Supporting Low-Skilled Adults in College and Career Pathways:
A Story of Supports and Partnerships

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Multi-state, multi-college career pathways initiative

Started with a planning year in 2011

Approaching the end of the three-year implementation phase now

Primary emphasis: redesigning Adult Basic Education and Career/Technical Education to enable more low-income adults to complete postsecondary credentials that are of value in the labor market.
By 2018, nearly 2/3 of all jobs will require a postsecondary credential.

But right now . . .

- 13% of adults ages 18 and older have less than a high school credential
- 30% have a high school credential but no college
- Another 19% have some college but no degree

62% of adults 18 or older lack the credentials needed for family-supporting careers
Programs lack supports and are ill-equipped to meet the needs of non-traditional students. The “black hole” of developmental education: Low completion rates for underprepared students. Remediation not customized to career pathway requirements. Programs lack supports and are ill-equipped to meet the needs of non-traditional students. Lack of alignment with career/technical credential programs postsecondary entrance requirements. Multiple Loss Points: Low rates of program completion and credential attainment.
Streamlined Adult Education Pathways

Accelerated and Integrated ABE and GED programs
- Career exploration
- Contextualized learning
- Skill-building for postsecondary/career success
- College and career counseling

Articulated Career Pathways
- Accelerated skill-building integrated with credit coursework
  - Support through gate-keeper courses
  - Intensive transition counseling

Stackable Credentials with Labor Market Value
- Comprehensive supplemental services
- Intensive counseling
- Flexible program options
- Job placement

More Adult Learners Succeeding in ABE to Credential Pathways
## Accelerating Opportunity’s Core Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accelerated Credential Attainment</th>
<th>Linkages to Comprehensive Career/Technical Pathways</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Teaching</td>
<td>Credit-Bearing Pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Instruction</td>
<td>Intensive Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated Alignment with Labor Market Demand</td>
<td>Partnerships with WIBs and CBOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Accelerating Opportunity Instructional Model

- Adult Education
- Career/Technical Pathway
- Support Services

At least 25% overlap in classroom instruction
7 States, Over 85 Colleges
Accelerating Opportunity’s Goals

- **Scale** the model to new colleges and states
- **Increase** the number of adults who earn the credentials and skills for family-sustaining jobs
- **Sustain** the work
- Create **systems change** - integration of ABE into college pathways
- **Promote policies** to dramatically increase post-secondary credential attainment
Supports & Partnerships in Accelerating Opportunity

Theresa Anderson
The Urban Institute

August 19, 2014

Prepared for the annual workshop of the National Association for Welfare Research & Statistics (NAWRS)
Some Basics about AO

• Started in 2012
• Four states in the evaluation:
  – Illinois
  – Kansas
  – Kentucky
  – Louisiana
• Requires at least 8 colleges per state, 2 pathways per college
• All received buy-in from state executive
• Grants administered by state agencies
Some Basics about AO

- Career pathways in high-demand and high-growth fields
- Targets adults with low basic skills
  - 6\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} grade in math or writing
  - Low English language skills
- Helps participants earn career & technical credentials
- Promotes co-enrollment with extra supports
  - Team teaching, navigation/coaching, academic & social supports
Today We Discuss a Small Piece of the AO Evaluation

• 3 evaluation components:
  – Implementation
  – Impact (non-experimental)
  – Cost-benefit

• Based on:
  – Site visits
  – Quarterly calls with states & colleges
  – 3 college surveys
  – 2 participant surveys
  – De-identified student records (treatment & comparison)
  – Document review
Primary Data Source Today Is the AO College Survey

• Covers calendar years 2012 & 2013
• Focusing on three states: Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky
• Colleges
  – Year 1: 25 colleges
  – Year 2: 32 colleges
• One section also based on 1st participant survey
  – 444 respondents from 4 states (incl. Louisiana)
  – Students enrolled in spring 2014
AO Numbers for 3 States in 2 Years

- 68 pathways in 1st year
- 96 pathways in 2nd year
- 1,005 students hired into a job related to AO training
- 1,161 students hired into a job
- 1,373 students did work-based learning
- 5,143 credentials granted
- 31,252 credits earned
- 4,187 students enrolled
PARTICIPANTS
AO Participants Are Both Genders, All Ages

**Gender**

- Male: 47%
- Female: 53%

**Age**

- 17-19: 15%
- 20-22: 23%
- 23-26: 18%
- 27-35: 22%
- 36-54: 19%
- >54: 0%
Mostly White, also Hispanic & Black; Many with Diploma

Race

- 21% Hispanic
- 19% Black
- 55% White
- 0% Asian
- 0% Asian
- 0% Hispanic
- 0% Multiple
- 0% Other

High School Credential

- 71% Diploma
- 19% GED
- 9% Other
- 0% None
Many Receive Pell & Are Employed

Pell Grant Receipt

- Pell: 43%
- No Pell: 57%

Employment

- Employed: 40%
- Not Employed: 60%
Supports to AO Students Are Crucial but Still Developing

• AO students eligible for college support services
  – Change for adult education students
• Most colleges utilize a coach, navigator, or transition coordinator
• Team teaching identified as a crucial support
### Participants Reported Some Support, but Suggest They Want More

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Received by</th>
<th>Wanted More Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General job readiness</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search skills</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring or extra class sessions</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency assistance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support**: The table highlights various types of support received by participants and the percentage of those who wanted more of each type. The data indicates that while participants reported receiving some support, they generally desired more. The table compares the percentage of participants who received the support to those who wanted more in each category.
College Staff Provided Support to Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Received by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College/Academic Issues</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Issues</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Issues</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Issues</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Pretty much all students satisfied with the support & advice received
Colleges Have Built Partnerships with WIBs, CBOs, & Employers

- Workforce investment system organization: 100%
- Community-based organization: 75%
- Employer: 69%
- Community college district administrative office: 44%
- Other community college: 34%
Partners Helped with Recruitment & Provided Support Services

- Helped with recruitment: 53%
- Provided support services or referrals: 37%
- Offered labor market information & analysis: 28%
- Provided career guidance: 27%
- Assisted with fundraising/identifying financial resources: 25%
Employers Did More Than Hire AO Students

- Hired AO participants: 45%
- Interacted with students: 39%
- Provided ongoing guidance and input to the AO program: 25%
- Helped promote AO to their own workers or others: 25%
- Assisted with pathway development and/or curriculum design: 22%
States have Forged Partnerships to Further AO Goals

- Rachel will describe some neat examples
- States also achieved policy changes:
  - GED Accelerator legislation in Kansas
  - Common core standards in Kentucky
  - Allowed Perkins funds to be used for AO in Illinois; will integrated AO structures into state strategic plan
Thank you!

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Partnerships with TANF Agencies in Kansas & Arkansas

TWO APPROACHES TO SERVING LOW-INCOME STUDENTS
TANF Statutory Purpose: End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by **promoting job preparation, work, and marriage**

**AO Goal:** enable more low-income adults to complete **postsecondary credentials** that are of value in the labor market and **attain family-supporting employment**

TANF funds can support:
- Career pathway partnership and curricula development
- Ongoing costs of providing education and training
- Ongoing support services

Participation in a career pathway program can reasonably be counted as either “vocational educational training” or “job skills training directly related to employment.”
Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

- Designed to improve the earnings and post-secondary education attainment of Arkansas's low-income TANF-eligible adults.
- Provides funding for two-year colleges to develop career pathways programs that assist TANF-eligible adults to earn a marketable educational credential for immediate entry into a high demand occupation.
- Emphasizes such program components as job readiness skills, basic academic skills preparation, remediation, and college credentials tied to high wage, high demand occupations.
- Intensive student services are provided for students in the program.
• Eligibility:
  – Adult caretaker of child under 21
  – Income 250% of Federal Poverty Level

• Objectives:
  – Improve work participation rates
  – Enhance basic skills
  – Increase attainment of college-level certificates and associate degrees
  – Improve job retention, advancement and wage progression
  – Reduce welfare recidivism
  – Increase self-sufficiency
• Tuition for college courses
• Book loan program
• Childcare assistance
• Gas money
• Tutoring
• Soft skill training
• Employability certification
• One on one counseling with a case manager.
• Job placement assistance
• Job search
• Students wanting to enroll in AO are sent to Career Pathways first prior to enrolling in Adult Education.
• College staff work with students to complete the CPI application and conduct a face-to-face interview.
• Student is given an individualized “To Do list:”
  – Visit financial aid
  – Complete FAFSA
  – Fill out college application
• Student enrolls in AO pathway and receives support through Career Pathways.
Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas is all about jobs, prosperity for individuals and economic growth for Kansas

- January 2012: Implementation of Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas begins
- Fall 2013: Partnership formed between the Kansas Board of Regents and Kansas Department for Children and Families (TANF agency)
- Common population
- Common agency goals – more Kansans employed in jobs that earn a family sustaining wage and less reliant on public assistance
Results of Partnership

- MOU between DCF and Regents supports AO-K enrolled TANF eligible students with tuition scholarships
- Must be co-enrolled in both adult education and career technical education programs in an AO-K career pathway
- Colleges reimbursed at full composite rate (includes student tuition, fees up to $300, and college cost such as instructors, support costs and extraordinary costs)
- Colleges reimbursed at two points: on enrollment and at completion of the 12 credit hour pathway
- To date 64 TANF recipient adults are enrolled in AO-K career pathways and applications continue!
• Communication is essential:
  – DCF Central Office passes on information to local offices
  – Presentations to staff and administrators
  – Ensure that everyone understands the goals and rules of the scholarship

• Develop processes to streamline referrals from DCF to the college
  – Standardized referral form
  – Clear understanding of who is eligible
  – Make sure colleges understand how reimbursement works
SUPPORTING ADULT LEARNERS WITH COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SUPPORTS
Why worry about student supports?

• Few ABE learners enter and complete post-secondary education

• 38% of enrollees in occupational certificate programs – and – 60% of enrollees in occupational Associate degree programs
  ...fail to earn a credential/degree within 6 years
Components of Comprehensive Supports

- **Academic Advising**: to support academic success

- **Nonacademic Advising**: to foster students’ sense of connection to the college, enhance self-confidence, ability to access resources and make decisions

- **Career Services**: to identify student goals, share information, ensure alignment of courses with goals and facilitate transition to employment

- **Financial Services**: to support financing of studies and build students’ self-efficacy around managing finances

- **Social Services and Counseling**: to help manage personal lives to support persistence and completion
Questions to consider

• Who needs to be involved?

• What services should be mandatory vs. optional?

• How can services be seamlessly embedded into existing programs?

• Which services need to be available at what point during students’ journey through college?

• Which service should a college provide vs. having a partner provide?
AO Support Service Options

Career planning
Case Management
Childcare
College navigation support
Disability Services
Financial Aid
Financial aid advising and application support
Job search assistance and job placement activities
Transportation Assistance
Tuition vouchers
Tutoring or other academic support
Veterans Services
Strategies & Recommendations

• Develop partnerships
• Coordinate service provision
• Ensure adequate resources

• Reduce barriers to access
• Make supports part of the program
• Strengthen nonacademic supports
• Foster creation of relationships

• Communicate the availability of services to faculty, staff and students
Promoting Persistence
Through Comprehensive Supports

http://www.jff.org/publications/promoting-persistence-through-comprehensive-supports