Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Compendium of Promising Practices

May 2013

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
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The Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) have been preparing many low-income individuals for careers in healthcare that pay well and offer opportunities for advancement. Grantees offer services and support to meet the needs of the whole person, in and out of the classroom. Therefore, programs can be complex and require coordination among many partners.

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 innovative approaches grantees have identified as effective in helping them meet the needs of participants and local employers in the healthcare community, expand partnerships, build long-term sustainability, and fulfill other program goals.

I encourage grantees and others who are interested in offering similar programs to read these promising practices to learn how they have served the HPOG programs that have used them and to consider whether similar practices may be useful in their own programs. These practices are bound to stimulate discussion and further innovation as they are adapted to strengthen other programs.

The Office of Family Assistance is hosting the *Compendium of Promising Practices* on the HPOG Community Website, where supporting documents, examples, and related information about these practices can also be found. There will be opportunities to share more information and ideas through the HPOG Annual Meeting, ongoing social media exchanges, and the upcoming roundtables.

Thank you to all grantees that contributed to this publication. We are looking forward to continuing to work together to find the strategies that are most effective for helping TANF recipients and other low-income individuals begin careers in healthcare.

Sincerely,

/s/

Earl S. 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 the third 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 American Job Center 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 has incorporated innovative practices since its inception. In addition to providing education and training, grantees provide many supportive services, such as case management, child care, and transportation. Further, grantees are coordinating with State and local TANF agencies, State and local Workforce Investment Boards, the Federal and State Offices of Apprenticeship, and other strategic partners.

This *Compendium of Promising Practices* captures some of the unique or innovative practices that grantees have identified as strategies that are important to their programs' success. They are indexed by grantee, state, community, type of organization, and program component. The practices were collected by the technical assistance provider for the Office of Family Assistance, JBS International, Inc.

The HPOG program is a demonstration project designed to build and share knowledge. Sharing promising practices and fostering a learning community are part of a broad strategy to build and share knowledge. A multi-pronged evaluation is also underway that will provide much more information on program implementation, systems change, outcomes, and impact. The evaluation will grow the evidence base for improving outcomes for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals.

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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Smart Start Program

Bergen Community College

Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium (NNJHPC)

Recipients of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG), funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, know that each state requires a percentage of its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients to participate in specific activities for a minimum number of hours per week. These activities are categorized as essential, or "core," and secondary, or "non-core." While the core activity requirements help emphasize work, some TANF recipients see them as being irrelevant to their career objectives and delaying their entry into the workforce. In New Jersey, for instance, TANF recipients interested in pursuing training in healthcare may first be required to participate in community service, regardless of whether this service is healthcare related. Recognizing this issue, Bergen Community College (BCC), the lead member of the Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium (NNJHPC), initiated a "Smart Start" program which offers TANF recipients an introductory course in healthcare that also counts toward their core activity requirements.

Launching this Smart Start program began with the NNJHPC leadership team exploring the feasibility of using a residential "boot camp" model, a strategy that is being employed by a number of HPOG grantees. NNJHPC invited representatives from one such grantee, the South Carolina Department of Social Services, to share that program's boot camp strategies and experiences at a consortium-wide summit. Following this event, the ACF Regional TANF Program Manager coordinated a meeting with representatives from the New Jersey Division of Family Development (the state's TANF agency), New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, local Workforce Investment Board, and local One-Stop Career Center to discuss the possibility of adding a pre-training program that could help fulfill TANF requirements. By bringing these players to the table, the Consortium helped achieve buy-in and strengthen community partnerships. The end result: the BCC Smart Start curriculum was approved by BCC's local One-Stop and saw its first enrollments in September 2012.

A TANF recipient's first step toward enrolling in the Smart Start program occurs at the local Board of Social Services. On or about the first of each month, the Board refers TANF recipients to the Bergen County One-Stop to participate in G-Job, the One-Stop's WorkFirst job readiness program. During G-Job, clients receive a general orientation to the job search program and complete a battery of assessment activities. They are then presented with career options, and those who are qualified and interested are encouraged to apply to BCC's HPOG program. If accepted, these clients begin the Smart Start program on or about the first of the next month (up to 30 days after their initial referral to the One-Stop).

In its current form, Bergen's Smart Start program runs five days a week for four weeks, and attendance for the entire program is mandatory. An experienced nurse-educator hired by BCC specifically for the Smart Start program is responsible for the course and is the primary

instructor, but approximately five visiting lecturers also lead courses during the four-week period. Smart Start students participate in both a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification and a first aid class which are taught by an additional pair of instructors.

The Smart Start curriculum provides an orientation to health career pathways and meets those work participation requirements placed on TANF recipients. As a result, clients who go through Smart Start are deemed to have fulfilled their community work experience (C-WEP) requirements and can directly enter training at the conclusion of Smart Start.

Uniformly, clients who complete Smart Start rave about the course and the month-long experience. They find themselves better prepared to begin their chosen vocational training and feel that the time has been well spent. To date, 98% of the 36 Smart Start clients have passed all of their occupational certifying or licensing exams, a significant performance improvement from Bergen's previous record. NNJHPC leadership expects that at least three other colleges in the consortium will adopt the curriculum this year.

When asked what they would recommend to other grantees considering programs similar to Smart Start, Bergen's leadership point to the importance of achieving buy-in from local faculty and One-Stop leadership during the course development process. They also acknowledge the value of hearing from the South Carolina Department of Social Services, and they welcome a visit from any HPOG grantee that would like to see NNJHPC's "nonresidential boot camp" in action.

Student Academic Progress Reporting Process

Blackfeet Community College

Issksiniip Project

The Issksiniip Project, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) project, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, has developed a promising strategy to improve output and outcomes for enrolled participants. Through early intervention aimed at academic success, this project takes a proactive approach to the participant training process, addressing problem areas early on and meeting them with solutions. The entire Issksiniip Project team works together to create a support network for the participants.

The process works like this. Every other week, individual progress forms are generated by the data technician, emailed to staff, and distributed by the retention counselor to students. The students take their forms to the instructors, who indicate both academic and attendance progress and sign off with their initial. The students then return the forms by the due date to the retention counselor, either in person or by leaving them under his door.

At 3:00 p.m. on the due date, the academic counselor, data technician, and mentor/tutor coordinator together determine which students need tutoring or other assistance. The academic counselor and mentor/tutor coordinator then meet with students who need mentoring, tutoring, or counseling regarding their academic programs. If these students do not attend tutoring, or if they consistently fail to submit progress reports, financial services will be suspended. The data technician, case manager mentor/tutor coordinator, and retention counselor determine on an individual basis if and when financial services are to be suspended and what steps are required for reinstatement. Services may be reinstated when students submit progress reporting forms and make good faith efforts to improve.

The mentor/tutor coordinator updates all Issksiniip staff regarding decisions to suspended services or reinstate services. All staff know which students are not progressing and which students are not submitting progress reports so that checks are not mistakenly given out or held. All staff are expected to provide individual blank progress reports if necessary and to direct students regarding the academic progress reporting process, which is illustrated on a flow chart that clearly outlines staff and student responsibilities in every step in the process.

Breakfast Clubs

Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium, Inc.

Buffalo and Erie County Health Professions Collaborative

The Buffalo and Erie County Health Professions Collaborative, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, hosts monthly Breakfast Clubs to help students meet and interview with local employers.

The program's job developer arranges the sessions, reserving space for a featured employer who is invited to participate in the meet-and-greet session. The job developer creates flyers advertising the particulars of the event and distributes them approximately three weeks prior to the Breakfast Club to give employers an appropriate amount of time to respond to the invitation and prepare their presentations. The flyers are emailed to employer contacts and are distributed by the job developer on cold calls to prospective employers. Students are required to bring up-to-date résumés to the sessions.

On the day of the Breakfast Club meeting, the employer presents to a group of students about his or her organization, its hiring practices, and expectations for new employees. Employers discuss the details and qualifications of open positions and often bring applications for students to fill out on-site. Some employers conduct prescreening job interviews at the sessions if time permits. An employer who does not have enough time to conduct interviews at the Breakfast Club session contacts the job developer to arrange interviews at the employer's location. The job developer maintains regular contact with the employer after the Breakfast Club to receive updates on the HPOG job candidates that the employer would like to pursue.

For employers, Breakfast Clubs serve as an introduction to groups of eager, prepared healthcare graduates and potential new hires, a great recruitment opportunity. For the students, these sessions function as the first step in the application process. They allow the students to learn more about each organization and to find out if the organization would be a good employment fit for them. Most importantly, the sessions give the students an opportunity to make a strong first impression face-to-face and in person. The Breakfast Clubs have led to many follow-up opportunities and placements for the program's students.

Healthcare Workforce Development Employer Engagement Workshops

Cankdeska Cikana Community College

The Next Steps Project

Healthcare workforce development workshops are a promising collaborative strategy of the Cankdeska Cikana Community College's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. The workshops support program sustainability through direct employer engagement.

The school's job development specialist, the state's U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, and a paid seminar facilitator present a healthcare workforce development workshop at eight locations across the state over a 10-week period. The four-hour workshop is free to all potential employers. Many are sent letters of introduction with an informational brochure, but any healthcare employer may register by contacting the consultant. The program features proven and effective strategies for diversifying, attracting, developing and retaining a high-quality healthcare workforce.

The first agenda item following the college representative's welcome and introduction of the consultant is a group activity to identify jobs for which it is especially hard to hire and retain people. Turnover cost computation is followed by an assessment of why people leave their jobs. Noting the dissatisfaction implicit in quitting provides the facilitator with a natural transition into the more optimistic topic of what people look for in their jobs or careers. Then the consultant relinquishes the stage to the apprenticeship representative, who explains how the programs work in general and gives specific examples of apprenticeship programs in healthcare.

After lunch, the college's specialist discusses healthcare employment by county and demographic. The pathways available to those wanting employment in the healthcare industry are presented next, followed by a group activity to identify jobs for which registered apprenticeships may be helpful. In closing, participants are asked if they want to meet with someone to work with them as they evaluate their workforce development program or explore the options discussed in the workshop.

This promising practice promotes program sustainability through employer engagement. A college program giving collaborative presentations statewide to prospective employers in a growth industry has the potential to create a self-perpetuating cycle of success. The probability of higher program completion rates and subsequent employment retention is increased because employer engagement will help keep the curriculums relevant to the healthcare workforce challenges. Employers happy with their hires are more likely to help provide opportunities for program enhancements like apprenticeships.

Pre-Nursing Assistant Classes

Central Community College

Health Education Laddering Program (Project HELP)

An innovative method of preparing students to become Nursing Assistants (NAs) was developed by Project HELP, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. Pre-NA classes are offered for students who score between a 3rd-grade and 5th-grade reading level on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment.

The HPOG grantee found that some students had difficulty in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course because it was hard to learn all the medical vocabulary that they are to know upon course completion during the short time frame of the course. In order to be successful in completing the CNA course, participants must be reading at a 5th- to 7th-grade level. All participants complete the TABE assessment upon entrance into Project HELP at Central Community College, and this assessment helps project staff determine if students are at these reading levels. If students are not currently performing at a 5th- to 7th-grade level, the Pre-NA course can help them to polish their skills.

There are multiple learning objectives for the Pre-NA course:

- Increase participant knowledge of medical/nursing terminology utilized in the CNA course.
- Increase participant comfort level in the traditional college classroom.
- Increase participant baseline reading ability.
- Increase participant enrollment in the CNA course.
- Increase participant knowledge of finding, applying for, gaining, and keeping employment.

Currently, Pre-NA courses are offered on the Columbus, Grand Island, and Hastings campuses in Nebraska. The class is held three hours a week, usually one night per week. It is taught by a Project HELP instructor. The curriculum was written by the vocational English as a second language (VESL) specialist with the assistance of an NA instructor, who currently teaches the Pre-NA course.

One resource needed to conduct the class is the NA textbook. In addition, Project HELP has written its own curriculum to focus on the medical vocabulary with which students must demonstrate proficiency when they take the CNA course. In the Pre-NA class, very few skills are taught because those skills will be the focus during the NA course and because instructors for the Pre-NA class are generally not nurses who would be qualified to teach the skills portion of the course.

The arrangements to conduct this course were orchestrated through the adult education department at Central Community College. Project HELP follows the payment rules and student orientation process of the adult education department for students enrolling in the Pre-NA class. Approvals for Project HELP to offer this Pre-NA class were obtained from both the adult education department and the extended learning services department.

One of the obstacles encountered in offering the Pre-NA class is having enough students at the 3rd- to 5th-grade reading level at the same time who can take the class together. It may not be possible to offer a class every semester because of the number of students who sign up.

Pre-NA courses offer successful remediation for students to improve their reading ability and knowledge of medical terminology in order to gain entry into certified nursing assistant courses.

Employer Engagement

Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit

Work Attributes Toward Careers in Health (WATCH) Project

The Work Attributes Toward Careers in Health (WATCH) Project is the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. The WATCH Project uses a variety of approaches to build relationships with employers, connect employers to project participants, and seek employer input and feedback. These connections establish long-term communication and encourage employers to turn to the project when they need to fill a position.

In establishing this relationship, WATCH career coordinators (case managers) meet with local employers to introduce the WATCH Project and share how it prepares participants for employment in the nursing and emergency medical services (EMS) fields. In addition, WATCH career coordinators are able to learn about the unique needs and expectations of each employer. They can also determine if an employer has nursing positions that need to be filled and then offer to share these job opening announcements with their participants.

Because of this relationship, WATCH career coordinators are often listed as references on participant résumés. This gives the career coordinators an opportunity to share information about applicants and also to connect with human resources (HR) and nursing personnel of regional employers. It establishes ongoing communication with employers as some HR personnel then contact WATCH for referrals when new positions need to be filled. Also, employers attend WATCH career coordinator staff meetings to share information about their hiring needs and requirements. Attending these meetings helps the employers to have a better sense of program functions and benefits and to offer input on suggested program changes.

The WATCH Project offers many opportunities for employers and students to meet and converse prior to hiring. This is a huge benefit to both, as students become aware of employers' expectations and employers get a feel for the students' abilities up front. Here are examples of these opportunities:

- Participants attend peer group meetings; employers are invited to the meetings to share information about their institutions and characteristics they look for in an employee.
- The WATCH Project holds employer events:
  - » WATCH sponsored an event for local employers to meet and learn more about WATCH and its participants and to discuss common staffing issues.
  - » WATCH hosted en employer event that allowed HR representatives to present information about their organizations and provide information to almost 50 WATCH participants about the role of nurses in their institutions, current hiring needs, the process for applying for positions with their institutions, and the availability

of orientation, training and mentoring upon employment. HR representatives from six employers, representing a variety of healthcare settings (long-term care, hospitals, home healthcare, etc.), participated in a panel presentation and question-and-answer session. A hospital recruiter delivered a presentation about job searching, resume writing, and interviewing. During a final networking session, HR representatives met with WATCH participants to answer their questions. This event is described in the online article at http://www.csiu.org/index.cfm?pageid=572&programid=271&programpageid=444.

Both these events provided HR representatives from regional employers an excellent opportunity to network with one another and provide WATCH staff with valuable information about employer expectations and needs. In addition, the relationships established enable WATCH career coordinators and employers to discuss participants who have applied for work or who have been hired. Career coordinators use employer feedback to mentor participants who are working in the healthcare industry for the first time.

WATCH works with a local evaluator who surveys every employer that hires a WATCH participant. The survey asks the employer HR representative or direct supervisor to rate the WATCH employee, shortly after employment and again six months later, on 24 employment performance-related elements, using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "outstanding." Currently WATCH has a 72% return rate on its employer surveys. WATCH does not receive the ratings of individuals, but it does get an analysis of the ratings for all employees, along with any employer comments (excluding the employer and employee names). The survey report provides constructive feedback on the success of participants who have moved to employment and helps to identify areas in which additional career training and counseling would be helpful. For example, according to the report for project year two, although the majority of the participants received a rating of "outstanding" or "very good" on attendance and punctuality, this was one of the elements that received the most ratings of "needs improvement."

As the curriculum for the Advanced and Geriatric Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) apprenticeship programs was being developed, staff from two local long-term care facilities reviewed it and provided feedback. One especially helpful employer representative was an HR staff member with nursing experience from a local long-term care employer who provided input and recommendations based on her former experience as a CNA. Her input was very valuable, especially in the area of state-specific mandates and procedures related to CNA duties.

Incorporating the Café Method into the Classroom

College of Menominee Nation

Health Profession Opportunity Grants Program

In January of 2013, the College of Menominee Nation contracted Dr. Laura Weisel, PhD, from PowerPath to Education and Employment to present a continuing education workshop for the college's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. PowerPath was developed by Dr. Weisel and her colleagues with the intent of redesigning education. A portion of Dr. Weisel's presentation focused on how to help students build social capital skills, which include interpersonal skills such as the ability to communicate, collaborate, and work with others. Research has proven marginal learners do not possess these skills.

One of the goals of redesigning education was to build learning communities where students develop social capital skills to be successful in their learning. Several methodologies were explained by Dr. Weisel, but the Café Method was demonstrated. Participants experienced how the Café Method facilitated collaboration and problem solving and helped move information from short-term memory to long-term memory.

First, participants were divided into groups of five or six. Next, they were given a large piece of newsprint, and one person was asked to volunteer to be the group's host. The host of the "café" facilitated the group by being timekeeper and assuring each person had the opportunity to contribute to the group's conversation. Each group was assigned the same task: to explain how the brain works.

The previous day Dr. Weisel had explained how the brain works and what happens in the brain when trauma is experienced. Participants worked together and drew what they recalled from the presentation. Each of the drawings included three parts of the brain: the neocortex, where self-regulation and decision making occur; the limbic brain, where values and interpersonal skills are held; and the reptilian brain, where we feel safe or struggle to be safe, and where our fight-or-flight mechanisms are.

At the end of the designated time, each group chose a spokesperson to explain the group's picture. Even though there was one topic, there were variations in the pictures. The group members talked to each other, better recalled information from the previous day, and worked together to display their story.

What the HPOG team found fascinating was that when students are experiencing any type of traumatic event, they retreat to their safe place, in their reptilian brain; however, learning does not occur within the reptilian brain. They are just trying to survive when they use that part of the brain. This made the HPOG team aware they need to be looking at where the students are in their lives in order to help them to get to a place where they can learn, if they are not there.

Glenda Weigner, a member of the nursing faculty at College of Menominee Nation, previously used the traditional lecture methodology as her primary instructional method. After she attended Dr. Weisel's workshop in January, Glenda changed her teaching style to incorporate cooperative learning through implementation of the Café Method. In each class period, Glenda divides her class into small groups, each group is assigned a different topic from their reading to address, and their assignment is to graphically display the concept/topic. Each member of each group has to add to the explanation of their topic by graphically explaining the topic on a large piece of newsprint. After everyone completes their assignment, each group explains to the other class members what they learned. If a point is missed that Glenda deems significant, she adds the point to the newsprint. All newsprint graphics are hung in the classroom.

Glenda started utilizing the Café Method in the spring 2013 term. She compared test scores from that semester with those from the previous semester, where she used lecture, and the findings were astonishing. Test scores from students who she lectured to were Ds and Fs; test scores from the Café Method were As, Bs, and one C. Glenda believes this method is not only allowing students to become better collaborators and problem solvers, but also helping them retain what they learned. Students who had previously taken the course but not been successful have also communicated their increased satisfaction with the course because of a greater understanding of the content. Additionally, Glenda is also feeling more fulfilled as a faculty person as she now feels she facilitates learning more effectively.

Two-Generation Approach to Ending the Cycle of Poverty

Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Inc.

CareerAdvance©

The Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa) CareerAdvance© program, a Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, is committed to using the two-generation (2-Gen) approach to ending the cycle of poverty. The program works with the children of participants' families in quality early childhood programs to prepare them to enter kindergarten and beyond at the same time their parents are preparing to enter or advance in the workforce with education and employment skills enabling them to excel as professional healthcare providers.

The 2-Gen approach looks at all aspects of the family to enhance the parents' ability to succeed in their education and employment. All eligible children get enrolled in an early childhood program, such as Head Start, Early Head Start, State Pilot Program, or Educare. CAP Tulsa partners with the facilities to provide before and aftercare as needed. When buying classes from the local technical or community college, class time is kept within the early childhood school schedule whenever possible to allow the family to experience minimal stress and maintain a family/education balance.

As part of the evaluation process, CAP Tulsa monitors not only the gains its participants have made in their education and employment but also the gains made by their children enrolled in partnering early childhood programs and children who have aged out of such programs and moved on to elementary school. The evaluation team conducts regular focus groups with participants to gain insight for both program effectiveness and family life balance.

CAP Tulsa's HPOG program is fortunate that early childhood education as part of its agency's mission. The HPOG program works with provider partner, Educare. These partnerships require a similar level of commitment as our education and employer partners, but they go above and beyond to provide care outside of regular hours for the clinical experience and other required class time. This assistance does require a greater level of buy-in from the early childhood program management and staff.

This approach should be replicable in other areas that have quality early childhood programs. Both the CAP and the non-CAP early childhood program sites participate fully in the evaluation process called the Family Life Study.

The HPOG program staff do work with the participants to secure Department of Human Services childcare subsidies to assist in the cost of before/aftercare. For those who qualify, there is no fee for the regular school day (9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. at most sites).

CNA Training Program with an Educational Advancement Option

Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.

CITC Healthcare Training

In its Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) project, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) has successfully implemented a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training program that includes an option for educational advancement through the project's Career Ladder track. It has enabled the project to be successful in transitioning students from graduation at Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC) with their CNA certificates and state licensure into full admission at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to complete the 24 credits of prerequisites they need to return to AVTEC for the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN) classes.

During this transition to the bigger university campus, students were sometimes frustrated with the admission and registration processes. CITC tried to assist students with online applications and the registration process, but due to time constraints and the number of students needing assistance, the coordinator was spread very thin. She was unable to help every student enrolled in the Career Ladder program, which left some students having to navigate the system alone.

In staff discussions with the students, it was suggested that the project invite all its UAA nursing students to meet together with the goal of demystifying the transition from a small campus to the largest college campus in Alaska so that students could meet each other and create a peer networking support system. It was decided the best time to hold this meeting, for the most student involvement, would be during spring break when classes were on break and some students had free days from work. Incorporating CITC's Native traditions, the project decided to hold a potluck and have no set agenda.

Half of the HPOG project's UAA students showed up with delicious homemade food, and the other students called and could not make it since they had to work that day. Everyone helped set up the potluck and the tables and, complimenting each other on the dishes they brought and sharing recipes, they started to get to know each other. Once everyone was settled in, they went around and formally introduced themselves and shared what classes they were in and where in the Career Ladder they placed. The LPN and RN students who were already at AVTEC and had finished the UAA prerequisites were also invited. Students began asking each other about all kinds of things, from how they first applied for admission online, to where they parked, to how they handled classes they were finding difficult. They even discussed how they balanced school and work and what to expect when taking the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) LPN state licensing exam.

Students talked about their plans to transition from the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in RN to the Bachelor of Science (BS) in RN and when they should apply to the UAA School of Nursing so that, when they return to UAA with their AAS degrees, they are no longer on the UAA waiting list for admission to the Nursing Program.

Due to the high success rate and interaction among the students, project staff planned another meeting in May, after the term is over, so that students can celebrate a successful semester at UAA with each other and their families at the park. This gathering will also begin introducing new CNA Career Ladder students to those who already have more experience so their journey in healthcare training will be less intimidating. The hope is that these network and support systems will last beyond the years of the HPOG grant.

Continuous Improvement Program Model

District Board of Trustees of Pensacola State College

Health Profession Opportunity Grant

As the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, progresses through its third year, grantees are applying the lessons learned from their first years of implementation to increase the effectiveness of their programs. At Pensacola State College (PSC), HPOG project director Inger Barnes and her team have implemented a continuous improvement model designed to systematize this process.

During the early years of the grant, PSC's HPOG team worked with community partners, college personnel, and others to develop operational protocols and guidelines. The continuous improvement model provides the HPOG team and its partners an opportunity to review and update these resources through perception surveys, focus groups, structured reviews of procedures and forms, and reviews of MOUs (memorandums of understanding). The annual cycle for this process runs from the middle of one year to the middle of the next, allowing the results of the review to be used for evaluation and reporting in the fourth quarter of the grant year. By the end of this year, Ms. Barnes expects a complete set of guidelines, protocols, and forms to be finished.

Once these tools have been reviewed and updated, they are shared with the project's stakeholders. At PSC, these stakeholders are organized into four committees: the Community Coordinating Council, the Family Services Committee, the Training and Employment Committee, and the Grant Management Committee.

The Community Coordinating Council includes decision makers from each participating organization and meets quarterly to review the operations of the project and oversee the coordination of services across the community. Council members assist the project staff in monitoring the project's continuous improvement plan, and at least one member of the council serves on each of the two committees that report to the council: the Family Services Committee and the Training and Employment Committee.

The Family Services Committee meets quarterly to review the delivery of services to project participants and recommend procedural changes, as well as changes to the project's services, to the project director. The committee evaluates the family services component of the project annually. Also meeting quarterly is the Training and Employment Committee, which reviews the delivery of educational and educational support services. Like the Family Services Committee, the Training and Employment Committee annually reviews and recommends procedural changes to the project director.

Lastly, the Grant Management Committee is made up of membership from within the college. This committee meets monthly to ensure that the grant is operating smoothly and resolve internal problems related to it. The HPOG project director may bring recommendations from other committees to this body for feedback. The Grant Management Committee also assists in the annual grant evaluation.

Grouping the project's stakeholders in this way facilitates communication and collaborative decision making and crystallizes the roles and responsibilities of each partner. It also establishes the actors who will carry out the changes recommended by PSC's continuous improvement process, specifically the Community Coordinating Council and Grant Management Committee. This structure, combined with the program's review mechanisms, helps PSC's HPOG program evolve and adapt to the changing demands of students, partners, and employers.

Team Meetings

Eastern Gateway Community College

Project HOPE

Mandatory monthly group meetings have been implemented since the inception of Project HOPE, Eastern Gateway Community College's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. The meetings offer participants the opportunity for peer-to-peer mentoring and support, soft skills training, academic support, and employability skills training.

When the group meetings were started, student coaches were given a list of suitable topics to present at group meetings. Each coach had the flexibility to select a topic relevant to the specific needs of his or her participants.

After administration visited several group meetings, it was clear that some modifications were needed. As a result, in the summer of 2012, Project HOPE staff met numerous times to create content and guidelines for a revised concept: "team meetings."

The "team" theme was correlated with the concept of an athletic team, incorporating fundamentals, skills advancement, preparing for game day, finishing strong, and the victory lap. The team meeting content binder was created and is a living document. Revisions and additions are encouraged as resources are discovered.

In addition, facilitation training was provided for all student coaches. The training included:

- Understanding the group process
- Developing facilitation skills
- Demonstrating the expectations of administration on how a team meeting should be implemented
- Presenting relevant materials and practicing delivery

Ongoing team meeting training is provided at monthly staff meetings.

The new model offers several advantages. Uniformity in delivery across the entire four-county program area facilitates consistency in measurable outcomes. Readily available content for coaches reduces the prep time needed for meetings. The team meeting model features interactive activities for content areas, and if offers steps for creating an inviting, fun atmosphere where participants are celebrated and valued.

Academic Advisor/Student Retention Specialist Model

Edmonds Community College

Creating Access to Careers in Healthcare (CATCH)

Creating Access to Careers in Healthcare (CATCH) is Edmonds Community College's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. A key element of this program's wraparound support team is its academic advisor/student retention specialist position. This is a relationship-based, student-centered model in which a student shares in the responsibility of advising and makes his or her own decisions to chart a path for personal growth. The professional student support relationship bridges faculty academic advising, classroom support, and the student's vision of personal development and life goals.

The CATCH program's wraparound support includes intensive interventions to respond to the many barriers that its students face. The program's navigators respond to social and financial barriers with ready referrals and follow-up with its community partners for events such as loss of home, unexpected changes in income, or family relationship problems. CATCH college success, computer literacy, and employment soft-skill instructors work with the allied health instructors to build new skills and identify tutoring or other interventions that may be needed. Along with the academic advisor, this team communicates through a Google Docs spreadsheet and weekly meetings to provide an early alert network tracking student progress.

One critical barrier for many students is their inability to see themselves being successful in life. The CATCH healthcare foundation core curriculum, with its stackable certificates and career pathway approach, provides a roadmap of clear individual steps to achieve a living wage and a future career. But self-sufficiency requires more than a clear path. Histories of past abuse or failures, along with negative social attitudes, are difficult to overcome. Students often have personal developmental barriers that may show up as "giving up," family discouragement, or even self-defeating intentional failure.

The developmental academic advising model CATCH employs uses the academic advisor/student retention specialist in a teaching function that is concerned not only with facilitating course or vocational decisions but also with encouraging students' development of rational processes, behavioral awareness, problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills. The goal is to assist students to develop and recognize their growing competence, autonomy, and purpose. Developmental advising is a process that is continuous and cumulative in building a relationship with the student. It requires establishment of caring, trusting interactions with the advisor.

Nora Faram, MSW, MHP, LSWAIC, is the academic advisor/student retention specialist for CATCH. She has provided some examples of how she works with students in this role.

About the time a CATCH student cohort completes the initial college success skill course, Nora meets with each student in an introductory interview to begin the student engagement plan that outlines that student's goals and dreams for their future. She uses this time to start building the relationship and trust and assesses the student's skill level in critical thinking and decision making. With continued conversation, and in using crisis assistance and referrals, she teaches problem solving. Nora is often the first confidante of a student in trouble.

One student with excellent grades declared she wanted to quit the program. Being a recent immigrant, she was greatly stressed over several factors in her household. She, her husband, and her infant daughter had several other family members staying in their house, and, with her husband's $10/hour job being the only income, she felt tremendous financial stress. On top of this worry, noise, and distraction, she found the cultural changes in adapting to American society created additional conflicts in expectations and family roles. She said that at times she felt split between two worlds. Along with other supports, Nora helped her explore her thinking, reflecting on her strengths and the benefits of staying with the program. The student decided to keep going and completed the program. During a CATCH recognition event this student received a special perseverance award that was presented by the college president. As her patient care skills increased so did her outlook. She earned her Nursing Assistant license and Phlebotomy Technician certificate, qualifying to sit for the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) phlebotomy exam. She was hired by her phlebotomy externship site and continued her education, earning her Clinical Lab Assistant certificate with a goal of a Bachelor's degree in Medical Technology. She is now in a lead role in her lab and makes about $18/hour.

Nora also helps to arrange recognition events that are specific and timely to help students see the success of others and celebrate their own successes. As students in one recent cohort neared the end of their first college success course, the instructor talked with Nora about their success. Of 19 students in the cohort, 15 had perfect attendance, and all had activated their campus email the first week and made fast progress in their computer literacy lessons. Awards for perfect attendance and a simple celebration were part of the last day of class. The students were surprised, excited, and proud of themselves. One student commented, "Let's keep this up and continue the good work."

Bilingual Pre-Practical Nursing Program

Full Employment Council

21st Century Healthcare Works

To address local workforce needs, Full Employment Council and local partners collaborated to develop a bilingual training program for pre-practical nursing. The Preparados en Salud (PeS) program combines Certified Nurse Assistant training, academic and workforce preparation, and prerequisite classes designed to help students seeking admission to the practical nursing program at Metropolitan Community College (MCC). PeS serves participants in the 21st Century Healthcare Works initiative, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance.

PeS is a partnership between the Full Employment Council, Metropolitan Community College, the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation (HEDC), Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), and the National Council of La Raza. In 2010, the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation was researching employment and training opportunities in the Kansas City area. HEDC approached Full Employment Council and MCC to plan for workforce partnerships specifically within the Hispanic community. At the same time, local hospitals were reporting serving increasingly larger Spanish-speaking populations, but having trouble finding enough bilingual staff who could communicate with individuals during direct care. After participating in a workforce development forum in the fall of 2010, these organizations decided to form a partnership to develop a bilingual training program resulting in employment in the healthcare industry.

FEC's role is to provide recruitment, assessment, screening, career counseling, program placement, and supportive services to PeS participants before training, and employment placement and retention services after training. JVS provides on-site case management services to all PeS students, including intake, assessment, appropriate referrals for services needed outside of the scope of JVS services, and follow-up meetings with each student as necessary, but at least monthly to assess progress and or barriers. JVS reevaluates case management plans as necessary for successful outcomes.

The National Council of La Raza provides technical assistance and information about the Carreras en Salud program in Chicago, which serves as the model for the PeS program. Truman Medical Center and Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics provided input about employer needs. Other employer partners are Cabot Health Center and Samuel Rodgers Health Center.

The program's training components include:

1) Certified Nurse Assistant

2) Patient Care Technician

3) Mental Health First Aid

4) Level One Medication Aide

5) American Heart Association CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) for Healthcare Providers

6) Nursing Seminar (employability skills, bilingual medical terminology, professionalism)

7) Math for Nursing (supplemental instruction for Cell Biology class)

8) Nursing Prerequisites

a) BIOL100 – Cell Biology

b) BIOL109 – Anatomy and Physiology

The first class graduated in September 2012. Over the long term, the PeS partnership is designed to: (1) create a career path in the healthcare field that is based on best practices; (2) provide new and stable access for low-skill Hispanic adults in community college certificate and degree programs in healthcare; (3) place certificate holders and graduates in corresponding career path employment and assist with their advancement in their careers; and (4) develop a best-practice model that will be recognized within the workforce development field at the national level. This initiative will help meet the demand for bilingual healthcare workers as well as serve the region's burgeoning Hispanic population.

Certification Exams

Gateway Community and Technical College

Health Profession Opportunity Project

Most participants in Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) programs, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, will need to take a national or state certification exam to be eligible to work in their selected occupations. Because of this, helping students pass these exams is one of the most important services an HPOG program can provide. At Gateway Community and Technical College in Kentucky, the HPOG program has recognized this and helps students schedule, prepare for, and pay for their certification exams.

Even if a certification is not legally required to work in an occupation, nationally- or state-recognized credentials greatly improve the employability of job seekers. Because of this, Gateway's HPOG program requires all students to take a certification exam at the end of their training. Relevant training programs include those for Nurse Assistants, Medical Coders, Pharmacy Technicians, Emergency Medical Technicians, Paramedics, Medical Assistants, Phlebotomists, and Massage Therapists.

The HPOG program begins preparing students for their tests from the first day of class. However, this was not always the case. Prior to the implementation of the HPOG grant, Gateway did not require Allied Health students to sit for certification exams. When HPOG project director Terri Green successfully made the case that certification improves employability, she observed a "culture change" within the Allied Health division, and soon faculty began to include test-related material in their lesson plans. Now some of the training programs even require students to take the certification exam as part of their grade.

Despite this increased classroom emphasis on certification, Ms. Green felt that the HPOG program could do more for its clients. To this end, the program pays exam-related fees and works with students to schedule their test dates. Recognizing that some certifying bodies require payment to come from the test taker alone, the HPOG program also reimburses students who are required to pay out of pocket for their exams. Since there may be a lengthy amount of time between finishing training and sitting for a certification exam (depending on the occupation), the HPOG program was also faced with keeping the student engaged and prepared even after he or she had finished training. By holding regularly scheduled skills workshops and group review sessions, the HPOG team addresses this gap and keeps students ready for their exams. In some cases, the HPOG program has also paid for review books and practice tests. All of this contact with the students provides an additional benefit to the program: the HPOG staff is kept aware of students' certification status and can direct them toward employment once they are certified.

To other HPOG programs looking to assist students in taking and passing certification exams, Ms. Green recommends keeping the students engaged while they wait for their tests. This helps maintain their motivation. Ms. Green also encourages programs to offer practice testing

in environments that closely resemble those in which the students will take their actual exams. Because many HPOG participants are nontraditional students who may not be accustomed to test taking, these practice sessions help them feel more comfortable and confident. Lastly, Ms. Green recommends HPOG programs consider any barriers students may face in getting to the testing location. In some cases, chartering a van to transport a group of students can lessen the stress on the students and prevent them from missing their test date.

Healthcare Profession-Specific Cohorts

Gateway Technical College

Healthcare Profession Opportunity Project

The Gateway Healthcare Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP), a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, has established a number of cohorts training for specific healthcare professions. The first was a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) cohort. In order to establish this cohort with a hospital partner, the HPOG program met with the human resources department of the hospital to discuss its current hiring needs. An HPOG specialist set up recruitment days and was present in the cafeteria on site at the hospital to recruit students. In addition, fliers were displayed to advertise this opportunity. The hospital established the eligibility criteria for prospective students: they could be part time or full time, couldn't be on probation, and needed a supervisor's recommendation. Once eligible students were identified, an orientation session was scheduled. HPOP worked with the hospital facilities department to arrange for classroom and lab activities to be held in appropriate settings.

Thirteen students completed the cohort. All were employed with Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare. Five continued with HPOP in other healthcare training. Some of the students sought other employment opportunities elsewhere.

Having experienced successful CNA cohorts, the Gateway HPOP considered the development of a Health Unit Coordinator (HUC) cohort. Again the employer was asked about specific hiring needs, and the employer expressed a need for HUCs. There was a recruitment process similar to the one done for the CNA cohort. The Gateway HPOP created a blended course schedule incorporating both computer and classroom instruction. Two nights a week students met face to face, and one night they completed work via Blackboard education software. Seven students are currently enrolled and anticipate graduation in May 2013.

The idea for a specific Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) cohort was not created with an employer partner. Rather, it developed during a church event when a pastor suggested that there were some students who could benefit from working as EMTs. At that time EMT training was offered only at a rural location 30 minutes away from the city, making it difficult for prospective students to attend. Gateway HPOP bought out a class so that HPOP could hold its own EMT training, made up entirely of HPOP students. To do this, a meeting was held with the dean of the service occupations and the lead instructor of EMT. During that discussion the meeting time and place for the course, possible instructors, and requirements and obligations of the course were established.

The HPOG grantee spoke with the lead EMT instructor at Gateway Technical College and began outreach. Outreach went viral, and 42 people showed up demonstrating interest in the 15 training slots available. The goal of the EMT cohort is to have a higher passing/completion rate than the 50% rate the college currently has.

The first team meeting held with these students featured a mandatory orientation from the lead instructor that detailed the EMT field. That was followed by specific orientation to the HPOP program itself. All paperwork for the EMT cohort was completed on site at the orientation. All students also participated in a Strengthquest assessment. In addition, a previous student served as a mentor onsite, talking to the new students about what the program was like for him, discussing the time commitment needed, and sharing the story of how he got started in the field. This process gave prospective students a very realistic picture of what the EMT field would be like, and students were encouraged at this early stage to honestly assess their suitability for the field. Each month there was a team meeting where the EMT students meet with the HPOP specialists, met with their mentors, and interacted with guest speakers who came to discuss topics such as study skills, test taking strategies, resume writing, and other soft skills.

For the EMT and HUC cohorts, students still had to come to campus to access some of the equipment. However, the first two classes of the HUC cohort were offered on site at the hospital. For the CNA cohort, everything was brought to the hospital location for the students, including books, uniforms, and orientations to labs. In addition, the students in the EMT cohort were loaned laptops for completion of online exams for three months. Students enrolled in these cohorts were charged NO tuition. The HPOG program paid the salaries of all the instructors involved with the courses.

Camaraderie with fellow students is at an all-time high in the cohort classes. The students form bonds that go beyond the classroom, studying together and supporting one another throughout their time together. In addition, with the cohort model the students always know the schedule for class dates and times.

Nursing Career Pathways

Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Inc.

CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute

Associate degree nurses in Wisconsin have indicated that cost and time are the greatest barriers to advancement in their nursing careers. Undertaking additional debt to finance education places financial hardships on families and demanding work schedules make it difficult to find time to study. The current average time for nursing students to complete education for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree is six years, but the incumbent nursing workforce needs more education to provide quality care in an increasingly complex healthcare environment. There is also a great need for increased diversity in the Wisconsin nursing workforce.

The Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) is striving to address these challenges through CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute, its Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. Partnering with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), MAWIB is working to develop an accelerated nursing program and to build nursing career pathways. This effort will help HPOG participants who are nurses or nursing students complete degrees and fill the nursing workforce gap currently facing local employers. The partnership has set the following primary goals:

1) Increase the number of associate degree nurse students of the Wisconsin Technical College System and incumbent associate degree nurses who enroll for the Registered Nurse (RN) to BSN program, and shorten their time to completion of the BSN.

2) Identify and remove barriers to enrollment and accelerated completion of RN to BSN degrees in Wisconsin.

3) Investigate the option for a self-paced, competency-based curriculum for students.

The goal of the partnership is to develop career pathways to make nursing training programs as streamlined and convenient for students as possible. Program recruitment will be coordinated through all educational partners. Prerequisite courses will be provided at more frequent times and locations so students will not be stuck if they miss or fail a class.

The project plans to establish methods for dual enrollment of MATC nursing students at UWM, and it will ensure the transferability of credits between the educational institutions. To increase access and convenience for program completion, courses will have options for on-line instruction or off-campus, employer-based courses. The program is working with employers so that students can incorporate training into their work schedules in a constructive way. These efforts will serve CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute students while building relationships that will have long-term benefits for local healthcare students and employers.

Working with Individuals with a Criminal Background

New Hampshire Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs

Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP)

The New Hampshire Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP), a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, has made an affirmative decision to accept individuals into the program who have criminal records. This practice is informed by employer feedback; a number of employers that work closely with the program through its business advisory councils have indicated that having a record will not automatically rule out an applicant for employment. Additionally, the program has made a philosophical decision that, to the extent possible, it will contribute to providing a second chance to otherwise marginalized individuals.

At the same time, HPOP is selective about these admissions and considers such variables as what the offense was, how long ago it occurred, and what the applicant has done since then to change his or her life and to make amends where appropriate. Program staff also listens carefully to how the applicant talks about the offense and the impact it had on the applicant's life and the lives of those around him or her, including the victim, if there was one. Especially, they listen for indications that the individual recognizes the error of his or her ways and takes responsibility for the act in question. Because staff must also assess employability within healthcare, an individual's healthcare career goal is a factor in the decision to admit to HPOP as well. Staff are frank with these applicants that their process may present more challenges than most and that they must be prepared, with the program's support and partnership, to do the extra work required to increase their marketability.

Individuals are referred to job developers at different times in the process of training and career preparation, but when a participant has a record, contact is often made sooner in the process. That gives the job developer more time for the work to prepare for job search, to maximize potential hires.

New Hampshire HPOP job developers implement a process of coaching strategies and portfolio development in addition to routine job search skills training. Some of these more specialized steps and strategies include the following:

1) Participants respond to routine job developer intake questions but are also questioned about criminal history and asked to describe criminal events in their own words.

2) Job developers and participants begin working together to assemble a professional portfolio.

   - Create a strengths-based résumé to help participants rebuild confidence to approach former employers and work initially within existing networks.

- If participant is not already engaging in relevant volunteer work, job developer will suggest doing so.
- Participant is encouraged to write a cover letter to be used to apply for paid employment, volunteer work, and internships.
- Participant is encouraged to get references and letters of recommendation from former or present employers, colleagues, church members, volunteer coordinators, sponsors/12-step members, or caseworkers. Among other things, this process can help rebuild contacts that may be essential to secure employment.

3) Participants practice interview skills, taking into account the challenges of criminal background discussion with hiring managers.

- Participant writes a letter of explanation for job interviews where s/he acknowledges not only responsibility for criminal actions but also positive changes that have occurred since that event.
- The hope is that the message of participant's marketability, ability, and skills has been reinforced through positive volunteer experience, recommendations, positive references, and continual review of interviewing skills.
- It is critical that the participant develop self-confidence that is apparent when disclosing criminal history to employers. Self-confidence is built on a process of asset development and recognition of self-value over time that mitigates the shame and diminished self-worth that is often apparent in individuals with criminal histories.

4) Participants maintain enthusiasm, encouraged by staff to follow these steps:

- Break down large goals into smaller, more immediate goals in order to experience success.
- Attend discipline-related training opportunities and continuing education when possible.
- Continue practicing interview skills.
- Learn to write a thank-you letter post-interview.

Collaboration with One Stop

Pima Community College District

Pathways to Healthcare

A partnership works best when both parties understand their roles and are motivated to work together. Pima Community College's (PCC) Pathways to Healthcare, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) project, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, has enjoyed the benefits of such a partnership by working hand-in-hand with the Pima County One Stop (PCOS). While the College has worked with the One Stop for over a decade, the relationship between Pathways to Healthcare and PCOS has strengthened this partnership and is a prime example of a successful HPOG collaboration.

Pima County One Stop is the primary partner of the Pathways to Healthcare program, assisting with a number of mission-critical tasks, such as intake and assessment. Indeed, due to its efficient referral process, PCOS is the entry point for many of the program's clients. This referral typically begins at one of the hour-long HPOG orientation sessions delivered by PCC staff three or four times a week at PCOS and PCC locations. Interested attendees complete a Student Interest Survey, which collects contact information and asks individuals about the types of health careers in which they are interested. Individuals can also sign up for a Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing session, which PCOS administers at a subsequent appointment.

After taking the TABE, participants set up an eligibility appointment with PCOS staff. Individuals who are eligible for the Pathways to Healthcare program are assigned a PCOS workforce development specialist (WDS), as well as one of four PCC student services Advanced specialists (SSAS), one of whom is co-located at PCOS. These two specialists will review the individual's assessments and work with him or her to develop a personalized training plan that outlines the desired career pathway and training programs in which the student will enroll. The WDS also assists the individual in completing a number of professional preparatory activities, such as an employability skills workshop and personal budget development, and ensures the participant is enrolled in the proper training courses.

Once an individual is in training, the WDS provides case management supports and coordinates the student's access to both community services funded by the Pathways to Healthcare program and those available through regular public programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child care assistance, rental assistance, and transportation. The WDS also approves HPOG-funded emergency services and ensures that participants have access to all PCOS job development services. Following placement, the WDS follows up with newly employed students.

Pathways to Healthcare leadership Brian Stewart and Amanda Abens shared a number of additional collaborative practices. To ensure the best provision of case management services, for instance, PCOS has granted the Pathways program access to its client database system. With access to the same client information, the WDS and SSAS keep one another updated on each individual's needs and share employment data, transcripts, and college readiness

progress. The benefits of this information sharing fall to the students: services are provided quickly, and efficiently and redundancy is eliminated. PCC and PCOS staff also participate in joint professional development exercises, allowing staff to "put faces to names" and improve procedures and services.

Collaboration occurs at the leadership level as well. PCOS and Pathways to Healthcare leadership meet bi-monthly and communicate regularly. As both partners have a vested interest in the success of the program, they use a joint hiring process where leadership from both organizations interview potential Pathways staff.

Mr. Stewart and Ms. Abens have a number of recommendations to other HPOG grantees looking to strengthen their partnerships with their local One Stop centers. First and foremost is to acknowledge your partner's goals and strategic needs. By understanding their perspective, you can better identify the potential benefits that result from collaboration. Second, work with your partner organization to break apart and analyze the systems and processes that are currently used. By examining processes together, partners can identify redundancies and areas to improve. The collaboration also increases understanding of the processes and builds buy-in from both partners. Lastly, Mr. Stewart and Ms. Abens recommend co-locating with partners, if possible.

Case Management in the Classroom

Research Foundation of the City University of New York–Hostos Community College

Allied Health Career Pipeline Program

"If a student is battling or struggling with varying ills, such as anger or aggression, depression, domestic violence, fatigue, financial instability, frustration, housing, hunger, legal issues, limited literacy or employability skills, unemployment or underemployment, that student's learning will be adversely impacted. That is why having a case manager in the classroom is so valuably vital," emphasizes Allied Health Career Pipeline Program director Deborah E. Reid.

This is the reasoning behind Ms. Reid's design of the "Case Management in the Classroom" model for the Hostos Community College Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. A case manager is placed in the classroom with faculty, both to identify barriers to program participation and completion and to devise individual service plans for addressing those impediments. Student barriers might be attendance and punctuality problems, requiring a time management plan; angry, verbally aggressive behavior, needing anger management intervention; or a more serious obstacle, necessitating referral by the student resource navigator for supportive services from a Pipeline Partner Network member agency.

Having a case manager in the classroom creates a supportive learning community for both instructor and student, builds a deeper understanding of a student's background and needs, and frames the discussions about student cases at weekly case conference sessions. These meetings, which include the case management and the career services teams, are used to formally evaluate students, assess their strengths and deficits and their technical skills development, and measure their progress toward achieving personal, professional, and program goals.

Although faculty and instructors were initially uncomfortable with an onsite case management presence, and students have been unnerved by this method, the "Case Management in the Classroom" approach has contributed immensely to improving program completion rates. It has become an accepted and welcomed case management practice.

Coordinated Employer Engagement and the Employer Matrix

San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc.

Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry

The San Diego Workforce Partnership's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, has developed an innovative approach to create efficiency and enhance its effectiveness in serving both its participants and local healthcare employers. The program, known locally as the Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry, utilizes four community-based agencies to provide navigator services in the four regions of San Diego County.

Initially, each agency was charged with conducting its own job development and employer engagement in its region. However, the time-consuming tasks of bringing in new participants and coaching them through the program precluded spending time in the field to meet with employers and build relationships. At the same time, business services staff in the region's One-Stop Career Centers and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs were duplicating each other's efforts to reach out to the same employers. In one case, two different staff asked two different people from the same healthcare employer to speak at the same event. Both agreed to speak, and then they were surprised to see each other at the event. This was a waste of resources for the employer and led to questions about coordination.

The Workforce Partnership's solution to these challenges has been twofold. First, it is convening the business services and job development staff from the navigator agencies, One-Stops, and TANF agencies so that all can share information about their activities rather than duplicate efforts. Second, the Workforce Partnership has created an Employer Research Matrix for the healthcare industry. This matrix is designed to gather all relevant information from employers regarding their hiring needs and processes. The matrix is expanded by and shared with all job developers as it is updated, preventing job developers from asking employers the same questions over and over again. This system allows staff to be more efficient and less burdensome to the business community. It also provides a service to the employers, as discussion is focused on what employers need rather than trying to sell job seekers to each of the employers.

HPOG program director Cindy Perry began by bringing on a business services representative (BSR) to contact healthcare employers on behalf of the HPOG partner agencies. The BSR created an employer survey and then set up in-person interview appointments with employers to complete the survey. The first employers targeted were those on the HPOG advisory board, those who sit on the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and committees to the WIB, those that had hired Bridge to Employment participants, those in healthcare professional associations, and other employers with whom the Workforce Partnership had relationships. At the interview, employers were asked who else should be contacted. Next steps involved reaching out to these employer referrals and cold calling. Organizations contacted include acute care hospitals,

comprehensive healthcare systems, community clinics, skilled nursing facilities, in-home care providers, and private medical practices.

The BSR typically meets with a hiring manager or human resources recruiter for each organization. During the interview employers are asked what allied healthcare positions they hire and, of those, what positions are in most demand. This information helps the HPOG program guide participants into training programs with the highest probability of employment. Employers are asked what schools their interns and recent hires attended. Navigators use this information to help participants select schools that have affiliations with specific employers.

Employers are asked what they believe will improve a person's employability in the industry. An interesting trend is employers reporting that work experience in other fields and volunteer experience in any healthcare environment increases a person's employability. When asked what special skills they look for, customer service is almost always included. Spanish-English bilingualism and computer skills also top the list.

Each employer is also asked to describe its hiring process. The process is outlined step-by-step on the matrix. It has been interesting to note that what employers describe in the interview often differs from the process described on the organization's website. The employer's suggestions on how to make an application stand out are also included on the matrix.

Just as important as application details is information about volunteer, work experience, and internship opportunities at the employer's site. The BSR gives significant attention to recording specifics about opportunities available and the on-boarding process. If Bridge to Employment participants can access these opportunities, they will build a relationship with the employer and will have a much stronger chance of being hired when a position opens up. Participants hone their skills and gain experience that employers find valuable. Most employers have acknowledged they will view unpaid experience the same as paid experience if the work environment and job tasks are very similar and a reference is provided.

Some items on the matrix—such as **use social media** and **list accomplishments**—are in bold typeface, helping the reader quickly scan important items. This is information that is gained only by talking with the employer. It is not in the employer's job descriptions or announcements, or on its website, yet it is important to the employer.

Trends in the industry, positions being phased out, new positions being created due to the Affordable Care Act, and words of wisdom for job seekers are often discussed when employer survey interviews are conducted. The BSR takes time during the visit to describe the Bridge to Employment program and its benefits to the employer. Services such as job matching, recruitment, connection to the career centers, and availability of on-the-job training funds are presented.

The San Diego Workforce Partnership has used the Employer Matrix as a tool to engage employers by focusing on learning what they need and what is most important to them.

Dental Laboratory Technicians

Schenectady County Community College

Health Profession Opportunity Grant

For many potential participants in Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) programs, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, a criminal past is an insurmountable barrier that prevents them from finding employment in the healthcare industry. Indeed, only certain occupations allow individuals with criminal backgrounds to work in healthcare. Dental Laboratory Technician (DLT), because of the absence of direct patient contact, is one such occupation. Having recognized this, Schenectady County Community College's HPOG program has begun offering DLT training to those individuals with criminal backgrounds, thereby enlarging the pool of potential program clients.

DLTs fabricate, alter, or repair dental devices and earn an average annual wage of $35,590. The tasks performed by DLTs are generally similar to those of a manufacturing job and are best suited to students who possess a good ability to work with their hands and an aptitude for detail. At Schenectady County Community College, the DLT program introduces students to the basic techniques, materials, anatomy, and terminology that will enable them to fabricate a dental appliance (denture or partial) from beginning to end. This training includes dental lab safety, oral anatomy, tooth morphology, complete denture work, casts, and custom trays. The course runs about 10 weeks, starting with an emphasis in the classroom and gradually moving to full-time work in the lab. Currently, instructors train students using the 2005 Air Force Manual, as recommended by the National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology.

Schenectady's DLT training came about as the program leadership was seeking ways to offer more inclusive training. Project director Tiziana Rota says, "We were approached by a local dental lab owner asking about providing training in Dental Lab Tech (DLT). As we explored various options, we found that using our existing classrooms for the more academic aspect of the training, along with the use of his lab for the practical aspect of the course, would provide us with the right combination for success." The first course launched in July 2012, with about six HPOG students enrolled.

Having worked out some of the kinks following the initial experience, Schenectady's HPOG program is now ready to launch an additional DLT training in a different county. As in the case of the initial DLT program, Ms. Rota has partnered with a local manufacturer of dental materials and equipment, CMP Industries, to offer training in a state-of-the-art training lab. Additionally, the HPOG program is working with the New York State Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship to develop a competency-based apprenticeship, thus offering more opportunities beyond the life of the grant and its geographical limitations. The HPOG program also plans to offer more advanced DLT training in years 4 and 5 of the grant.

For other HPOG projects interested in launching DLT programs, Ms. Rota recommends that they first get in touch with dental lab facilities, as these will provide students with an optimal training environment. Ms. Rota also suggests learning what certifications are needed by local DLT employers so that programs may tailor their trainings.

Job Placement Assistance

South Carolina Department of Social Services

Project HOPE

Job placement assistance is a service provided by the South Carolina Department of Social Services' Project HOPE, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. Many students who are enrolled in the HPOG program need to make money to support their families and themselves while they are furthering their education and working toward higher-paying healthcare jobs, and job search assistance addresses this need.

Job developers on the South Carolina HPOG program staff visit the boot camps, the first step in the student's journey, during the first week. At that time individual student assessments are made, including review of the student's personal and financial situation to determine the best job fit. Job developers work with the students to develop résumés and complete generic work applications to demonstrate the students' work histories. They talk with the students to determine what kinds of jobs the students might be interested in that are compatible with their home locations, their transportation situations, and their childcare needs.

Job developers contact employers in the area to make them aware of the HPOG program and the services the program provides. Then they present résumés of the students to the employers. To prepare students for interviewing with employers, the program staff conducts mock interviews with students and talk with them about dressing for success and other skills necessary to successfully attain and retain jobs. The job developers forge good relationships with employers in healthcare and other industries in order to facilitate continued work opportunities for clients who are in the HPOG program. The employers are encouraged to call the program any time issues with HPOG students arise so that the staff can work with the students to resolve them.

It can be somewhat challenging to find employers that offer the flexible work hours needed for students' school attendance. It is necessary to have skilled job developers on the HPOG program staff, and they need to be good salespeople for the program and for the students. They also should be familiar with labor market information and understand the current job environment. The job developers can identify jobs that are compatible with part-time entry-level work so that the students can pursue an education and work at the same time.

In areas where there is more than one location for a business, such as stores that are part of a chain, it is most beneficial to establish the relationship with the corporate office for the chain. Employers are often enthusiastic to participate because of earned tax credits they can receive by hiring HPOG students, so that becomes a good selling point to make with employers.

To demonstrate the dedication and work ethic that the HPOG students bring, HPOG program staff informs the employers when students they have hired are working and attending school at the same time. They also inform employers about what the program does to provide childcare and transportation support, assuring the employers that these issues will not negatively affect their new hires.

The South Carolina HPOG program has three job developers on staff. They maintain their own databases of employers specific to their assigned regions, but they also share their information across the staff. Some of the businesses Project HOPE works with for job placement purposes also support the program in other ways. For example, Subway provides food-only vouchers for students in the program but also is a potential employer of HPOG students.

Creative Job Development Strategies

Southland Health Care Forum, Inc.

Pathways to Health Care Occupations

Pathways to Health Care Occupations is a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. This program of the Southland Health Care Forum (SHCF) has developed placement and employer engagement strategies that have been successful for its participants and are a promising practice for other HPOG grantees.

According to this program's job developer, Dionis Harvey, a full evaluation of the participant's current home situation is critical to successful placement. SHCF sees its role as not only training participants in healthcare occupations, but also leading them through a whole-person lifestyle change. Program staff work with participants to help them anticipate the needs, problems, and changes in their lives that could become barriers to successfully finding a job.

SHCF strives to provide participants with opportunities to meet with employers in person before they graduate. Employers are invited to monthly student orientations so they can learn more about HPOG and interact with the staff, instructors, and participants, seeing face-to-face the people who will be entering the workforce. SHCF also invites employers to career development workshops and job clubs where students conduct mock interviews.

Program staff share wage information for occupations and ensure participants have realistic expectations for entry-level jobs. Participants learn that they may have to work night shifts or work in institutions other than major hospitals, and that the healthcare field is not the way it looks on television—it's hard work!

In a way, HPOG programs have two clients—participants, of course, but employers as well. A job developer can read the mission statement of an employer to learn about the employer's values, then attempt to place students who have similar values with that employer. This strategy is much more likely to be successful than sending a deluge of résumés, and it encourages both the job developer and the student to research the employer, which is an important part of the job search process in itself.

Programs should have a customer service mindset when working with employers, striving to send them the people they need, not the people you want to place. Social media or professional networking sites like Linked-In can be used to re-engage with employers. Having participants create Linked-In accounts, with virtual résumés that can easily be forwarded with the click of a button, makes it easier for employers to work with the résumés than sending them hard copies.

SHCF's HPOG program staff collaborate to make placements, but placement can also be considered a responsibility shared by the student and the job developer. The participants have to do their part to prepare for the application and interview process, but the job developer

keeps the participants on track and provides guidance. The job developer also has an ongoing relationship with the employer, which is critical. Career fairs represent a networking opportunity for both participants and job developers.

SHCF maintains a spreadsheet with information about local employers. A quarterly scan of employers is used to stay abreast of which employers are hiring. Networking with job developers from career centers and other community-based organizations can be helpful; programs can collaborate rather than compete. SHCF keeps geography in mind when making placements, attempting to place participants in their communities. It keeps a job developer manual as a guide for these strategies.

When a participant starts a new job in their healthcare career, it is an important milestone to celebrate. The SHCF team recognizes the value of congratulating participants on finding their new jobs, but also appreciates that job retention is just as important as placement. The team is available to participants and employers, especially during the transition-to-work period. Graduating participants are encouraged to reach out to program staff with any problems. SHCF often asks graduates to come back to speak to new participants.

SHCF hosts employer appreciation breakfasts to recognize employers for their contributions to workshop partnerships. At these events, the HPOG program's top participants present awards to employers so they know they are true partners who share in program and student successes.

What can HPOG program staff do when they are struggling with placements or feeling bogged down? Be creative and try new ideas. For example, video interviews and video introductions are becoming more popular. HPOG programs can help participants create videos about themselves, which can be placed in their Linked-In profiles. Another idea is setting up informational interviews with employers that are new or that the program has not worked with yet. When placing Registered Nurses, find out which employers have new graduate hiring programs.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the learning process does not need to end with finding a job. Participants will want to advance on career ladders and receive ongoing education and training, and they will need it to have successful careers.

HPOG Student Orientations

Suffolk County Department of Labor

Project SCHOOL (Suffolk County Health Occupational Opportunity for Learning)

The Suffolk County Department of Labor (SCDOL) holds an extensive orientation for students in its Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. During that one-day orientation, students' barriers are assessed and all program opportunities are presented to students.

Orientation meetings are held in groups of approximately 25 individuals on an as-needed basis, shortly before students begin their HPOG-funded training programs. At orientation, students are introduced to their support team, composed of SCDOL and licensing and consumer affairs counselors whose primary objective is to provide supportive services to students in a positive, cooperative problem-solving effort. The team ensures that everything possible is done to make students' school lives both rewarding and successful.

It is a fact that students are most successful when there is a strong spirit of cooperation between home, school, and community. Based on this shared responsibility, the support team meets with students to explore possibilities and strategies that will best meet their educational needs. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory and a very important step to a cohesive team effort to achieve a positive outcome to the incredible opportunity the Department of Labor Project SCHOOL offers participants.

In agreeing to take part in the HPOG program, students also agree to the following terms:

- Arrange transportation to and from the training site and/or during internship placement.
- Be prompt and maintain regular attendance at school and/or during internship placement.
- Call appropriate school and/or internship placement personnel if late or absent for any reason.
- Arrive dressed appropriately at school and/or during internship placement.
- Maintain high academic and training standards.
- Obey all rules and regulations at school and/or during internship placement.
- Communicate openly with school coordinator or SCDOL Project SCHOOL counselor concerning any problems, concerns, or conditions that are interfering with progress at school or during internship placement.
- Attend all meetings or activities, whether scheduled on site at school or at SCDOL, to promote or monitor student progress.

- After completion of training, all inquiries from either the school or SCDOL Project SCHOOL regarding a student's employment status must be answered. If students secure employment during training, they must advise SCDOL/Project SCHOOL counselor.

The atmosphere upheld during the orientation and support team meetings is one of personal responsibility and inspiration. Staff use meaningful quotes to help students aspire to their greater selves and accomplish their goals, and they give students tips to succeeding and overcoming barriers. The combination of the student support team, positive atmosphere, and clear directives gives the students every opportunity to succeed in their goals. This scheduled orientation period sets a positive tone for the remainder of enrollment in the HPOG program.

Building Strong Employer Relations

Temple University of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education

Health Information Professions (HIP) Career Pathways Program

The Center for Social Policy and Community Development (CSPCD) at Temple University offered training in the career of Medical Office and Accounts through several grants prior to the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. To strengthen the learning experience of the HPOG students, and to provide them a more substantial work history in this field, CSPCD looked to the partner organizations, health systems and hospitals of Temple University, to create meaningful internships. One of the first responders was Maureen Connell, the director of central business operations for Temple University Physicians.

Ms. Connell enthusiastically embraced and helped shape the vision of what a good internship would be. She had a long history in medical billing. Prior to Temple University, she had worked at Thomas Jefferson University, where she provided internships to high school students from Northeast Philadelphia and was able to hire some of them. At Temple University Physicians, she became director of central business operations, and all staff and positions were evaluated to ensure maximum efficiency and productivity. She loves teaching others the many skills that she has acquired, so working with the HPOG program was a natural fit.

Creating this employer relationship took some time due to busy schedules. Once contact was made, HPOG staff visited Ms. Connell and presented the program, the curriculum, the paperwork that was needed weekly to monitor students (such as time sheets and performance reports), and a sample learning contract. Tentative scheduling dates and protocols were presented for Ms. Connell's input. A review of the HPOG curriculum and a meeting with the HPOG instructor assured her that classroom content was comprehensive.

Collaborating with the program made sense to her because she could be training future employees, assisting students with on-the-job training, and providing her staff with an experience that values mentoring, teaching what they know, and providing guidance for employment. Ms. Connell would be able to hire students who performed well as she watched them learn and grow at the Central Billing Office.

She and her team have provided a nurturing experience for the students. As they train students for success in the workplace, they ensure the students receive an all-around experience that helps them to feel confident in their work, find value in their accomplishments, and feel good about who they were and what they contribute. In addition to assisting students and staff, Ms. Connell serves on the Temple HPOG employer engagement committee and shares with other committee members best practices on building more effective partnerships with the HPOG program and students.

Ms. Connell interviews all internship applicants, just as she would interview job applicants, and discusses how she started out in the field, what the field requires, and what opportunities exist in the field. A discussion then takes place with the HIP Career Placement Coordinators for the specifics of what the learning contract will contain. Ms. Connell starts the interns out with work on the basic level and later guides them to more complex functions. Student progress with the internship is monitored by the Career Placement Coordinators for the duration of the experience. Ms. Connell offers the interns letters of reference in their job searches and job consideration when they complete the program.

Since forming this partnership, Ms. Connell has offered internships to more than 25 students and has been instrumental in helping students obtain and retain employment. This fall, she offered two internship slots in Coding to students who have recently passed their American Health Information Management Association Certified Coding Associate (AHIMA-CCA) exam, the certificate that a student in Tier 2 can earn. A typical internship requires 20 hours per week for 6 to 12 weeks. The Coding internships offer students experience in scanning, processing 1500 insurance claims, using the GE/IDX billing system, managing charge tickets and key data, printing explanation of benefits (EOB), reconciliation, and data entry verified insurance claims. The first student to pass her AHIMA-CCA was just hired by Ms. Connell as a Financial Analyst in Health Information.

The Tier 1 internship gives students who have completed entry level course work in Medical Office and Accounts hands-on experience in CMS-1500 insurance claims, EOB research, and gathering information of benefits and back-up information for credits owed. Rotations in the Billing and Coding units give the students an all-around experience in a busy physician billing office that handles bills from the Temple University Health System.

Participant Progress Awards Program

Turtle Mountain Community College

Project CHOICE

Project CHOICE, the Turtle Mountain Community College Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, has implemented a progress awards program to enhance the participants feeling of success along the way to reaching their goals. The purpose for this program is to assist the students in working towards successful program requirements by offering small rewards for their achievements. The awards are given for Attendance, Grades, Compliance with program requirements, and Passing Program Licensure Exam.

The Attendance Awards are provided in this manner, for 100 percent attendance for four weeks, the student is awarded a meal ticket. Attendance for 100 percent at midterm, the student is awarded a gift bag. The attendance for 100 percent of the time at the end of the semester, the student is awarded a bookstore gift certificate for school supplies.

Students can earn awards for a bookstore gift certificate for school supplies for having a C or better at midterm. Improvement of a letter grade at finals students will earn a Program t-shirt. For keeping Program scheduled appointments and required paperwork, if a student never misses a scheduled appointment, he or she will earn a mug or water bottle. For students who consistently attend required training will earn a small token. For students who pass their licensure exam, the award they receive is related to the career tool such as a medical watch or stethoscope.

Lunch and Learn

Will County on behalf of The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (WBMC)

Healthcare Careers—Skilled Workers, Strong Earnings

Healthcare Careers—Skilled Workers, Strong Earnings is a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. The program features Lunch and Learn, a monthly job readiness workshop for program participants, which also functions as a peer support club. During Lunch and Learn sessions, students have an opportunity to get to know each other while receiving training on resume writing and interview skills. In a recent session, program staff helped students set up Linked-In accounts.

Many of the program's students have not been in school for many years or were not particularly successful when they were in school. For some students, these experiences engendered a fear of educational institutions and the classroom environment. Program case managers were looking for ways to help students overcome barriers like these so they could return to school and be successful.

Program staff recognized that peer support was a strong element contributing to student success in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Students got to know each other in the classroom and clinical settings, and many stayed connected through social media while completing their prerequisite course work for Nursing or Occupational Therapy Assistant programs.

The Lunch and Learn sessions were created to add to the peer support available through the program. Lunch and Learn sessions help students maintain relationships with their fellow participants and case managers in an informal setting, while providing an opportunity to learn or reinforce job readiness skills, soft skills, and personal development.

Students are encouraged to suggest the topics for future meetings. Among the suggestions have been Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree requirements, how to advance along a career path, various topics related to employment, and if students should join honor societies. Students have been encouraged to share their work experiences, both positive and negative, as a starting point for problem solving.

While offering pizza or a sandwich is an important component of Lunch and Learn, it is obvious that the food is not the only reason a student participates. Feedback has been very positive as students return monthly.

Occupational Training Cohorts

Workforce Development Council of Seattle–King County

Health Careers for All

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle–King County (WDC) includes the purchase of specific occupational training cohorts at community and technical colleges as one training component in Health Careers for All (HCA), its Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) project, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. WDC has found that using grant funds to support this type of strategy allows HCA to effectively engage its partners, particularly employer and education partners: funding lowers the risk of testing new strategies, and the cohort provides a concrete opportunity to partner rather than a generalized and sometimes unclear invitation to "work together." At the same time, WDC is able to "learn by doing" and create a case for sustaining those practices that are effective.

As one example, WDC is using HPOG funds to bring employer and education partners together to address a common gap in the career pathway between NA-C (Nursing Assistant Certified) and LPN/RN (Licensed Practical Nurse/Registered Nurse). HCA designed a cohort for entry-level incumbent healthcare workers that packages all of the prerequisite coursework required for entry to the Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) program, along with the ADN program itself. The cohort will run for approximately three and a half years, including both the prerequisite and ADN phases of training.

Two challenges that employer partners have expressed with regard to supporting entry-level incumbents to pursue additional training that qualifies them for higher-level positions are funding and scheduling. In this case WDC is using HPOG funds to pay for the cohort, covering all tuition, fees, books, and supplies for the entirety of the training. This practice has effectively eliminated the funding barrier in the near term and allowed the program to focus considerable effort on scheduling challenges, both working with the college to regularize/create greater predictability in the academic schedule and working directly with employer partners to explore/troubleshoot challenges they face internally.

Internal employer challenges include backfilling/arranging for coverage while student employees are in class, supporting reduced schedules that accommodate training, maintaining full-time-equivalent (FTE) levels that allow students to retain critical benefits, exploring mobility within the organization where possible (e.g., supporting changes in position/schedule/FTE to accommodate training), and managing staff morale issues that may stem from perceived preferential treatment for employees in the cohort. Because WDC is working with a diverse group of employers, including both larger healthcare organizations and smaller community health clinics, its employer partners experience those challenges and opportunities to varying degrees.

The cohort includes the following specific design elements:

- Packaging of prerequisite (prereq) coursework to increase efficiency of moving through the prereq phase: This phase can be complex because some prereq courses are actually prerequisites for others, courses fill up if students don't register early enough, etc.
- Regularized schedule to address logistical challenges for both incumbent workers and their employers related to school schedule changing each quarter: At least through the prereq phase, students are on campus Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. (plus online work and Saturday review as noted below).
- Hybrid campus-based and online instruction: Face-to-face instruction is critical with the level of academic rigor, but the hybrid approach allows for reduced time on campus/away from work.
- Review sessions/tutoring built into the model: The jump in academic rigor between NA-C and prereqs/nursing curriculum is considerable, and individuals who are working often don't have as much time available to study. (Saturday review sessions are built into the model and are mandatory, creating formal time for review and study.)
- Use of cohort approach to leverage peer support: The cohort approach allows for customized design elements like those described above as well as strong peer support, which together have a strong positive effect on retention.
- Campus-based coordinator/single point of contact for the cohort: This resource person can streamline and assist with registration, financial aid, academic issues, etc.

PHOCASHELPS.COM Web Application

Workforce Investment Board SDA-83, Inc.

Professional Healthcare Opportunities—Careers and Support (PHOCAS)

Serving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and low-income individuals in northeast Louisiana, Professional Healthcare Opportunities—Careers and Support (PHOCAS) is a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance.

One way PHOCAS uses technology to serve a geographically large, rural area is through PHOCASHELPS.COM (http://www.phocashelps.com), a Web-based student success application that facilitates communication and collaboration for students, coaches, instructors, tutors, counselors, and administrators. Launched in August 2012, the application features a private, secure social network, smartphone applications, tutoring services, and video conferencing for online meetups.

PHOCASHELPS.COM has all the features of a social networking site. Users access the application with a username and password, create a profile, and upload a picture. Users can share documents, chat in blogs, add friends, send messages to other members, and read news on the Wall. The site's calendar lists test dates, tutoring sessions, and study group meetings. Students can enter online, face-to-face meetup rooms any time they want to study or just talk. This social interaction helps the application function as a peer support community of learning.

One of the primary purposes of PHOCASHELPS.COM is to connect students with flexible tutoring services specialized for the health sciences. PHOCAS has developed online tutorial videos for basic skills training and prerequisite courses which cover dozens of topics in math and science, and all videos are hosted on the application for viewing anywhere there is an Internet connection. The application is used for Web-based, face-to-face tutoring sessions for specific courses and topics with students who are sometimes an hour's drive away from the tutor. Students go on the application to request the tutoring session. The tutor and student enter the online video meetup room for the tutoring session, where the tutor can present documents, use the digital whiteboard, and use desktop-share during the session. The tutor can record the session and post it as a video for other students to review. Students can also use the site to request the tutor visit their school for in-person sessions.

Instructors use the PHOCASHELPS.COM site to support program courses through a method called flipped learning ("flipped" because instead of classroom lectures and homework exercises, this method more or less makes the lectures the homework and uses the classroom for practice). With flipped learning, students review the lecture, flash cards based on the lecture, and required readings prior to the actual class. Teachers and tutors develop these presentations and upload them in PowerPoint and video formats. Then the instructor messages students to notify them of the posting and due date. Students can then watch the video or PowerPoint on a

computer or smartphone as often and whenever they wish. Embedded quizzes give instructors feedback so they know which problem areas to focus on in class. In the classroom, students then try to apply the knowledge by solving problems and doing practical work. The role of the classroom teacher is then to tutor students when they become stuck, rather than to impart the initial lesson. This method allows classes to be used for more hands-on time with the instructor guiding the students.

With more than 352 members, the application is very popular with PHOCAS students, and it is helping them succeed in their courses as well as pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX).

TANF Relationship

The WorkPlace, Inc.

Health CareeRx Academy

The Health Professions Opportunity Grants (HPOG), funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, are designed to offer healthcare training to recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other low-income individuals so that they may advance along established career pathways and earn a family-sustaining wage. The Health CareeRx Academy in Bridgeport, Connecticut, an HPOG program, has made large strides toward this goal by serving more than 60 TANF recipients, who make up about 40% of its clients. The academy's excellent relationship with its local TANF agency staff is the cause of this achievement.

In Connecticut, TANF recipients are required to participate in the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES), subject to time limits. TANF clients can access JFES in the academy's service area by going to four local CTWorks one-stop career centers. CTWorks is run by Career Resources Inc., an operator under contract to The WorkPlace, providing the foundation for a very strong partnership between the HPOG program and JFES staff. Additionally, in the region's largest city, the CTWorks office is located one block away from the HPOG program offices, making it very easy for interested clients to learn more about the program.

The success of this relationship is not due to common leadership and location alone, however. The WorkPlace has taken a number of actions to improve communication with JFES and increase the number of TANF clients referred to the program by JFES case managers. For instance, HPOG staff speak to JFES case managers on a regular basis, in group settings or individually, to update them on the program, discuss common clients, and encourage referrals of TANF candidates. Under the leadership of Debra Keel, Vice President of Operations, and Barbara Jean Thomas, Vice President of One-Stop Operations, at Career Resources, Inc., JFES Case Managers discuss the Health CareeRx Academy with all incoming TANF clients. Information session dates and locations are posted on the CTWorks calendar in advance.

If a client is interested in learning more about the Health CareeRx Academy, the JFES case manager can register the client for the next available information session via the Connecticut Works Business Services (CTWBS) management information system. This lets academy staff know how many people to expect at the session and also serves as a vehicle for documenting whether or not a client has attended and is in compliance with the JFES program.

Because JFES clients must verify their job search and training activities on a weekly basis, the academy reports to JFES case managers on whether their client has attended a session, and that information is recorded in CTWBS under the client's attendance record.

The academy and Career Resources are working to formalize the relationship between the two programs by assigning staff to be the "official" points of contact with each other. Additionally, the academy's case managers will begin meeting regularly with JFES case managers to discuss

clients who may be struggling or in need of additional attention. Plans for the future include sharing client status information in real time.

When asked what other HPOG programs can do to improve their relationships with the local TANF providers, the academy director emphasizes the need for strong lines of communication. To increase the number of referrals coming to the HPOG program, he suggests taking the initiative to educate TANF case managers and supervisors on the program: its goals, demands, and culture. This helps case managers speak about the program and ensure that referred clients are truly interested in its services and have realistic expectations regarding the academic requirements.

HPOG programs should encourage their participants to spread the word to friends and family who may also be interested in careers in healthcare, as much of the academy's recruitment is done via word of mouth. To this end, the academy strives to develop a brand which sets it apart from other training programs and similar services, with clear messages about its selection process as well as benefits.