering relevant information to improve their healthcare organizations overall. However, it is important to note that employer outreach and engagement is only one piece of the puzzle. If the instruction Gateway HPOP students received hadn't properly prepared students to perform to expectation on the job, the program would have little credibility in the eyes of its local employers. The competence and support of HPOP instructors has also been instrumental to our success with employers.

Though preliminary, review of employer feedback suggests employer roundtables are contributing to a more robust training-to-employment pipeline. Specifically, Gateway HPOP has experienced greater engagement by employers in its largest career fair event, the Evening of Excellence. Gateway HPOP has also seen an increase in employer attendance at its Health Science Open House, an event that invites local employers to learn more about the training available at Gateway Technical in the health sciences, including HPOP.

Though it goes without saying that employers are essential partners in HPOP's efforts to transition low-income workers into high demand healthcare professions, workforce and training programs can strengthen employer partnerships by actively seeking ways to identify and

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address the needs of local employers. Also, it is important to have dedicated staff focused on engaging employers within one's organization. It is simply not realistic to expect employers to come to learn about a training program and its students. Human resource professionals are so busy within this quickly growing industry. Regular contact complemented by relevant and timely information helps build a strong foundation of trust and mutual benefit.

Promising Practices

Participant Recruitment

Kansas Health Profession Opportunity Project (KHPOP) at Kansas Department of Commerce

The Kansas Health Profession Opportunity Project (KHPOP) provides healthcare career training via local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs). Supported by the [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) funded by the Office of Family Assistance, these local boards (Local Areas 1-5) serve job seekers in each of the five regions across the State. Local Area 1, Kansas WorkforceONE, is responsible for a 63 county area in the Northwest portion of the State. Within this local area, KHPOP staff work with local training providers to conduct onsite program information sessions. During these sessions, staff explain how the KHPOP program can support students -many of whom already have entry level certified nursing assistance (CNA) or certified medical assistant (CMA) credentials – in advancing their careers. The presentation focuses on how KHPOP can support these students in their continued training and career laddering goals. The students who attend these meetings – in addition to holding valid entry level credentials – have also already completed the prerequisites for nursing education, but because the wages they earned at their entry level jobs were so low they were unable to pursue additional training. KHPOP addresses this gap by supporting their higher level training needs. These students are income-eligible for KHPOP services, because of the low wages they received in their entry level positions, enabling them to further their training and advance on their journey to self-sufficiency.

Local Area 1 began this program at one school in 2012. This year, they expanded to all partner schools in the area. Using this outreach strategy, Local Area 1 has enrolled 77 participants in higher level HPOG-funded training which exceeded their target for 2014. Participants are mastering their coursework, passing their boards, and – in many cases – going on to additional career ladders. Staff in the Local Area report that this recruitment strategy can be particularly valuable for programs at later stages of operations where ongoing recruitment in the community may be challenging. When thinking about the future of these career laddering participants, Kansas anticipates very high rates of completion and employment entry, along with living wages that will move participants out of poverty and into self-sufficiency.

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Public-Private Partnership in the Health Care Job Sector

Careerworks Healthcare Training Institute at the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB)

To enhance training experiences for [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) participants seeking opportunities in healthcare employment at entry-levels, MAWIB decided to enter into an agreement with Aurora Health Care (Aurora), a not-for-profit health care system serving eastern Wisconsin, in May 2011 to provide state-of-the-art certified nursing assistant (CNA) training to [CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute](#) (HTI) program participants in a hospital setting. HTI is MAWIB's one-stop training and education center for low-income individuals seeking work in the health care field and is funded by the Health Profession Opportunity Grants from the Office of Family Assistance.

Aurora's training program is exceptional in that it offers the CNA training in a hospital setting, which provides students with hands-on learning opportunities and more readily translates to job offers by area hospitals. MAWIB chose to partner with Aurora in this CNA training program because Aurora's reputation in its training programs is highly respected locally, regionally, and nationally. In a [2005 article](#) on Milwaukee's evolution away from a manufacturing-based economy, the Wall Street Journal highlighted Aurora's training programs and philosophy as an example of where the future lies. The author noted that with its "13 hospitals, more than 100 clinics and 140 community pharmacies in eastern Wisconsin...Aurora gives entry-level employees opportunities to advance through in-house training programs and tuition reimbursement."

Prior to this partnership, HTI was overwhelmed with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other low-income persons seeking the CNA entry level healthcare training. Finding available slots at qualified training vendors was a challenge and most private vendors did not offer the clinical training experience often required by hiring healthcare employer partners. MAWIB was fortunate to have an Aurora employer "champion" on its Employer Advisory Team who approached her senior level Aurora managers to suggest opening the Aurora CNA

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class to HPOG participants. Although state certified, the Aurora Health Care CNA Training Program was private and available only to Aurora employees, so it was a big accomplishment when HTI was given the opportunity to refer its participants.

While MAWIB appreciated the opportunity to refer HTI participants to the Aurora CNA training program, it found that that eight person classes usually filled up quickly with Aurora employees and when one to two spots did become available, HTI was often given insufficient notice to identify, prepare, and refer eligible participants. Moreover, the training facility used was small and located outside the central city where most HTI participants lived, which limited the number of spots available for HTI participants and made it difficult for HTI to find eligible participants with the ability to attend.

To address some of these issues and better serve HTI participants, MAWIB's Aurora "champion" approached her employer with a new proposal to expand and relocate the training facility. The main challenge was how the relocation and expansion of this project could be funded. The project required preparing the new space and purchasing all the necessary equipment to equip a clinical training classroom. Also, additional nurse training staff would be needed to meet state requirements for the increased staff size. To meet these challenges, MAWIB utilized funds from a private foundation for the initial investment of \$20,000 and Aurora agreed to reinvest the training fees for HTI participants back into the project over an extended period of time sufficient to cover all costs associated with the project expansion.

The new larger training facility is located on the Aurora St. Luke's Hospital campus, an acute care hospital facility, which can guarantee up to seven slots in each class for HTI participants. Prior to the grand opening, which was held in August 2012, nurse managers and recruiters from major healthcare systems were invited to tour the facility and encouraged to refer candidates. Since this expansion, three groups of CNA students have been served through this partnership: (1) candidates recruited by Aurora human resources recruiters who conduct initial assessments to determine eligibility for MAWIB's HTI program; (2) candidates recruited and enrolled by HTI sites that were screened and referred to the Aurora CNA training program; and (3) employees of other healthcare systems that are identified partners of HTI who meet eligibility criteria for HTI services and are seeking CNA training and certification to advance in their careers with their current employer.

The results speak largely for themselves. Since May 2011, of the 148 HTI participants that enrolled in the Aurora CNA training program, 84 were hired by Aurora after completing their training, while others were hired by other health care employers or chose to continue with their studies to obtain a nursing degree. Sixty-two of 84 remain employed at Aurora currently,

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and many of these individuals have enrolled in or completed other health care education to further their careers.

MAWIB's successful partnership with Aurora is the model that they are currently using to build and expand their public-private relationship with other healthcare systems, and they anticipate it to be the foundation of sustaining HTI after federal funding ends. This initiative is an excellent example of the value of collaboration and partnership, as Aurora works closely with MAWIB and area employers to ensure that when students graduate they are job-ready candidates that have already completed specialized training in a hospital setting. MAWIB credits their employer champion at Aurora as critical to getting this partnership off the ground and allowing for its expansion. Other programs looking to implement similar training efforts should seek out similar employer champions – they can be the linchpin to help cut through the bureaucracies that can often act as barriers to establishing viable and mutually beneficial partnerships.

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Peer Support Group Service

New Hampshire Health Profession Opportunity Project (NH HPOP) at New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs

While many training programs intend to help low-income individuals get employed by reducing barriers to financial self-sufficiency, eligible applicants often need additional supports to learn the skills necessary to fulfill their educational and employment goals. The capacity to set goals, devise plans for achievement, solve problems and engage social supports to address challenges are critical to the success of the participants served in the [New Hampshire Health Profession Opportunity Project](#) (NH HPOP), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance.

The peer support group service helps participants identify personal goals and then work together towards attaining them while learning skills critical to successful performance in a team environment. The peer support groups are facilitated in-person workshops and virtual forums designed to build the skills needed to succeed in the classroom and on the job. NH HPOP utilized a cohort model to reinforce soft skills and develop informal social supports to promote resilience.

This strategy was developed after a review of NH HPOP program results revealed lagging completions and job placement numbers for enrolled students. Specifically, students were enrolling into the program but not progressing in the estimated timeframe. Local employers indicated a set of core skills and competencies most valuable in new hires including demonstrated abilities to think critically, creatively solve problems and work well in a team based environment. NH HPOP, therefore, constructed the peer support enhancement service to (1) facilitate improved student engagement and capacity building and (2) improve student success, particularly completion and job placement numbers.

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In addition to standard case management and job development services, peer support group participants participate in an in-person orientation meeting, six 1.5-hour workshop courses and a wrap-up session for a total commitment of eight months. During this time, there is one face-to-face interaction monthly followed by on-line content to reinforce workshop lessons, additional discussions on relevant topics and peer interactions. The design of the program maintains frequent contact with participants through virtual tools like cell phone, text, and Facebook as a way to bolster newly forming social networks as well as keep focused on action steps towards specified goals. Course sessions cover a range of topics, including those on goal setting, advocacy and values, professional culture and conflict resolution. As an attendance incentive participants are also given a \$10 gift card for their participation.

An early challenge in implementing this approach was building an extensive and accessible network of community-based services to support students' real-life needs. Case managers and job developers are also essential partners for student success and therefore must be seamlessly integrated into the peer support group without necessarily being in the sessions. NH HPOP had to ensure the interface between the peer support group facilitators and case managers and/or job developers was timely and relevant to meet student needs. To accomplish this, NH HPOP gives students a series of information sheets to complete. The sheets are submitted to the peer support group facilitator, who then shares them with the project manager who ensures identified needs get to the right staff person to respond.

New Hampshire has been using this strategy since the Fall of 2013. Within this relatively short timeframe, NH HPOP is beginning to see early indications of improved student participation, and there appears to be an increase in satisfaction with the program by those receiving the peer support group service. As a result of the peer support group service, New Hampshire HPOP anticipates increased student completions and improved job placement as students strengthen technical and relational competencies.

If other programs are interested in this approach, they should be sure to have a skilled and qualified facilitator as well as a strong peer-driven curriculum. NH HPOP did not just want a peer support group for students, but an integrated curriculum that incorporated employer feedback and would contribute to student success within the classroom, on the job and in all areas of life. Incorporating within that an opportunity for similarly situated graduates to come back and share their advice and mentorship has also proven to be a powerful demonstration for current students and is motivating them to succeed.

Promising Practices

Using Kiosks to Increase Program Visibility

Health Profession Opportunity Grant Program at Pensacola State College

[Pensacola State College's \(PSC\) Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG\)](#) program is an effort funded by the Office of Family Assistance's [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#). As part of their funding, PSC has enrollment thresholds to reach, therefore marketing and outreach are critical parts of the program's success. In an effort to increase the program's visibility and to increase enrollment numbers, program leadership have purchased three kiosks for placement in agencies or locations where target populations are likely to frequent. The kiosks, which PSC ordered from Olea Kiosk Inc., have both PSC and HPOG logos and were installed by PSC's MIS Department using a copy of the college software. Each kiosk mainframe model has a 19' monitor and allows users to access the PSC HPOG site for information and a printable application.

PSC program staff plan to rotate the kiosks into different agencies to reach their target populations, to increase familiarity with the PSC HPOG brand and ultimately to increase interest and enrollment. In April 2014, the kiosks were placed in the local Catholic Charities office, the Escambia County Homeless Coalition and the local Head Start office. These locations were strategically chosen, as each serve the populations that PSC targets for participation in HPOG – TANF eligible and other low-income individuals in households with income at or below the 200% federal poverty level who live within commuting distance of Pensacola State College.

The kiosks have been successful in reaching a wider audience of individuals in the Pensacola area. The Escambia County Homeless Coalition, which aims to prevent and eliminate homelessness, has been pleased with the system and reports that it is working well. When Coalition clients express an interest in returning to school, staff direct them to the kiosk for information about PSC and the HPOG program.

The local Head Start office has added the kiosk to their resource room. "The kiosk has definitely been noticed by all parents who come [in]," said one staff member. Many of the

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parents Head Start works with are looking for a better job or education assistance. The kiosk, along with other print materials about HPOG, have provided Head Start staff with an easy conversation starter about parents' work or education interests and future. One staff member alone reported that she has worked with 10 parents to explore the HPOG program using the kiosk.

PSC is also developing a questionnaire to assess the frequency and use of the kiosks. The questionnaire would be completed by partner agencies housing the kiosks and ask questions about daily usage and referrals to the HPOG program. Questions may include: (1) On average how many individuals use the kiosk? (2) On average how many HPOG applications are printed at your facility? (3) On average, how many individuals ask specific questions in addition to using the kiosk? (4) On average, how many individuals do you refer to PSC HPOG?

Asking these questions of partner agencies will allow PSC to assess how the kiosks are being used and where they may be best situated to increase PSC HPOG's accessibility and reach within the Pensacola community.

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Participation in the Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self Sufficiency (ISIS) Evaluation Study

Pathways to Healthcare at Pima Community College

In 2012, the Pima Community College (PCC) [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project of the Office of Family Assistance (HPOG), [Pathways to Healthcare](#), joined the Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self Sufficiency (ISIS) study. The ISIS study is evaluating nine innovative career pathways programs, and is funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. As part of the ISIS study, Pathways to Healthcare recruited and randomly assigned 1,220 individuals into treatment and control groups.

The idea of entering into a research study with 50/50 random assignment ratio (50% of consenting participants assigned into the treatment group and 50% of consenting participants assigned into the control group) elicited many concerns. These included increased time commitment, the ability to recruit a sufficient number of program applicants to meet both study and HPOG program goals, and addressing potential negative reactions from partners and stakeholders. Working through these concerns with OPRE and Abt Associates, the program's evaluator, PCC agreed to participate in ISIS because it provided an opportunity to contribute knowledge development that could influence future directions in career pathway programs.

The Pathways program faced multiple challenges while implementing the study. Early challenges included coordinating with program partner Pima County One Stop (PCOS), the location of random assignment (RA), and adjusting the participant intake schedule to accommodate the hour and a half long RA appointments. It was essential to provide ongoing training of Pathways staff at both PCC and PCOS on understanding research protocol and data security measures. Pathways leadership needed to educate staff on "substantial services" and the importance of not providing them to the control group. PCC had to create extensive data tracking tools to be able to report to Abt Associates on the status of treatment participants in HPOG, as well as

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audit points for PCC and PCOS in tracking control participants to ensure they did not return to random assignment or receive any form of substantial services.

Secondly, and perhaps the most difficult challenge for Pathways, was to communicate with program partners and community-based organizations regarding their fears and concerns about randomly assigning Pathways participants. Extensive time and effort were taken to educate all Pathways stakeholders and potential participant referral sources to remove any misinformation about RA and to clearly define all the services and options still available to the control group, thus taking the fear out of referring individuals.

Third, participating in ISIS necessitated an increase in time and money invested into outreach and marketing. Pathways implemented a variety of strategies to increase program interest. Marketing strategies included the use of radio ads, television commercials, local weekly newspaper advertisements, Craigslist, and bus posters. Job fairs, community-based organization outreach, and increasing contact with partnering agencies have continued to be the most effective means of participant recruitment.

Fourth, Abt Associates required evaluation of multiple data points regarding treatment students that were not available in PRS, HPOG's data collection system. The purpose of such data was to be able to assess trends that are not currently calculated in the PRS system. Examples of these data points that are not in PRS include average days from the RA appointment to being training ready, length of time from RA to key program benchmarks, and average time for a participant requiring developmental education to enter an occupational training program.

The Abt Associates research team provided constant support and expertise to guide and assist the Pathways program through all the facets and challenges of the study. With regular team calls, site visits, and annual partners meetings, the Pathways program felt well supported.

While there were many challenges, there were also many benefits to participating in ISIS. PCC and the Pathways program have learned how to conduct random assignment for a study, including best practices in communicating with stakeholders about research study participation. PCC has also expanded its abilities and knowledge on effective marketing methods for specialty programs. Increased tracking created extensive data collection that has been used to support PCC in making data driven decisions when evaluating program points and system improvements. Further, PCC will benefit by being included in an impact study, implementation study, and cost benefit study.

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Based on research needs, Pathways staff expanded their methods for capturing and analyzing data. Abt Associates provided technical support and guidance with data tracking and analysis. With the availability of data above and beyond what was previously captured, Pathways leadership and staff expanded their ability to make time-sensitive program decisions affecting program quality and program outcomes.

By participating in ISIS, the Pathways to Healthcare program will have program evaluation results utilizing the gold standard of research – random assignment. The results from the study will affect how the college and the community approach career pathways and will have an impact on the future direction for funding of career pathways programming. Participating in ISIS has afforded PCC the experience to confidently apply for other funding opportunities that include a research component, as Pathways now has the expertise and procedures in place to implement such studies.

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Healthcare Open House

Allied Health Career Pipeline Program at Hostos Community College

As part their commitment to increasing employment opportunities for low-incomes populations in and around their target communities, program staff at [Hostos Community College's Allied Health Career Pipeline Program \(AHCPP\)](#), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project of the Office of Family Assistance has well-defined enrollment goals. To achieve these, AHCPP builds community awareness of the program's offerings and views these efforts as critical components of the program's success, particularly with regard to enrollment. Accordingly, AHCPP program staff, in partnership with the Hostos Community College, Continuing Education Department, held an open house in February of 2014 to increase enrollment into the AHCPP program. The open house was created for potential students to learn about the program's offerings including training for community health workers, patient care technicians (PCTs), pharmacy technicians, and New York State certified nurse assistants (CNAs). In addition participants learned about GED preparation (in the context of healthcare) and supportive services including case management, childcare, transportation assistance, examination preparation courses, tutoring, enhanced career-focused internships and job placement and retention assistance.

Presenters included program staff and staff from the Continuing Education Department who were available to answer participants' questions and to provide additional guidance about enrolling in programs of interest. AHCPP program staff also provided on-the-spot Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) registration at the event to encourage participants to follow through on their interest. Thirty attendees registered to take the exam. Program staff continue to follow up with all the potential students to administer the TABE test and to enroll eligible participants.

The open house was a success in terms of sheer numbers—there were 80 attendees, 29 of whom requested to be contacted for additional information. Of those 29 potential students, 26 returned to the AHCPP offices to take the TABE test; eleven of those tested enrolled while seven were assigned to the control group while the remaining participant were either deemed ineligible or are in the process of being retested. In addition to its impact on current enrollment, the open house had the effect of increasing community awareness of AHCPP,

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which will help the program meet its future recruitment goals. Given its success, AHCPP plans to hold another event with the Continuing Education Department in the summer of 2014.

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Employer Engagement Socials

Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry at San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc.

During the third year of [San Diego Workforce Partnership's](#) (SDWP) [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) funded project by the Office of Family Assistance, San Diego's contractors and partners were heavily engaged in outreach and recruitment activities. Recruitment and enrollment strategies were working well, but employment strategies were suffering. What was needed were methods to identify employer needs and hiring practices and meaningfully connect with healthcare providers.

SDWP re-purposed some of its funds so that its sub-contractors could each hire a full time business services staff person to build employer relationships and participate in its new Employer Outreach Team. In turn, the Employer Outreach Team, led by SDWP Business Services Representative, Dan Cabrera, decided to develop special Employer Social events that would bring students and employers together in a social/networking environment. During these events, employers would present information informally and participants could ask them questions in a safe, neutral environment. These socials would give participants face-to-face time with employers before they began their formal job search. The relaxed environment would help dispel some of the anxiety new job seekers feel when they start interviewing.

SDWP began these Employer Socials at the end of 2013 and will be holding them quarterly. In off months, students are invited to participate in mock interview events and work readiness clinics. Program data has not validated the successes of the Employer Social events at this early date, but anecdotal evidence shows indications of early positive outcomes. For example, several of SDWP's sub-contractors are already seeing results: Four students from sub-contractor MAAC South were hired after their March 2014 employer social, eleven after Comprehensive Training Services' event and four after North County Lifeline's.

To supplement SDWP's Employer Socials, SDWP's HPOG Project Director, Cindy Perry, created an innovative matrix, which contains information from each employer regarding the type of healthcare provider they are, the occupations for which they have the greatest need, the skills that are most important in each occupation and their on-boarding process for applicants. Each SDWP business services staff person adds information to the matrix when they

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meet with a new healthcare provider. This ensures that staff is not contacting the same businesses asking the same questions. It also helps to create awareness of SDWP's work in the county and helps the program identify the best and new employers to participate in the Employer Socials effort.

SDWP's Employer Outreach Team and Socials have helped healthcare providers in San Diego realize their workforce needs and has poised SDWP to help this industry meet its demands going forward. Today, many employers look to SDWP to fill their vacant positions before pursuing their traditional recruitment activities. A year ago, no employers provided SDWP with exclusive access to open positions. After just five months of Employer Socials, two employers now seek SDWP students prior to offering their opportunities to the general public.

If other programs are interested in pursuing this approach they should ensure they have the resources and leadership support. SDWP reallocated resources to support these efforts and its business services representatives. Leadership was also an important component. Business representative staff needed a strong leader to bring them together, coach them and convene the team around a common goal. SDWP's goal has been to improve employer engagement and increase student job placements. Through the development of its Employer Outreach Team, Employer Socials and employer matrices it has begun to do so in a thorough, collaborative and community-responsive way.

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Strategy to Resolve Transportation Barriers

Health Profession Opportunity Grant at Schenectady County Community College

Schenectady County Community College operates the [Health Profession Opportunity Grant \(HPOG\)](#), a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project of the Office of Family Assistance. HPOG includes training for home health aides (HHA), based in part on program staff's research and solicitation of feedback from local employers that have said that there is increasing demand for this occupation in their area. However, one of the major barriers to employment for HHA graduates relates to their lack of autonomous transportation. Given the varying hours and assignments that are often associated with employment in the HHA field, it is important that workers have reliable transportation. Also, some home health agencies either require ownership of a vehicle (mainly for insurance purposes) or access to assignments/cases that are not located on public transportation routes. Unfortunately, the vast majority of HHA graduates do not have the requisite resources to acquire a reliable vehicle. Therefore, despite the fact that the SCCC program has met job placement goals, the transportation issue threatens to impact employment retention goals over the life of the program. SCCC program staff began to think creatively about identifying alternative funding sources to help graduates get reliable transportation. Program staff first reached out to a local credit union to work out funding arrangements, at favorable rates, for HHA graduates to purchase vehicles but the program's proposal was not accepted by the credit union.

Program staff then turned to another project with which is it a collaborative partner – the Schenectady City Mission's (City Mission) "Employer Resource Network." The Network offers employers an opportunity to improve retention and productivity through a low cost shared success coach. During strategic planning sessions for the Network, program staff learned about faith-based organizations that have vehicles and drivers that only use them for specific times (e.g., Sundays and special holidays). Those vehicles and drivers could serve as reliable transportation for the HHA training graduates. The only missing links are a dispatcher and dispatch software that would maximize the routes and ensure efficiency of the process overall. SCCC HPOG foresees a two-part process to implement this new, reliable transportation partnership between itself and the City Mission. The first phase of the partnership would be to

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develop a feasibility plan through the use of data provided by employers. The second phase would be to implement a small pilot that would involve 10 willing home health aides who do not currently have vehicles. Program staff anticipate that the first phase will occur over the course of five months, beginning in April 2014 and that the pilot will occur in September 2014. SCCC has seen significant improvement in the number of participants employed in healthcare (from 68% at the end of 2013 to 74% as of March 2014) since refocusing their efforts on increasing student employment goals and expect to see additional increases this year as a result of the transportation intervention.

SCCC HPOG has already contracted with Schenectady City Mission. Under the contract, the partners will reach out to at least four home care agencies interested in participating in the effort. The City Mission will be the employer of record for drivers and dispatchers based on the schedule and needs of the employer and the partners will coordinate work with a local software company to adapt existing software for the use of homecare agencies. The contract also stipulates that the partners will actively work with faith-based organizations to gain access to their vehicles and drivers and reimburse them for the cost of wear and tear, miles and portion of insurance.

Many promising practices are illustrated in the planning phases of this innovative effort. For example, SCCC HPOG has demonstrated the importance of community involvement—without having been involved in the discussion and strategic planning sessions in the Schenectady City Mission’s initiative, SCCC HPOG program staff would not have been aware of the transportation resources available to their target communities. SCCC HPOG has also demonstrated the benefits of active employer engagement, without which program staff were provided additional insights into placement and retention gaps, needs and opportunities. Lastly, SCCC HPOG’s participation in the strategic planning process has made community members more aware of its program offerings; increasing the potential for additional connections that can impact sustainability, enrollment and overall program visibility.

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Job Placement Assistance

Project HOPE at South Carolina Department of Social Services

Job placement assistance is a service provided by the South Carolina Department of Social Services' [Project HOPE](#) a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance. Many students who are enrolled in Project HOPE need to have a stream of income to support their families and themselves while completing training certifications required for higher-paying healthcare jobs. Project HOPE designed its HPOG program with job placement assistance services as a resource for participants from the very beginning.

Project HOPE has four job developers covering a four-region service area to provide placement assistance services. Job developers help Project HOPE participants locate employment to meet basic needs as well as work requirements for those receiving public assistance. For example, any vendor who provides public benefits such as childcare, transportation or food assistance, may also hire Project HOPE participants while they complete training and certifications.

Job developers visit Project HOPE Boot Camps during the first week. The Project HOPE boot camp is an intensive training that introduces program candidates to the type of commitment needed to complete coursework, as well as enhance their prerequisite skill sets. The primary objective of the boot camp approach is to provide a realistic environment where students must learn to adapt to demanding situations typically encountered during their healthcare training and professional life. Job developers meet Project HOPE students to review individualized student assessments, including students' personal and financial situations to determine the best job fit and work with students to develop résumés and complete generic work applications to demonstrate students' work histories. They also talk with students to determine what kinds of jobs they might be interested in and that are compatible with their home location, transportation situation and childcare needs.

Job developers forge good relationships with employers to facilitate work opportunities for Project HOPE students. They contact employers to make them aware of the project and the services provided. They meet with employers to determine available positions that match the knowledge and skill levels of project participants. They also conduct mock interviews with students, prepare students to dress for success and share other soft skills necessary to

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successfully attain and retain jobs. Employers are encouraged to call job developers to discuss any on-the-job issues they have with project students to ensure fast problem resolution.

It is challenging to find employers that offer the flexible part-time work hours at a rate of pay necessary to support student expenses while attending school. Project HOPE hired job developers who have business backgrounds and can provide targeted supervision and capacity building training to individuals with multiple barriers to academic achievement and employment. The job developers also work closely with regional and statewide Project HOPE staff to ensure students are not overwhelmed by their class, work and study loads, and offer timely access to additional services to support continued student progress where needed.

The job development assistance program has been a useful tool for Project HOPE and its participants. The majority of the students enrolled in Project HOPE simply must have some stream of income to support themselves while completing educational requirements. Job development assistance helps students identify jobs that provide the flexibility Project HOPE students need to progress academically and simultaneously meet the financial needs of their families. And in fact, preliminary data shows that 52% of students currently enrolled in Project HOPE are going to school and also working as a result of job developer assistance. Without this help, many students would not be able to continue participating in the program.

Job developers are the face of Project HOPE with employers throughout the state, and therefore must possess a varied set of skills including an understanding of labor markets, marketing and sales, mentoring and coaching, and quality assurance. Project HOPE's job developers provide a critical bridge connecting program mission, student employment goals and employer needs and are responsible for creating mutually beneficial outcomes for all involved.

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A Recruiting Firm Business Model

Pathways to Health Care Occupations at Southland Health Care Forum

[Southland Health Care Forum](#) (SHCF) a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) (HPOG) provider funded by the Office of Family Assistance has developed a number of human resource supports to help businesses attract and retain top talent. This model was initiated in December 2013 with the goal to reduce the time and costs associated with hiring new employees in south suburban Chicago, Illinois. The Forum's business representatives create a unique recruiting strategy to meet each company's hiring needs. The business model is designed to ensure that a company will hire—and retain—quality, reliable employees.

As job orders are placed with SHCF, business representatives can search through an extensive resume database to identify prospective candidates that match an employers' job description and requirements. Business representatives will contact candidates with matching skill sets, and, should an employer desire, schedule interviews on the prospective employer's behalf.

SHCF offers complimentary office space at its two locations to hold employer interviews. A professional office suite and conference room can be reserved at **no charge**. The facility includes Internet connections, office equipment, marker boards, easel pads and speakerphones.

When an employer informs SHCF of job specifications, a business representative refers well-matched candidates to available job openings. Staff are flexible and work at the employer's convenience. SHCF business representatives customize every step of the hiring process to fit employer needs. SHCF can also create customized hiring events at its satellite office in Matteson, IL or at the employer's company location, allowing an employer to interview multiple candidates at once.

The program also offers free consultations to employers interested in taking advantage of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a federal incentive program that offers a tax credit to businesses of up to \$2400 per eligible hire. Overall, this practice offers many benefits, at no cost, to employers, including:

- Assistance increasing their pool of qualified candidates.

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- Pre-screened candidates for employer job openings.
- Customized solutions for workforce challenges as an extension of the employer's HR Department.
- Assistance applying for federal tax credits that can reduce federal tax payments per eligible hire.
- Complimentary conference room space to hold interviews.

This practice also has many benefits for the SHCF. Improving their ability to better manage/control job seeker and employer interactions, this practice leads to greater placement coordination and success. Utilizing a recruiting business model enforces the relationship of the job developer/employment account executive as the central point of contact; reducing potential confusion that may occur during initial candidate/employer meetings. This formal meeting structure also ensures a candidate is well prepared for the employer interview. Typically, job developers are the last to know if a hired candidate is having difficulty on the job or if the employer has terminated him or her. This recruiting model has the candidate and employer communicating concerns or issues to an employment account executive to resolve through discussion, up-training, required certificates/documents and supportive services. The recruiting model's enhanced communications strategies have increased job placement rates for program participants by 15% and led to entry level wage increases of 9% above previous goals. It is anticipated that long-term retention rates will see similar increases in the near future.

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Student Orientation and Mid Semester Support Group

Project SCHOOL at Suffolk County Department of Labor

The Suffolk County Department of Labor in Hauppauge, New York has been a grantee of the [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) program funded by the Office of Family Assistance since 2010. In February 2012, Project SCHOOL (Suffolk County Health Occupational Opportunity for Learning) implemented a two-part group orientation for all participants that addresses student retention, completion and achievement. It was believed that this innovation would enhance the students' experience, lead to better grades, stronger student retention and completion rates.

The Student Orientation meeting, held at the One Stop Employment Center prior to the start of classes, is an opportunity for scholarship recipients to meet classmates and to address concerns and questions. The meeting is also an opportunity for facilitators to explain the unique features and benefits this program offers. Students are reassured that they will receive the support and encouragement necessary to alleviate any fear or trepidation that arises when embarking upon a new endeavor.

At the first group meeting, students are given tips for balancing home-life responsibilities such as childcare, school and study time. Students are also encouraged to stay positive while addressing any challenges as they arise. They are urged to partner with other productive students and to mentor one another. Halfway through the semester, students return to the One Stop Employment Center for a Mid-Semester Support Group Meeting. At this time, students discuss their coursework, their challenges and next steps after graduation – job searching! The support team offers the students training on resume development, interviewing skills, networking and job search strategies. Students are reminded to utilize the placement services at their schools as well as the resources at the One Stop Center. Tours of the Center are given along with handouts of upcoming job fairs, employee recruitments and schedules of events at the Center. Additional supportive services are also offered, as needed.

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As an example of this process, Fran and Cindy, both prospective certified nursing assistant students at Western Suffolk Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) attended one of the first orientations. They then returned for their mid-semester meeting. Cindy shared how she had been failing, feeling overwhelmed and rethinking her decision to return to school earlier in the program. She was close to quitting the whole thing. But, as Cindy explained, Fran “took her under her wing” and called Cindy each night to offer words of encouragement and support. They would discuss the class material and soon they were studying together. Cindy credited the bond she formed with Fran at the orientation for driving her to continue her studies and to achieve her dream of graduating. By the mid-semester meeting, Cindy’s grades had improved and she had a new found confidence and outlook.

As Project SCHOOL progressed and more students entered the program, Fran’s and Cindy’s story was retold. Suffolk County Department of Labor has heard countless stories similar to theirs over the years. There have been many examples of friendships, support and encouragement in subsequent groups that have resulted in students taking pride in their determination and accomplishments. Since this innovation has begun, over 450 students have attended these orientations and mid-semester meetings. By instituting the two-part group orientation and support meetings, Project SCHOOL has achieved a 10% improvement in students’ completion rates. Part of this success can be attributed to how the program has clearly defined and implemented support services such as the buddy system and job search preparation. The meetings also occur at key junctures during students’ progression through the program.

This strategy has also been successful, in part, because Project SCHOOL used staff with training experience to facilitate the meetings. The project also researched the most pertinent information to share with students and restructured certain employee’s schedules to meet the demands of meeting preparation and follow-up. Staffing and finding mutually convenient times for the meetings was a challenge – with staff juggling numerous, varied responsibilities. But, the project has been able to adjust responsibilities accordingly and implement the meetings successfully.

If other programs are considering implementing a similar approach, they should design their interactive group meetings based on the potential positive effect they may have on participants. Every meeting should have a defined purpose and all participants should leave the meeting feeling more comfortable and empowered than they were prior to it. Feedback should be strongly encouraged as well. There should always be an open dialogue between facilitators and participants.

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HIP Career Exploration Symposium 2014

Health Information Professions (HIP) Career Pathways Initiative Program at Temple University

On Wednesday, January 15th, 2014, [Temple University's Health Information Professions \(HIP\) Career Pathways Initiative Program](#) (a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) program funded by the Office of Family Assistance) held a career exploration symposium. The symposium was titled, *The HIP Career Exploration Symposium* and was created for community members and potential participants to: 1) explore and learn about the growing field of Health Information; 2) learn about how to enter and progress in the field; 3) learn about the HIP program's eligibility requirements; and 4) explore additional training opportunities in the field. Through this effort, program staff wanted to create an environment in which potential trainees could learn about the program's requirements and opportunities for growth in the health information field. Ultimately, the HIP staff wanted to ensure that participants were positioned to make informed decisions about enrolling in the upcoming Bridge to HIP (B2H), Tier 1 and possibly Tier 2 training cohorts. Also, HIP program staff provided on-the-spot Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) test registration at the event to encourage participants to follow through on their interest; 85 (62%) of symposium attendees registered to take the exam.

The one-day event was interactive and involved several presentations, workshops and activities to ensure that participants were well aware of what the HIP program was and what a career in health information could entail. As a result of the diligent marketing efforts of the dedicated HIP staff such as presentations at Employment, Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) centers, posting flyers at libraries and supermarkets, mailing flyers to churches and sending mass emails to partners and employers, 193 people pre-registered for the event. On the day of the event, 138 or 72% of registrants attended the symposium – representing the largest pool of possible HIP candidates the program has ever attracted to one event.

The symposium included presenters with varied backgrounds in the field of health informatics, workforce development, counseling, medical equipment supply and human resources, all of

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whom volunteered their time. The agenda for the day was split between morning presentations focused on the health informatics field in general and afternoon sessions dedicated to the many educational opportunities the HIP program offers. Specifically, the workshops provided attendees with: 1) practical job search tips; 2) strategies for marketing their skills, experiences, and education effectively; and 3) tips for sustaining employment despite difficulties at the workplace. In the interest of addressing participants' strengths, needs and potential barriers, some workshops targeted specific groups such as ex-offenders or attendees with prior experience in clinical healthcare occupations.

One workshop offered participants an opportunity to hear from a panel of past HIP students, who are now employed in the field. These graduates spoke about juggling the educational content of the program along with seeking employment. This workshop in particular struck a chord with the audience especially with regard to dealing with unemployment prior to enrolling in and completing the HIP program.

At the close of the day, participants were able to provide their feedback, via evaluations—sharing their impressions of the symposium. A majority of the comments reflected the positive feelings participants felt about the event. One participant noted: “this program is wonderful, I am so glad to be a part of this.” Another participant stated: “thank you for providing job training to our community – we feel left out of opportunities most of the time.” And another declared: “I wish I had heard about this training before I enrolled in college.” These comments validated and underscored the importance of the event for the HIP program, the community and potential future students.

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Foundation Skills Workshop Week

The Health CareRx Academy at The WorkPlace, Inc.

The WorkPlace Inc.'s [Health CareRx Academy](#), one of the [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) funded by the Office of Family Assistance, implemented a comprehensive orientation program for new participants to address concerns about their preparedness, aptitude, and completion rates for occupational skills training in health careers. At the time the program wanted to “meet the student where they are” in terms of how they learned and what interested them. Conducting better interest assessments, contextualized basic skills training and teaching effective job search strategies could achieve this goal. It was believed that once the orientation included these features, student participants would make better decisions in their choices of coursework and the occupations they pursue. More important, students would be provided with basic skills that touched upon their motivation and improved their work readiness, self-esteem and mental attitude.

In October 2013, the Health CareRx Academy implemented the seven-day Foundation Skills Workshop Week (FSWW), an expanded version of their general orientation to prepare low income participants for entry level employment in health careers. Many participants in the program have never worked and are unfamiliar with college and career training. FSWW classes were contextualized to careers in health care and used an integrated approach to support and nurture the whole student. The workshops included: Core Skills Training and DISC (or personality) assessment; Motivation, Health & Wellness; Work Readiness; Positive Mental Attitude; Goal Setting; Goal Action Planning; Self Esteem; Stress Management; Customer Service; and Job Search Strategies. As an example of the contextualization of the training, students in the Health and Wellness class can learn how to be an effective and compassionate care giver and parent. A number of classes during FSWW emphasize the student's own personal care in such areas as nutrition, relaxation, stress-reduction and good sleeping habits.

With so much diversity in health careers, an effective personality assessment tool such as DISC (Dominance, Inducement, Submission, and Compliance) can guide students to the best-fit occupations from direct patient care to medical billing and pharmacy tech. After completing a DISC assessment, Charlene, a success story from the Academy, aimed higher from her goal of

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becoming a certified nursing assistant to the more demanding goal of becoming a patient care technician.

The implementation of Foundation Skills Workshop Week is showing great promise. Since expanding into an integrated comprehensive orientation model the Academy has seen an increase in participants completing occupational skills training as well as a steady rate of direct placements in healthcare jobs. For example from the fall of 2012 to the fall of 2013, 43% of students attending the Academy completed their occupational training and were ready for employment. Since the fall of 2013 until the spring of 2014, the Academy is estimating an 82% completion rate.

Occupational skills training alone does not equate to employment for low-skilled adults. The Foundation Skills Workshop Week is providing Academy students with the skills and the tools to make better career decisions while acquiring their essential healthcare basics in a contextualized learning environment.

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Early Engagement of Students with the Employer Relations/Job Developer Office

Project CHOICE at Turtle Mountain Community College

Starting in September 2013, [Turtle Mountain Community College's](#) (TMCC) Project CHOICE, a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) initiative funded by the Office of Family Assistance, began connecting Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) students to the newly established Employer Relations/Job Developer (ERJD) office during the beginning of CNA classes and at Project CHOICE orientation. Once connected to the ERJD office, Project CHOICE students begin a series of job development and career planning activities, including identifying locations outside the Turtle Mountain reservation they would be willing to relocate to for employment. The goal of this approach is to introduce students to the concept of a healthcare career pathway, the critical stages of job development and help students visualize early on the possibility of finding employment outside the local community.

In collaboration with ERJD office personnel, Project CHOICE staff lead students along a three phase employment and career pathways development process. The first phase involves orientating students to the basic concept of job development – career interest assessment, development of an employment plan and setting up ongoing meetings with the job developer. During the second phase, students work intensively with ERJD coaches on the steps to developing tailored and effective resumes. The third and final phase of the ERJD job and career development process is to identify job openings in the student's preferred geographic location while helping familiarize them to the idea of working outside their local community. Project CHOICE staff accompany students to the potential work site, tour the facility, investigate possible housing locations, while also visiting local community establishments such as schools, shopping malls and other places of entertainment.

The need to align students along a career pathway that possibly takes them outside of their local community stems primarily from the dearth of local employment opportunities. In TMCC's experience, students are also highly hesitant to leave their local community and

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existing family and cultural supports even at the prospect of securing a well-paying job. The three-phase ERJD job and career development process helps students envision the long-term steps of job development, familiarize themselves with non-local environments and create connections to potential employers and community assets outside the Turtle Mountain reservation. Actively engaging outside employers through the Project CHOICE student site visits is also another way for TMCC to market their programs and exhibit the high quality of their students and training programs.

TMCC reports that, while it is too early in the process to gauge outcomes from this approach, student reception to the multi-phase job development process has so far been highly positive. TMCC is confident that combined with increased enrollment numbers,² the early job development engagement approach will lead to increased job placements during the remainder of this year and the next.

² Enrollment numbers are approximately 60% higher in 2013 and 2014 (113 to-date) compared to the 2011-2012 grant period (70).

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Chicago Pharmacy Technician Training Program

Skilled Workers, Strong Earnings at Will County on behalf of The Workforce Investment Boards of Metropolitan Chicago

The Pharmacy Technician Training Program in suburban Chicago, IL is a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) program funded by the Office of Family Assistance. [Jewish Vocational Service Chicago](#) (JVS), a sub-contractor of the [Workforce Investment Board of Will County](#) has operated this training program on behalf of the County since it began in 2010.

Externships are a critical component of any pharmacy training program and traditionally are provided at the end of the vocational classroom experience. In years past, the externship work experience at JVS was at the end of the vocational classroom training and added an additional two to three months (or more) to the program. Employment support during the externship was not in the classroom and this approach extended the time students had to wait before beginning job placement activities. Technician trainees worked in pharmacies but did not have access to support services or job counselors until after their externships ended. This linear process failed to provide a strong and robust support system necessary for student success.

In the 2013, JVS re-designed its externship activities so that they would happen concurrently with educational training. Background and drug testing efforts were scheduled earlier in the program and licensure was moved to the second week since students cannot begin an externship without a state pharmacy technician license.

The biggest challenge in this new approach was for program staff to secure externships and conduct evaluations on the externship sites for the students all at the same time. Once this challenge was overcome, it was possible to have a whole class of students at externships while concurrently in the classroom.

The new standard operating procedure of externships combined with classroom training has provided many positive outcomes. For example, students get to have real life work experience at a retail pharmacy while in the vocational classroom session. This affords the students the

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opportunity to troubleshoot work situations with their classmates, teacher, case manager and the job placement team. A half an hour (or more if needed) each class period is dedicated to sharing work experiences and questions from students' externship experiences. In addition, job placement specialists and students form working relationships with the pharmacy managers at each externship site, exposing students to employer hiring managers. The students get important real world experiences and often are invited to apply for open pharmacy technician jobs.

Since implementing this approach six graduates have been offered positions from their externship sites compared to only one in the entire two year period prior to this re-design. And in one case, a program graduate is actually supervising a current student who is an extern at the pharmacy. Current program placement data for pharmacy technicians also shows a 94% placement rate with competitive wages and benefits. Trends data also suggests that this health care occupational demand will continue to provide excellent career opportunities in the Chicago area.

Overall, students find the externship experience to be a positive motivator and a practical method of developing job skills earlier in the training. Having an externship experience coincide with vocational training helps ensure students get the necessary job supports while in a supportive learning environment. It also helps ensure that they are ready to begin employment immediately after completing the program.

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High Impact Tutorial Practices

Professional Healthcare Opportunities-Careers and Support (PHOCAS) at Workforce Investment Board SDA-83, Inc.

The Professional Healthcare Opportunities – Careers and Support (PHOCAS) Program at the Workforce Investment Board SDA-83, Inc., a grantee of the [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) project funded by the Office of Family Assistance knows that all of their students can succeed. They've implemented a strategy called High Impact Tutorials that are adapted to the students' needs by "teaching to the student" instead of merely "teaching the student."

PHOCAS estimates that 428 students participated in High Impact Tutorials in program year three. In the first half of program year four, 210 students participated. Student performance will be examined as data continues to be analyzed. Anecdotally, PHOCAS already sees improvements in grades, attendance and completion compared to earlier program years before the Tutorials began. Three basic features outline the strategy PHOCAS has developed:

- Working Together in Small Groups
- Using Flexible Formats to Deliver Content
- Collaboration with Classroom Instructors

Working in small groups

At PHOCAS, relationships are developed between tutor and student two weeks prior to the beginning of class and study groups are formed. Students are more likely to complete their studies if they are part of a study group. The mutual support that study group members share connects the student to their learning community and increases persistence levels. Many of the students in PHOCAS are working toward passing a Certification Exam such as the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nursing (NCLEX-PN).

- Friends in class are encouraged to partner with other friends
- The tutor sometimes meets individuals and at other times, they meet together
- Students drill one another with practice questions from the NCLEX-PN exam

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Using flexible formats to deliver content

Proactive tutoring (not reactive tutoring) is practiced. Students are guided while they learn how to read a paragraph to comprehend and use the most important information. Tutors regularly ask, “If you were the instructor, and you wanted to make sure this class knows the material, how would you go through the chapter and what you would put on the test.” This exercise frequently changes the student’s perception of how to study.

A technique called “flipped learning” is used whereby study groups and their tutor go over material in advance of classroom study. For some students who cannot afford to purchase books until the first day of class, this also gives them an advanced look at the textbook materials. Some students feel prepared to take their exam on the first day of class. Most score in the 80 to 90 grade range on exams, raising confidence levels and perseverance.

- Students learn how to read for comprehension
- They learn the process of analysis to choose the best answers on exams
- They develop good study habits and learn how to budget their time
- They are encouraged to create and review outlines
- PowerPoints with audio content are used; with practice, students create their own PowerPoints
- Recorded or narrated slides teach students how to pronounce complex terms while increasing their retention
- Students alternate between reading materials and quizzing one another

Fun is also introduced where appropriate. One PHOCAS study group met at an alligator farm. Their study breaks were usually spent nibbling on fried alligator or shrimp etouffee.

Collaboration with classroom instructors

It was also important to have instructors of the PHOCAS program on board with this process. They are the classroom teachers of students participating in High Impact Tutorials and they need to prepare for a different classroom experience. The combination of Flip Learning and Proactive Tutoring creates a higher level of discussion and interactive classroom dynamics. Instructors found it necessary to adjust their classroom techniques to enrich the educational experience of the better-prepared student.

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PHOCAS has demanded excellence of its students. It is believed that they will rise to the level of excellence that they set. Students are met where they live intellectually. They are encouraged, challenged and supported. PHOCAS believes that their students can learn much more than they think.

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Incumbent Worker Nursing Cohort

Health Careers for All at the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

Part of the overall approach to healthcare training under the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County's (WDC) [Health Careers for All \(HCA\)](#) project has been to address a common gap in the pathway between nursing assistant certified (NA-C) and other entry level healthcare occupations and more advanced occupations, such as registered nursing. To support career pathways within HCA, a [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#) initiative, funded by the Office of Family Assistance, the WDC has worked closely with employer and education partners to design a training model for entry-level incumbent healthcare workers that combines pre-requisite coursework with the ADN program itself. Known locally as the Nursing Careers Program, the model was launched in summer 2012 at North Seattle Community College and will run approximately 3-1/2 years including both the pre-requisite and ADN phases of training.

The program includes the following specific design elements:

- **Packaging pre-requisite coursework to increase efficiency.** The pre-requisite phase can be complex because some pre-requisites must be taken before others, courses fill up quickly and some science and math courses can “expire” if too much time elapses between taking them and applying to nursing school. Packaging this coursework increases the ability of working students to complete this phase.
- **Regularized schedules to address work-related logistical challenges.** During the pre-requisite phase students are on campus Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons (and perform online work and Saturday reviews) each of the six quarters, creating scheduling predictability for students and employers.
- **Hybrid campus-based and online instruction.** To reduce students' time away from work, the approach offers both in-person and online instruction. While some face-to-face instruction is critical with the level of academic rigor and for lab-related instruction, the hybrid approach provides increased flexibility for working students.
- **Review sessions/tutoring.** The jump in academic rigor between entry level (e.g., NA-C) and pre-requisite/nursing curriculum is considerable, and individuals who are working

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often don't have as much time to study. To help keep students from falling behind, Saturday review sessions were built into the model and mandatory during the pre-requisite phase, creating formal time for review and study.

- **Using a cohort approach to leverage peer support.** The cohort approach allows for customized design elements like those described above as well as peer support, which together appear to have a strong positive effect on student retention.
- **Campus-based coordinator.** Serving as a single point of contact for the cohort, this person works directly with students to streamline and assist with registration, financial aid, academic issues, among other things.

Several sources of data are being tracked to assess the effectiveness of this approach. First, HCA established a student training completion rate goal of 70%. This target was set against a benchmark completion rate of 51% for TANF students in healthcare training at the time HCA was launched. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of incumbent worker cohort students successfully completed the 6-quarter pre-requisite phase and moved into the ADN program. North Seattle Community College has also compiled data to track how Nursing Careers students perform compared to “traditional” students. For example, incumbent worker cohort students performed better in math than other students during a comparable time period with an average GPA of 3.58 compared to 2.51. Finally, HCA has captured significant qualitative data using vehicles such as the [Small Group Instructional Dialogue](#) method of assessment to capture student and faculty reflections.

One of the distinguishing features of this model is that it was designed and implemented in close partnership with local employers, including community health centers, acute care facilities, large ambulatory care systems and public health. Employers have had an active role in selecting the incumbent workers to participate, informing the instructional delivery model and developing approaches at the workplace that increase support for students. This has been a significant and ongoing collaboration with representatives from the WDC and HCA, North Seattle Community College, and employers meeting monthly to address ongoing programmatic issues and challenges.

Two major challenges to implementing the model have been scheduling and managing the financial impact on students with reduced work hours. Standardizing days on campus during the pre-requisite phase was instrumental to addressing the scheduling challenge. This isn't possible during the ADN training phase, as much of the schedule is dictated by clinical sites. In lieu of providing a regularized schedule during this time, the college committed to providing the

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schedule for each quarter to students and their employers at least 4 weeks prior to the quarter start to allow more time to adjust schedules and backfill as needed. Although students will be working throughout the program by design, most have had to reduce their work hours to accommodate the time demands and rigor of the ADN program. Decreased income has been a major challenge for many students, and several strategies have been employed to mitigate this, including assistance with financial aid, support services, links to Earned Income Tax Credit/tax filing and various approaches by employers to maintain benefits to the extent possible.

One of the most critical aspects to implementing an approach like this is the strength of the partnership between the service provider, the college, and the employer partners. Each has distinct constraints and opportunities, and the model itself is complex. A strong foundation and regular and effective communication are imperative to keep things on track.

