

# Program Profiles

## ACCESS COLLEGE EDUCATION

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Portland Community College Southeast Center, Portland, Oregon
<b>Partners:</b>	Steps to Success Welfare-to-Work program at Portland Community College, WIA Dislocated Worker program, One-Stop Career Centers
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use of student resource specialist to connect students to services</li> <li>■ College credit earned for bridge classes</li> </ul>

Portland Community College's (PCC) Southeast Center developed the Access College Education (ACE) program to increase access to a college education for students who place below the college-entrance level, in part to address the high dropout rate in its developmental education reading and math classes. PCC developed a contextualized curriculum and intensive support model to motivate student learning and to prepare students for college-level work. Students are able to earn college credit for classes taken in this bridge program once they test at the college-entrance level.

### Program Design

ACE integrates the teaching of basic skills, especially math and writing, into career planning, goal-setting, and some soft-skills training. Students develop research, writing, and computer skills in the context of career exploration. For example, for one motivating math exercise, students calculate what they would need to earn to become completely self-supporting. The information gathered in this and other similar life-related tasks culminates in student-generated PowerPoint presentations, many of which include percentages, pie charts, and graphs. The curriculum was developed in-house using a variety of sources.

The program targets current and potential PCC students who fall into four categories: dislocated workers, participants in PCC's Steps to Success Welfare-to-Work program, WIA Title II students who are completing their GED and wish to continue on to college, and college applicants who test too low to enter college. This last group may be recruited through flyers, or referred to ACE by their employers, social service agencies, community groups, and

other organizations in the Portland area that work with this student population. Classes are approximately half white and half people of color (Latino, Asian, and African-American).

In the first term of the program, students earn six institutional credits by enrolling in one reading, one math, and one college-guidance class. In addition, they are required to attend two half-day seminars on topics such as self-esteem and job-search skills. At the end of the first term, students are tested using Compass or Asset. Those whose test scores indicate that their skills have advanced beyond the developmental education level begin to take college classes in the second term. Those who still need to improve their basic skills continue with additional developmental studies, mostly in math and some in writing.

The students in this second developmental ACE term take a four-hour math and a four-hour English class and can earn up to eight additional institutional credits. All ACE students continue to participate in the half-day seminars to strengthen their communication and assertiveness skills and help them learn how to deal with difficult situations and plan for the future. Once students pass the PCC entrance requirements, after either the first or second term, they are able to enroll in a vast array of either lower-division transfer or professional-technical programs.

Students move through the two-term program in a cohort of about 20. Within each cohort, students work collaboratively in small groups. In these cohorts, frequently those with higher skill levels support and mentor those with lower skill levels.

### Support Services

In addition to the coursework and seminars, all ACE students meet with the student resource specialist. The student resource specialist's duties include program outreach and recruitment, providing counseling to help students handle personal crises, connecting students with the college's tutoring center, and connecting students with outside support services. The resource specialist provides this support to all students for their entire stay in the ACE program, whether one or both terms.

The cost to the participants in this program is minimal. Because the courses in the program are college-level and credit-bearing, students qualify for federal financial aid. However, application deadlines may be past by the time students enroll. In that case, students entering ACE through the Welfare-to-Work and Dislocated Worker programs have their tuition paid by these programs, while students who have first completed their GED at PCC are awarded one free college semester; the few students who do not fit in either of these categories are given scholarships, funded by the state grant (see below). During the second ACE term, students generally receive federal financial aid, which can cover tuition.

### Staffing

PCC Southeast Center is a workforce training center that only recently added degree programs. ACE instructors are full-time faculty in writing and math who also teach developmental education and transfer credit courses. The program instructors work individually with students to help them master course content. The program also employs a student resource specialist who works 10 hours per week to help provide the additional support these students need. The program considers the student resource position vital to the program's success.

### Funding

PCC uses state-allocated WIA Title I and Title II incentive money to partially fund the ACE program. The money is used for the student resource specialist, while college operating funds support the full-time faculty instructors. There may be some funding changes in the future due to budget cuts to the college, but the college is committed to continuing to offer the program.

### Outcomes

About half of the first cohort completed the program in one or two terms and entered college courses, either during the second ACE term or after.

### Contact Information

Terri Greenfield  
Dean of Adult and Continuing Education  
Portland Community College  
(503)788-6220  
tgreenfi@pcc.edu

## CAREER PATHWAYS VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

<b>Lead Organizations:</b>	Portland Community College and Mt. Hood Community College, Portland, Oregon
<b>Partners:</b>	Worksystems, Inc., five one-stop career centers in the Portland metropolitan area, Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Employment Department, other WIA partners
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employer involvement in identifying labor-market needs, ongoing curriculum design, and providing internships and jobs</li> <li>■ Close connection with workforce system, especially for referrals and funding</li> </ul>

The Career Pathways Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers provides vocational training in entry-level occupations to limited English, non-native speakers at the intermediate level, some with high school diplomas from their native countries. The program offers six skills tracks: healthcare, institutional food service, direct care worker, office skills, entry-level high-tech manufacturing, and welding. Several of these incorporate customer-service skills. Upon program completion, students can secure positions starting at \$7.50 to \$12 an hour.

### Program Design

The program, jointly operated by Portland Community College (PCC) and Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC), provides occupational and technical training taught contextually in English to immigrants primarily from Asia (especially China and Vietnam), Latin America, and Africa. Since the program targets non-native English speakers, all courses incorporate ESL into the curriculum. Most students are unemployed or dislocated workers with access to training unemployment insurance. The Dislocated Worker programs and Adult Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs at five one-stop career centers refer about 60 percent of students. The CASAS entrance requirement varies slightly depending upon the program and is used to test students for English-language proficiency.

All of the six skills programs integrate technical and basic skills and connect all learning to work. The healthcare, institutional food service, direct care, and office skills programs last 14 to 23 weeks, depending on the skills track. Most programs include field trips, unpaid internships of eight to 12 hours per week, and 12 to 20 classroom hours per week, including six hours spent on job-search strategies, one-on-one job-search assistance, and developing customized cover letters and resumes. The high-tech manufacturing program lasts six weeks, meets for 35 hours a week in the classroom, and does not include an internship. The sixth track, welding, lasts 23 weeks, is the only program that provides credit (22 hours), and does not include an internship. Program curricula are available on CD for a shipping and handling fee.

Students have access to a tutoring center and computer lab. All six programs include job-placement services. Most completers secure employment quickly. Those who do not meet in small groups for job-search assistance for 60 days after training.

This program serves 120 to 150 students a year, in eight to 12 classes, with 12 to 15 students per class. Some classes are offered at PCC and others at MHCC. PCC and MHCC also offer other career-pathway bridge trainings that do not target non-native English speakers.

## CAREER PATHWAYS VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

**Staffing**

The PCC/MHCC Career Pathways Training Team includes a full-time education coordinator, a full-time employment specialist, a part-time office assistant, a part-time director, and a part-time education coordinator. Part-time trainers teach occupational and technical skills, and part-time training assistants provide small-group supports for job search and computer skills.

**Role of Employers**

Program staff interviews employers to identify entry-level requirements and state requirements, identify skills requirements for curriculum development, and establish parameters for internships and jobs.

**Partners**

PCC and MHCC jointly operate the training. Worksystems, Inc., the Local Workforce Investment Board, provides funding. WIA partners, including the five one-stop career centers, the Employment Department, Housing Authority of Portland, and Vocational Rehabilitation, provide outreach and referral to the training. PCC operates two and MHCC operates one of the one-stop career centers.

**Program Development**

Manufacturing layoffs beginning in 1998 hit immigrants in production-line positions particularly hard because it was difficult to secure new employment with their limited skills and limited English. Around this time, Kaiser-Permanente and then later three other medical facilities (Legacy, Emmanuel, and Providence) approached MHCC about preparing people for pharmacy packager jobs, which they were having trouble filling. Soon this program expanded from one department and one occupation to more than 60 employers and several occupations. PCC/MHCC continues to expand and adapt the programming to meet the current needs of employers.

The latest program, direct caregiver, took about six months to get off the ground, requiring approval for the curriculum and hiring technical, ESL job readiness, and workplace basics skills trainers. After each program is piloted, PCC/MHCC modifies the curriculum. The direct caregiver position at an assisted-living facility leads to medication aide, activities coordinator, and eventually to CNA.

**Funding**

Worksystems, Inc., the local Workforce Investment Board, provides funding through WIA Title I-B funds. The program also has a grant from the Governor's Employer Workforce Fund and is developing career pathway roadmaps for all of these ESL and vocational trainings, which will be Web-based and available in early 2006.

**Outcomes**

In fiscal year 2003-2004, 146 students enrolled in the Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers programs, 144 completed, four continued with further education, and 123 were placed in jobs (83 percent). In fiscal year 2002-2003, 163 students enrolled, 133 completed, six continued with further education, and 96 were placed in jobs (72 percent).

**Contact Information**

Mimi Maduro  
Workforce Development Director  
Portland Community College – Extended Learning Campus  
(503) 788-6209  
mmaduro@pcc.edu  
www.pcc.edu/cp

Kelli Walker  
Assistant Director  
Mt. Hood Community College – Workforce Connection  
(503) 252-0758  
walkerk@mhcc.edu

## CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN SKILLED TRADES AND INDUSTRIES

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
<b>Partners:</b>	Program-related employers, labor unions, M-Trans, BIG STEP pre-apprenticeship program, training providers, nonprofit organizations
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employer and labor union demand for qualified and diverse candidate pool drives program development</li> <li>■ Lead organization is a workforce intermediary jointly governed by business and labor</li> </ul>

The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP), a nonprofit membership organization of employers, unions, and other organizations whose mission is to maintain family-sustaining jobs in the Milwaukee area, founded the Center of Excellence in Skilled Trades and Industries in 2004 to develop a more skilled workforce in manufacturing and construction in the Milwaukee area. WRTP worked with employers, labor unions, educational institutions, and philanthropic organizations to develop the Center of Excellence to bring WRTP's widely recognized manufacturing model to scale in Milwaukee's central city. In addition, WRTP has expanded its efforts to include a wide range of target industries, including healthcare and service, and plans to open more Centers of Excellence to work with even more industries.

### Program Design

The Center of Excellence in Skilled Trades and Industries develops programs to address skill shortages identified by local employers and labor unions. The demand-driven programs expand employment and advancement opportunities for community residents, upgrade the skills of incumbent workers, and help employers and unions recruit and retain qualified job candidates while building a more diverse workforce. The programs prepare low-income, unemployed, and younger workers for careers in a variety of manufacturing industries and construction trades.

To develop a training program for a particular skill area, the Center begins with a needs assessment to identify a target

industry's occupational career ladder, job openings, job requirements, and the demographics of the current workforce. The Center also secures hiring commitments from those employers who pay higher wages and offer benefits. The Center then establishes a steering committee for the trade or industry that is jointly composed of employers and labor to design a program to meet the target industry's skill shortage. The steering committee develops a charter specifying the mission and governance of the partnership and then helps to assess the specific skills required for the identified job openings. This set of skills is used as the basis for designing a pre-employment certificate-training program for that industry. The Center then works with an appropriate local technical college, such as the Milwaukee Area and Waukesha County technical colleges, apprenticeship training center, or other training provider, or the training centers and trust funds of the carpenters, electrical workers, laborers, operating engineers, or other trades, to develop the curriculum. The committee reviews the curriculum, which includes basic skills contextualized for the targeted occupation, and approves the certificate as a qualification for hiring. Where applicable, certificates are also designed to meet state certification requirements.

Potential trainees include apprenticeship candidates, dislocated workers, graduates of other training and tutoring programs, students from local high schools and technical colleges, and other job seekers. Applicants are referred by public agencies, employers, unions, and community

organizations, including the Milwaukee Urban League, Spotted Eagle, UMOS, Word of Hope, and YWCA. These and other nonprofit partners then conduct a pre-screening and the Center TABE-tests and interviews applicants, and provides an orientation. Depending on skills level and qualifications, applicants are then placed in one of four tracks: direct job placement; referral to the Business-Industry-Group Skilled Trades Employment Program (BIG STEP), a building and construction trades apprenticeship preparation program that requires eighth-grade skills and access to transportation; referral to one of the Center's pre-employment certificate programs, which require sixth- to eighth-grade skills and last about 160 hours; or referral back to the community organizations for support services and, for those with skills below the sixth-grade level, basic skills development.

The Center currently offers:

- Entry-Level Construction Skills Certificate
- M-Trans Road Construction Certificate
- Sewer and Water Construction Certificate
- Utility Construction Certificate
- Entry-Level Manufacturing Skills Program
- Environmental Remediation Training Program

Those students who complete a pre-employment certificate program and demonstrate the required skills are eligible for the identified job openings. In the case of industries that use hiring halls, unions and employers have agreed to give hiring priority to individuals holding certificates. Nearly 150 Center pre-employment training participants were placed in laborer, utility, and other construction jobs in 2004, with an average starting wage of \$15.80 an hour plus benefits.

### Partners

The Center partners with employers, labor unions, training providers, and community-based organizations to design and deliver the pre-employment programs. These partners vary depending on the targeted industry, and include representatives from Associated General Contractors, Harley-Davidson, SBC, VA Medical Center, and We

Energies, as appropriate. The WRTP Board of Directors is involved in the design of these programs, and includes the heads of the Milwaukee Building Trades Council and the Milwaukee County Labor Council, representatives of individual labor unions, and employers from manufacturing, construction, and healthcare institutions. In particular, the Associated General Contractors, which has a member on the WRTP Board, offers the BIG STEP apprenticeship preparation program and is a Center partner.

### Role of Employers and Labor

The Center partners with labor and employers to develop the pre-employment certificate programs. The development of the Utility Construction Certificate Program (UCCP) illustrates how this works. This pre-employment training certificate is the first formal job-training system for this trade. A person entering this career pathway generally begins as a groundsman (essentially a helper), moves up to an equipment operator, and then to a line mechanic. In the past, there were no specific requirements for a person to move from groundsman to equipment operator. The UCCP is now recognized as the entry-level credential for the equipment operator position by both labor and employer partners. Those who want to become line mechanics can enter BIG STEP.

### Funding

Funding for the Center of Excellence comes from foundations (24 percent), Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (23 percent), the Department of Transportation (11 percent), the private sector (11 percent), the City of Milwaukee and the United Way (seven percent each), and the workforce development system (six percent). The Center's annual budget exceeds \$1 million.

### Contact Information

Eric Parker  
 Executive Director  
 Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership  
 (414) 217-3158  
 eparker@wrtp.org.  
[www.wrtp.org/pdf/CtrOfExcelBroc.pdf](http://www.wrtp.org/pdf/CtrOfExcelBroc.pdf)

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Tacoma Community College, Tacoma, Washington
<b>Partners:</b>	Tacoma Community College Division of Workforce/Basic Skills and Division of Continuing Education, Tacoma Public Schools, local child-care providers
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Two college divisions developed and implement program together</li> <li>■ Employers provide internships and employment opportunities and participate on program advisory board</li> <li>■ Program is first step on Early Childhood Education career pathway</li> </ul>

The Tacoma Community College Child Development Associate program prepares people with very low basic skills to secure the Child Development Associate (CDA), an industry-recognized credential, and to enter a one-year paraeducator certificate program or a two-year associate of applied science (AAS) degree program. The CDA is a national accreditation and targets a high-demand occupation — there are not enough certified child development associates in Tacoma to meet the need. CDA is one of the educational requirements of state licensing for program supervisors in child care centers. This program has an active advisory board, which includes representatives from large human service agencies, a private-sector child care center, and the public schools. Board members assist in recruiting students from among their own employees and help place students who need new jobs.

### Program Design

Most students are non-native English speakers with native languages of Spanish, Cambodian, Russian, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Farsi. Some test as low as level 3 or 4 on the CASAS test. Many worked with young children in their home countries, and some are employed by agencies represented on the program's advisory board.

The program is marketed primarily through word-of-mouth, ESL classes, and mailings to community agencies,

and the college currently has more applicants than capacity to serve them. The intake process includes the CASAS test and an interview that helps students to assess their own goals and skill levels. Interested students attend an orientation that emphasizes the required time commitment and helps students to determine whether the program is right for them.

The program combines ABE and ESL instruction with the required early childhood coursework to prepare students for the CDA credential examination process. The overall CDA program of three non-sequential quarters and an optional fourth takes nine months to one year to complete. The fourth quarter is used to help organize application materials and to help prepare students for written and oral examinations. Students can begin the program in any quarter. Because most students work during the day, the program meets three evenings per week.

In addition to the three-quarter program, students take a 20-hour basic training, which is an introduction to caring for young children, and they take CPR and first aid, which are state requirements for all child care providers. The Child Development Associate curriculum includes concepts of child development, safety and health, social and emotional development, and basic skills, which is contextualized and team-taught by vocational and basic skills instructors.

Students must also complete 420 hours of documented work experience in a state-licensed facility, Head Start, or Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) program. Program instructors visit and evaluate the students on these jobs. Some of these positions are paid. For students wishing to pursue further education, the CDA program provides nine credits that transfer to the paraeducator certificate or paraeducator/ECE AAS degree program at Tacoma Community College.

Overall, the program is designed to help students increase their incomes to at least \$9.50 an hour, prepare them for greater job responsibility as they learn English, qualify some for employment in public schools as bilingual teacher aides (although beginning in 2006, this will become more difficult because the law will change to require an AA degree to be a teacher aide), prepare them to pass the national test for certification, and expose students to the potential of starting their own facility. The program enrolled 13 students in the first cohort, six in the second, and six more in the third, with another 10 students on the waiting list for fall 2005.

### Program Development

The college identified an appropriate existing training program, the CDA, that would respond to both industry need and the interests of students. The CDA curriculum was based on the Essentials for Child Development Associates coursework, a competency-based curriculum developed by the Council for Professional Recognition.\* Program development began with a series of meetings between Continuing Education and Workforce/Basic Skills, at which they each clarified their roles in program development and implementation. Program administrators and division deans worked on the proposal for funding, and faculty from both divisions developed the basic skills and contextualized ESL as bridge components. The faculty used the national certification standards in developing the curriculum, which required teamwork between the basic skills and vocational instructors. The state provided technical assistance in

developing the curriculum and helped to facilitate a learning community with other pilot programs, where meetings with staff from the other state-funded pilot programs enabled them to share lessons learned and best practices.

### Funding

A one-year grant awarded by Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Demonstration Project (I-BEST), which has been extended for an additional year, covers some tuition and the cost of exams, books, fees, and instructional costs. Perkins funding and college operating funds are used to support curriculum development and coordination between the two college divisions, as well as time for program instructors to conduct site visits and evaluations for students during the structured work experience. In addition, college operating funds supported administrative time and effort for planning and development. Program staff are also trying to secure funds for intensive intake support and for assistance with identifying financial aid for students.

### Contact Information

Kim Ward  
 Director, Basic Skills  
 Tacoma Community College  
 (253) 566-6048  
 kward@tacomacc.edu  
 www.tacomacc.edu/schedule/abe.shtm

\*www.cdacouncil.org

## COLLEGE GATEWAY PROGRAM

<b>Lead Organizations:</b>	Skyline College Center for Workforce Development, San Bruno, California; the San Mateo County Workforce Investment Board; and Cañada College, Redwood City, California
<b>Partners:</b>	One East Palo Alto, Opportunities Industrial Centers West, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, State of California Career Ladders Project, Gruber & Pereira Associates
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public/private partnership among colleges, workforce system, community-based organizations, and two foundations</li> <li>■ Prepares low-skilled individuals for college-level work in biosciences and allied health</li> <li>■ Career exploration is integral part of contextualized curriculum</li> </ul>

The College Gateway program prepares under- and unemployed adults and transitioning foster youth for education programs in allied health and biosciences. Offered by both Skyline College and Cañada College, it helps people who are not prepared for college-level courses to navigate up the educational and employment ladder by offering contextualized basic skills training and career planning. Completers may continue on to pursue a certificate program or an associate of arts degree and prepare for transfer to a four-year university. Students completing certificate programs are prepared for employment in high-growth job sectors like allied health and life sciences.

### Program Design

Opportunities Industrial Centers West (OICW), a local community-based organization, conducts the screening intake and assessments for the Gateway program. OICW uses Accuplacer to assess English and math levels. Successful candidates then complete the community college placement tests to ensure accurate placement. Applicants can place one to two levels below college English and math to participate in the program.

The Gateway program consists of 12 to 14 weeks of intensive contextualized basic skills preparation in English and math, along with life counseling and career planning. The curriculum consists of four courses: 1) Math, a basic skills class that leads to elementary algebra, a requirement for allied health programs; 2) English and Reading, one level below transfer level, contextualized to familiarize students with the allied health field; 3) Learning Skills, individual or small group instruction by tutors or instructional aides to help in English, reading, and math; includes computer-assisted learning programs and online tutorials; and 4) Career Preparation, self-assessment, career exploration, and job-seeking strategies, in which students explore the career-planning process and gather information about their interests, personality type, and values. The information helps students determine their career options, make decisions and plans, write resumes, and prepare for interviews. Students create, present to the class, and submit a final career-related project.

Students in the Gateway program earn 12 to 14 units of college credit, which establishes their full-time status. As a result, students can apply for financial aid, including Pell grants.

Instructors employ a team approach, working with each other and all of the program core staff, including administrators and support people, to discuss the progress of students and the effectiveness of the program, share information, identify issues, and work on solutions.

### Partners

The Gateway program is a public/private partnership involving the two community colleges and the workforce, nonprofit, and foundation communities. Each institution takes leadership in the areas of its specialty. Skyline College develops and implements the curriculum, coordinates the faculty activity, coordinates and provides educational student support services, designs and implements program elements, evaluates the effectiveness of the program, and supports the participation of its sister college, Cañada College. OICW, which is located closer to the targeted population, houses the location for classes for the Cañada College cohort, taught by Cañada instructors. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) contracts with the colleges, helps fund the programs, and identifies funding streams to support it. The community-based organizations, OICW and One East Palo Alto, offer outreach, communication, and support services. Employers are integral to the success of the career programs that students enter as a result of the Gateway Program. All the program partners were involved in the development of the program.

The program also built internal partnerships by convening college faculty in the biology department and presenting the program idea to the Academic Senate at Skyline College. The project leader addressed initial faculty concerns about the program and invited interested faculty to participate in its design and to teach the classes.

### Program Development

The Gateway program grew out of three initiatives. The first is a program to retrain dislocated airport workers for jobs in the biotechnology industry, which was offered by the San Mateo County WIB. Program developers adapted Skyline's bioscience curriculum to fit the career pathways approach and the needs of dislocated workers. Program

entry was highly competitive, and program developers discovered that many of those interested in this program did not have the tenth-grade-level math and reading skills required. The second is the Hewlett Foundation's Earn Initiative, an employment program targeting Palo Alto, which realized it could be more effective if it incorporated for-credit education, a suggestion of the Vice President of Instruction at Skyline College who chairs the foundation's Workforce Development subcommittee. The third initiative is the State of California's Career Ladders Project, which convened several WIBs, colleges, and community-based organizations to encourage them to offer for-credit instruction to disadvantaged 18- to 24-year-olds to prepare them for employment and further education. It took program partners about nine months to move from initial discussion to the start of classes.

### Funding

The Walter S. Johnson Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the San Mateo County Workforce Investment Board (using WIA governor's discretionary dollars), Skyline College, and Cañada College fund the Gateway program.

### Outcomes

Two college cohorts have completed thus far, in June and August 2005. They had a combined enrollment of 45 students, with an 82 percent completion rate. Of the Skyline cohort, seven students entered the bio-manufacturing program and 13 students are working toward an associate of arts degree. Of the Cañada cohort, 13 students are continuing in general education and four are continuing in a variety of programs. Two additional cohorts are slated for Skyline in the spring of 2006.

### Contact Information

Regina Stanback-Stroud  
Vice President of Instruction  
Skyline College  
(650) 738-4321  
stroudr@smccd.net  
www.skylinecollege.edu/workforce

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Community College of Denver Center for Learning Outreach, Denver, Colorado
<b>Partners:</b>	Denver Office of Economic Development Division of Workforce Development, Denver Department of Human Services, employers, community-based organizations
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employer involvement in identifying labor-market needs, ongoing curriculum design, and providing internships and jobs</li> <li>■ Program results in credit-bearing vocational certificate</li> <li>■ Paid internship acclimates students to the world of work</li> </ul>

The Essential Skills Program (ESP) is a multi-occupational vocational certificate program that began by serving low-income individuals with dependent children and people transitioning from welfare to work and is now offered to the general population. It prepares participants for jobs in high-demand occupations, which currently include medical clerical, accounting, financial services, business services, information technology, and early childhood education, and it articulates to the next educational level. The program emphasizes building skills in the transactional environment of the world of work through group discussion, peer support, case management, internships, and post-employment support.

### Program Design

Most applicants find out about ESP and enter the program through a Community College of Denver (CCD) recruiter housed at the Denver Department of Human Services who pre-screens and TABE-tests applicants. Those who are interested in the program and meet the seventh-grade literacy requirement are referred to the CCD campuses for enrollment in ESP. CCD staff, called individual track coordinators, conduct industry-focused literacy and life-skills assessments and review students' employment history. Students who do not have a high school diploma or a GED must co-enroll in a GED program.

The five-month program has three components: 1) workplace core, 2) vocational core, and 3) full-time, unsubsidized employment. The workplace core is completed in the first month of the program. Students participate full-time in a combination of work-readiness activities and vocational training specific to each of the six occupational tracks. Also included in this phase are GED preparation (when needed), case management, and resource referrals.

The vocational core is a two- to three-month period of contextualized classroom instruction, specialized to the selected occupation, combined with a paid internship. Students are in class two days a week and serve their internships three days a week. Internships are credit-bearing and count toward a degree if the student stays in the same vocational area. Case management during this period shifts from a focus on personal issues to professional behavior and expectations in the workplace. This component also offers transition skills training, such as financial planning and individual education plans for progression to standard community college offerings. It ends with placement in unsubsidized employment. Students who complete the workplace and vocational cores earn an Essential Skills Certificate in their chosen occupation and 16 to 17 college credits. Each of the Essential Skills Certificates is the first step on an educational ladder that leads to better positions

in their fields. For example, a person with an Early Childhood Education Essential Skills Certificate can move up to a Group Leader position, earn a Director Certification, and then an associate degree.

The final component lasts a full year after placement in full-time employment and offers retention services through traditional case management, job coaching, and referral to appropriate support services.

### **Staffing**

The program has one coordinator for each career track, a case manager who refers people to outside support services, two full-time and one part-time job developer, instructors, and a program director.

### **Role of Employers**

Employers provide resources to enhance the program, offer expertise on workplace competencies, consult on curriculum design, provide internship opportunities, hire program graduates, and provide CCD staff feedback on new-hire performance. Employers also help the program stay abreast of labor-market information, since standard data are generally six months out of date. Business partners for medical clerical occupations include Denver Health Medical Center, Exempla Hospital, Planned Parenthood, Kindred Hospital, and Bright Eyes Optometrist Center. Employer partners in business services include Center for Financial Education, Public Service Credit Union, Denver Community Federal Credit Union, Glendale Police Department, and Denver Division of Workforce Development. Early childhood education employer partners include Denver Public Schools, Hope Center, YMCA, Clayton Foundation, Catholic Charities, and the Community College of Denver.

### **Partners**

The one-stop career centers administer all employment and training contracts for Denver's TANF and low-income participants and serve as the primary government partner. The second key partner is the Denver Department of Human Services, which works with ESP on recruitment and case management. In addition, ESP works with several local community-based organizations that provide additional resources for emergency and long-term issues, such as housing, financial planning, legal issues, and mental health services.

### **Funding**

The Denver Division of Workforce Development contracts with ESP to provide program staff and to pay wages for the internships, using TANF funds. In Colorado, internship wages are set at the going entry-level wage of the employer (for example, \$10 an hour for 24 hours a week, which meets 200 percent of the poverty level if the person has two children).

### **Outcomes**

The program has 1,000 completers to date, and 35 percent of program completers have gone beyond the certificate into college. Job placement varies between 80 and 95 percent, depending on the labor market. About half of the students who co-enroll in the GED program pass the exam. This program meets the TANF participation rate with a program retention rate of 125 percent of the TANF goal and meets the TANF work requirement with the internship.

### **Contact Information**

Elaine Baker  
Director of Workforce Initiatives  
Center for Learning Outreach  
Community College of Denver  
(303) 226-5560  
elaine.baker@ccd.edu

## GREATER CINCINNATI HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACADEMY

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
<b>Partners:</b>	Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development Adult Workforce Division, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County One-Stop Career Center, Greater Cincinnati Health Council, Mercy Connections, Cincinnati Dress for Success, and the Greater Cincinnati Tech Prep Consortium
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employers actively involved in creating, building, managing, supporting, and delivering program</li> <li>■ Multiple points of entry and exit</li> <li>■ Career coaches help students negotiate pathways and provide support</li> </ul>

The Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy is a collaboration of healthcare employers, educators, the workforce investment system, and community agencies that is designed to: 1) provide access to healthcare careers for unemployed and underemployed individuals, low-wage incumbent workers, displaced workers, recent immigrants, and people with disabilities; 2) alleviate regional healthcare workforce shortages; and 3) increase the diversity of the healthcare workforce in Greater Cincinnati.

### Program Design

The Academy’s “multi-entry, multi-exit” system enables applicants to enter specific programs at different levels based on their interest and capacity and to advance along different tracks in healthcare careers. The Academy draws applicants both from the community and from among incumbent low-skilled hospital employees. Career coaches assist individuals to identify and pursue their own goals for healthcare advancement, whether becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or LPN, or pursuing an associate degree. There is no “correct” pathway—each pathway is designed by the individual.

Once students identify their goals, they take a program-specific placement test, and if they do not place into the program immediately, the career coaches identify steps to reach the entry level. For instance, if a person’s goal is a CNA and she tests below a ninth-grade level in reading and math, she

may enter a GED program or the 80-hour Adult Basic Literacy Exam (ABLE) course, which offers contextualized basic skills in healthcare. CNA or Unit Clerk applicants who test at or above the ninth grade or complete the remedial program begin the CNA or Unit Clerk program. Both courses include a three-week employability skills component. Upon completion of the CNA course, the student takes the certification exam to become a state-certified nursing assistant. Unit Clerk program credits are transferable to any of the associate degree programs at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. After completing either of these programs, most people will secure employment or move to better positions, and some will wish to continue into the multi-comp degree program described below.

LPN applicants take the WorkKeys test. Those who do not pass level 4 reading and level 5 math are referred to the pre-nursing course, which is a contextualized developmental course, and retest upon completion. Successful participants can then enter the LPN program and are able to work while enrolled. LPN completers can continue on to an AA in Nursing offered by Cincinnati State, with LPN credits applying toward this degree.

The Academy has partnered with Cincinnati State in building a “multi-comp” degree program in clinical, clerical, diagnostic, and information technology occupations. Uniquely, the core courses that are common to all the

occupations may be taken at the Academy, with the hospitals providing the clinicals. Students may then pursue a specialty at Cincinnati State.

### Support Services

The Academy employs two career coaches (one funded by Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the other by Cincinnati State) to guide students through the program. They begin with vocational, educational, and personal assessments to help place the students in appropriate programs and determine their need for support services. The career coaches then provide career guidance and planning, life-skills training, placement assistance, and retention support for a full year after employment.

### Role of Employers

Employers were actively involved in creating and developing the Academy. Participating employers provide curricula input, clinicals, equipment and space, program oversight, job placement, and funding for a career advisor. They also provide tuition reimbursement and, in some cases, pre-pay tuition so upfront costs will not be a barrier to employee participation.

### Partners

The primary Academy partners now include:

- Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development Adult Workforce Division, which is the fiscal agent and provides career development, workforce development, and economic development
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
- The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, a group of six hospitals and multiple physicians' practices
- City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County One-Stop, which recruits students and provides tuition assistance
- The Greater Cincinnati Health Council, a nonprofit member service organization that provides an industry-wide presence, critical workforce data, and community outreach
- Mercy Connections, Cincinnati Dress for Success, and the Greater Cincinnati Tech Prep Consortium, which are all community-based organizations

### Program Development

In 2003 the Academy emerged out of an existing partnership of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, a public nonprofit provider that offers adult career technical courses, to address a severe shortage of qualified healthcare workers. The partnership expanded its Project SEARCH Healthcare Training program, a vocational training program for TANF recipients and individuals with disabilities, to include hospital employees in low-wage, low-skills occupations, and it developed a course to bridge to credit-based programs in healthcare. The Health Alliance, a hospital system, and Cincinnati State then joined as partners, and the Academy began meeting regularly to formalize the partnership, further define and enhance educational programs, and reach out to a larger target audience.

### Funding

Sources of funds include contracts for Workforce Investment Act, Vocational Education, Empowerment Zone, and State of Ohio funding; employer-paid tuition; and a planning grant from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation. Industry provides significant contributions through tuition reimbursement for incumbent workers, subsidies for 50 percent of the Academy space, supervisors for clinicals, and career coaches. Using partners' existing services also leverages funds. In addition, the Academy is considering requiring a placement fee for employers.

### Outcomes

The Academy tracks completers for one year after graduation, analyzing key indicators such as job placement, certifications and licenses acquired, wage gains, and employment retention and advancement. All 18 of last year's LPN graduates are now working. In 2005, the Unit Clerk and state-tested Nursing Assistant classes graduated 80 people, and 56 are currently working. An additional four people have gone on to another level of education. The remaining 20 people are still working with the job developer.

### Contact Information

Erin Riehle

A Managing Partner of the Health Professions Academy and Director of Project Search

(513) 636-8729

Erin.Riehle@cchmc.org

## MADISONVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAREER PATHWAYS

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Madisonville Community College, Madisonville, Kentucky
<b>Partners:</b>	Madisonville Community College Adult Centers for Educational Excellence, Madisonville Community College Nursing Department, The Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Flexible weekend and evening schedules for working CNA and LPN students</li> <li>■ Individualized one-to-one and small-group tutoring support</li> <li>■ WIA-funded paid work experience for those who qualify</li> </ul>

The Madisonville Community College Career Pathways program provides academic support for weekend and evening students in Madisonville Community College's CNA, LPN, and two-year RN/ADN programs. In addition, the program provides academic assistance to students who are preparing to "bridge" into a Nursing Assistant program or to a higher level of nursing education. An articulation agreement with Murray State University allows LPN students to transfer credits toward its bachelor of nursing degree.

### Program Design

Madisonville Career Pathways provides individualized one-on-one and small-group tutoring to help individuals who wish to enter Madisonville Community College's CNA, LPN, or RN programs, existing students who need additional academic support, and students who are trying to move from one rung to the next in the nursing career ladder. Instead of an established curriculum, the one instructor and two LPN and two RN tutors work with students on their problem areas, especially to prepare them for the nurse entrance test and the later RN test. The instructor and tutors help students with their class work and prepare additional materials as needed, such as math problems contextualized to the appropriate nursing program level. The key component is responding to students' specific needs, which can include basic math and reading, the content of a neurology chapter, preparation for examinations, time

management, or goal setting. Students who are very far behind are placed in adult education developmental courses.

Two program enhancements are available to qualifying CNA students, both funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The You Make A Difference CNA program pays for tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, and certification fees for 15 CNA students per year. The Workforce Connections program offers a three-day employability skills workshop and then places graduates of the CNA program in subsidized work experience positions at the Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, area nursing homes, and physicians' offices, with WIA funds paying their first 500 hours of salary. About 80 percent of Workforce Connections participants receive an offer for a permanent job with their subsidized employer. Both WIA programs target 19- to 21-year-olds with barriers to employment, such as being a single parent, having a criminal record, and/or having an income less than \$9,300 per year.

### Partners

Two divisions of Madisonville Community College (MCC), the Adult Centers for Educational Excellence (the adult education program) and the Nursing Department, work closely to offer this program. Other partners include the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, which provides financial and other assistance and paid work

experience for eligible CNA students, and the Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, which provides weekend and evening tutoring space in its library. Madisonville Career Pathways also benefits from the knowledge of the MCC Nursing Advisory Board, which includes the chairman of the MCC Nursing Division and representatives of local hospitals.

### **Program Development**

To meet the needs of working students, the MCC Nursing Department began offering weekend RN classes in fall 2001 and weekend LPN and evening CNA classes in January 2004. Although the pieces of the career pathway were in place, they needed a way to help students move from one rung to the next, that is, for individuals with a high school credential to enter the CNA program and for CNAs and others to progress up the career ladder. In December 2004, the MCC Adult Centers for Educational Excellence applied for and won state Career Pathways funding to provide academic support services for these weekend and evening students and for other students who are either at risk of dropping out or who want to advance in nursing careers. These efforts connected with an existing project, the Department of Nursing's Nurse Mobility Project, an outreach effort to recruit low-income individuals in the general population to the CNA program and to recruit CNAs at long-term care facilities and hospitals to the LPN program. This project is funded by a Health Resources and Services Association (HRSA) grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its outreach effort informs working adults of the academic support services available through the Career Pathways program.

### **Funding**

The Madisonville Career Pathways program is funded under a two-year grant from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, which provides funding to support innovative approaches to developing career pathways in its 16 districts. In addition, the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board pays for tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, and certification fees and subsidizes work experience for eligible individuals. Madisonville Community College contributes the learning lab, nursing software for remediation, and equipment.

### **Contact Information**

Cris Crowley  
Director of Adult Education  
Madisonville Community College  
(270) 824-1818  
cris.crowley@kctcs.edu

## MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY BRIDGE

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago, Illinois
<b>Partners:</b>	West Side Technical Institute (part of Richard J. Daley College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago), University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute, the Tooling and Manufacturing Association, its member companies, and other manufacturers
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vocational ESL pre-bridge serves as feeder to higher-level bridge</li> <li>■ Program offered by a community-based organization and connected to an educational and career pathway</li> <li>■ Provides bilingual instruction in technical fundamentals of manufacturing</li> </ul>

Instituto del Progreso Latino, a community organization in Chicago's Latino Pilsen neighborhood, created the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program to enable Latinos who have been laid off from low-skilled manufacturing jobs and others stuck in low-wage service jobs to advance to better paying entry-level skilled manufacturing jobs and community college certificate programs in manufacturing technology. These entry-level jobs start at \$9 to \$12 per hour plus benefits, while an advanced certificate from a community college qualifies workers for skilled trades positions that start at \$12 per hour and are in even greater demand by employers.

### Program Design

Individuals wishing to enter the Manufacturing Bridge program take the TABE test, or CASAS for monolingual Spanish speakers, to assess reading and math levels. Those testing eighth grade and higher can begin the Manufacturing Bridge, while others begin the vocational ESL pre-bridge program. An extensive intake interview helps program applicants explore different career possibilities, focusing on transferable skills, resolving personal barriers to employment, and determining the education and training needed to pursue their chosen career paths.

Two 14-week sessions of vocational ESL pre-bridge provide instruction in job-related conversation, technical vocabulary,

job-related reading, and words and phrases that explain job processes and can help individuals resolve problems on the job. At this level Instituto also offers instruction in basic computer skills and basic math, stressing measurement skills. Completers may enter the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program.

The Manufacturing Bridge curriculum consists of technical literacy modules in applied mathematics, computer applications, and workplace communication, and technical specialty modules in blueprint reading and machining. Instruction is contextualized, using problems, situations, and materials drawn from the contemporary manufacturing workplace. Bilingual instructors teach the technical specialty topics. The curriculum was designed to prepare students for the rigorous screening tests in applied mathematics, literacy, and graphical acuity given by employers, and for interviews with workplace team leaders and members, which test their ability to think on their feet and communicate well with others.

Trainees in both the lower-level pre-bridge and higher-level Manufacturing Bridge programs receive extensive preparation in resume writing, interviewing, test-taking, and other employment skills, as well as job-placement assistance through the strong relationships Instituto program staff have established with Chicago-area manufacturers.

Graduates from the Manufacturing Technology Bridge are strongly encouraged to enroll in the West Side Tech advanced certificate programs in precision metalworking or industrial maintenance. In many cases, Trade Act funding is extended to cover these tuition costs.

### Partners

Instituto provides recruitment, counseling, case management, job placement, follow-up support, ESL, VESL, instruction in workplace basics, and curriculum development. Daley College's West Side Technical Institute provides instruction in applied technology fundamentals and college recruitment and enrollment. Tooling and Manufacturing Association staff and companies form the program advisory board and provide opportunities for job shadowing, internships, and jobs. The UIC Great Cities Institute provides labor-market analyses, technical assistance on program design, planning, evaluation, and funding.

### Support Services

Instituto provides tutoring services as needed and conducts job-readiness workshops. Clerical staff complete bi-weekly forms for students receiving extended unemployment insurance under the Trade Act program and arrange for onsite child care or after-school programs and provide bus passes for transportation assistance. Instituto can also provide vouchers to pay for interview clothes, work boots, etc., and can refer students for additional assistance.

### Program Development

Instituto designed the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program based on the Transformations program that was developed by the Consortium on Occupational Research and Development in Waco, Texas, for use in training displaced manufacturing workers for more skilled jobs.\* Instituto worked closely with a group of Chicago-area manufacturers and with faculty from the Manufacturing Technology certificate programs at Richard J. Daley College to ensure that program graduates meet the qualifications sought by employers and are qualified to enter the college program so they can advance to even better jobs. Instituto also offers bridge programs for careers in computer technology and healthcare.

\*[www.cord.org](http://www.cord.org)

### Funding

The Instituto del Progreso Latino uses multiple funding sources for its bridge programming, including the Workforce Investment Act, North American Free Trade Agreement/Trade Adjustment Act (NAFTA/TAA), and the Illinois Job Training and Economic Development program. Empowerment Zone funding was important in establishing the program. Each of these sources has a different eligibility requirement. NAFTA/TAA provides the most options for training and permits a longer and more comprehensive ESL component. Instituto also provides customized training for employers for a fee. As with most community-based organizations, it seeks support from foundations.

### Outcomes

Using wage record data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the University of Illinois at Chicago tracked the job histories of participants before and after the Manufacturing Bridge. These data show that program completers secure better employment and retain their jobs longer than those who do not complete the program. On average, completers earn significantly more than program dropouts. Detailed reports on the evaluation are available at [www.uic.edu/cuppa/techbridge/](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/techbridge/). Over the past three years the Manufacturing Bridge and pre-bridge have served an average of 90 students per year.

### Contact Information

Tom DuBois  
 Director of Workforce Programs  
 Instituto del Progreso Latino  
 (773) 890-0055  
[tom@idpl.org](mailto:tom@idpl.org)  
[www.idpl.org](http://www.idpl.org)

## SEARK COLLEGE CAREER PATHWAYS PILOT PROJECT

<b>Lead Organizations:</b>	Southern Good Faith Fund and Southeast Arkansas College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas
<b>Partners:</b>	Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, Arkansas Department of Workforce Education
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prepares students for specific college-level certificate programs</li> <li>■ College/community-based organization partnership</li> <li>■ Offers “Employability Certificate” to those who need immediate employment</li> </ul>

The Southern Good Faith Fund (SGFF), a community-based organization, and Southeast Arkansas (SEARK) College developed and offer the Career Pathways Pilot Project to improve access to and completion of college-level training for low-skilled adults. Arkansas, and in particular its Delta region, has many low-skilled adults, while the region and the state have significant job opportunities that require post-secondary training. The Career Pathways Pilot is designed to address this mismatch and to provide an alternative model to deliver postsecondary training, because the current model does not adequately serve low-skilled adults.

### Program Design

There are four major components of the Career Pathways Pilot: 1) WAGE Prep, 2) WAGE Pathways Bridge Program, 3) the WAGE Employability Certificate, and 4) six college-level Certificate of Proficiency programs (Microsoft Office Specialist, Early Childhood Paraprofessional, Emergency Medical Technician, Industrial Skills Technologist, Nursing Assistant, and Welding Technology).

Students who TABE-test below sixth grade begin with the WAGE (Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy) Prep component. Students who TABE-test between the sixth and ninth grade begin with the WAGE Pathways Bridge Program, which links low-skilled individuals to career paths by preparing them for the college-level Certificate of Proficiency credit programs. The program teaches basic academic skills and job-specific competencies in the context of specific job tasks and knowledge through six separate, con-

textualized curricula. The WAGE Pathways Bridge curricula are not only contextualized to the specific jobs for which the six Certificate of Proficiency Programs prepare students, but they also provide the required academic and classroom skills needed for success in the six Certificate of Proficiency programs. The key outcome is a ninth-grade TABE score in reading and math so the students can move on to one of the Certificate of Proficiency college credit programs.

Students who complete the WAGE Pathways Bridge or who bypass it by TABE-testing at ninth grade or above can enter into one of the Certificate of Proficiency programs. The certificates articulate to six higher-education programs, providing credits that can be applied towards advanced degrees in business, education, emergency medical technician/paramedic, manufacturing, nursing, and welding. Upon completion of a certificate of proficiency, students can secure better-paying jobs as well, as employers have verified that demand exists for individuals with these credentials.

For students without a high school diploma or GED and/or who want to quickly secure employment, the program also offers the WAGE Employability Certificate. This qualifies them for specific entry-level jobs with local employers while preparing them to take the GED exam, thus completers can get a job and qualify to enter college. Those who wish to continue with their education can then enroll in any of the programs that are part of the SEARK College Career Pathways Pilot Project, or any other college credit program.

### Staffing

One adult education instructor teaches the WAGE Prep and WAGE Pathways Bridge program for all six areas. This instructor provides group and individual classroom instruction, flexible scheduling, and an open-entry, open-exit format. Other core staff members are the WAGE program coordinator at SEARK College who engages employers in the WAGE program, a SGFF counselor who coordinates a comprehensive system of student support services, and a SGFF career consultant who focuses on job placement.

### Partners

The key program partners are SGFF and SEARK College. SEARK College provides most of the academic instruction, while SGFF coordinates a comprehensive student support services system, which includes student outreach, program orientation, individual assessments, career and academic advising, academic monitoring and tutoring, and job placement. Together SEARK College and SGFF have developed a replicable strategy for improving adult enrollment and completion of college credentials. The Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC) supports any necessary institutional change at the college and replication of the program at other two-year colleges. The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education supported the development of the six contextualized WAGE Pathways Bridge program curricula.

### Role of Employers

Employers were initially engaged via the WAGE program advisory committee, which provided input into the design of the Career Pathways program. They helped organize focus groups of a broader collection of local employers in each of the six targeted industries. The focus groups verified occupational demand, identified career pathways in their workplaces, identified internship and other work experience opportunities, and provided input on further aligning the career pathways training with their specific workforce skill needs. Most employers involved in the program are relatively large local employers in manufacturing, healthcare, education, and business and government services.

### Program Development

Several years ago, the Adult Education program within the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education created the

WAGE workplace literacy program to contextualize adult basic education curricula to specific job skills and competencies based on Literacy Task Analyses, which involve observing workers engaged in specific jobs to determine the particular skills needed for those positions. SEARK College and SGFF used this model to develop the WAGE Pathways Bridge program curricula, and they continue to conduct Literacy Task Analyses to keep the curricula current.

SGFF and SEARK College began to design the WAGE Pathways Bridge program to help prepare people for certain Certificate of Proficiency college credit programs at SEARK College in the fall of 2003. It took about a year to write the curricula and hire the full-time instructor, which were in place by January 2005. The partners derived the conceptual framework of the project from several Workforce Strategy Center reports.\*

### Funding

SGFF and SEARK secured a grant from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education to develop the WAGE Pathways Bridge program curricula and hire a dedicated instructor. In 2005, state TANF funds were provided under the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative to continue to support WAGE staff and SGFF staff involved in providing student support services. TANF funds are also supporting student child care and transportation payments. Continued TANF support is now mandated by state TANF law under the High Wage Education and Training Initiative, which incorporated the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative already underway at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. This initiative was recently awarded \$16 million in state TANF funds for two years to replicate career pathways programs at eleven two-year colleges in Arkansas. AATYC was instrumental in securing the TANF funds, which started July 2005.

### Contact Information

Mike Leach  
Public Policy Program Director  
Southern Good Faith Fund  
(501) 661-0322  
mleach@goodfaithfund.org  
www.southerngoodfaithfund.org

\*Building a Career Pathways System: Promising Practices in Community College-Centered Workforce Development, and Building Bridges to College and Careers: Contextualized Basic Skills Programs at Community Colleges. [www.workforcestrategy.org](http://www.workforcestrategy.org).

## WATSONVILLE DIGITAL BRIDGE ACADEMY

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Cabrillo Community College, Watsonville, California
<b>Partners:</b>	Santa Cruz County Human Resource Agency, Watsonville High School, alternative and continuation schools, drug and alcohol treatment programs, Santa Cruz County Probation, Children’s Mental Health Departments
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accelerated semester prepares individuals with multiple barriers for college-level educational programs in fields requiring the use of digital technologies</li> <li>■ Students earn degree credits while enrolled in Digital Bridge program</li> <li>■ Effective use of cohorts</li> </ul>

The Watsonville Digital Bridge Academy prepares multiple-barrier individuals for success in knowledge-based careers in computer information systems, engineering technology, nursing, radiology, criminal justice, or other allied health fields that require postsecondary education, the ability to work in teams, and the capacity for ongoing learning. The Digital Bridge addresses the divide between the need of the area’s high-technology industry for qualified workers and the low-skilled residents in nearby communities. The program prepares its participants to enter college and ultimately graduate with a degree or a certificate in fields requiring the use of digital technologies, or to transfer to a four-year college if the student so wishes. Most participants are limited-English-speaking Latinos, and 65 percent are first-generation Americans.

### Program Design

The Digital Bridge recruits students through the Santa Cruz County Human Resource Agency, comprehensive high schools (Watsonville High School), alternative and continuation schools, Cabrillo College’s basic skills classes, drug and alcohol treatment programs, Santa Cruz County Probation department, and Children’s Mental Health Departments. Also, many students learn about the program by word of mouth. Because the goal is for students to continue into a degree or certificate program, the main criteria

for entering the program is a ninth-grade reading level in English, which is the minimum starting level for a student to successfully complete the program.

Students proceed through the program in cohorts of 24 to 29. The curriculum is broken into components so it can be customized and localized for use at other colleges. There are three main components: 1) Light the Fire Within, 2) Academic Acceleration Semester, and 3) Internships.

Light the Fire Within is a two-week immersion program to help these students with no role models or previous expectation of going to college and little understanding of knowledge-based careers to learn new behaviors, become aware of their potential, and be motivated to learn. This component meets for 40 hours a week and uses discovery exercises and a self-managing team environment.

The Academic Acceleration Semester (the Bridge Semester) is a 13-week series of five courses to bring students to college-level academic performance and accustom them to a full-time workload. Students earn 16.5 AA degree-level credits toward a college degree or certification. The students meet in class four days a week and in a study group on the fifth day. The courses are interdisciplinary and offered by three divisions within the college that cover computer information systems, reading, movement, and

career counseling departments. Most classes include project-based learning. The faculty designed the curriculum for the semester so that content from different classes follows a logical sequence and may be introduced in one class, used in another, and reinforced in a third. In addition, to help students manage their workloads, all assignment due dates are coordinated. During this semester students take a project course, which begins with a primary research project on a social justice issue and culminates with a public presentation. The social justice issue serves as an important motivator for these students, because the topics they choose frequently relate to their own personal experiences.

After the Academic Acceleration Semester, students continue into college-level certificate or degree programs at Cabrillo College. While enrolled in a degree program, they also continue with their cohort in a one-and-a-half- credit seminar that covers topics like leadership versus management, creating the conditions for self-managing work teams, leadership and sustainability, managing change, and consulting skills.

Students have internships while enrolled in classes in their second semester at the college. These internships are within the college itself, where the interns recruit for the academy, do office work, provide peer mentoring, support service referrals, and help arrange other internship opportunities. The plan is for these interns to continue with other internships in governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and educational institutions, and then move on to externships in the private sector.

### Staffing

The program has eight faculty members who also teach other Cabrillo classes. One benefit of faculty who also teach outside the Digital Bridge is they are able to evaluate Bridge students in the same way they evaluate other students. The Digital Bridge has one full-time faculty member.

### Program Development

Cabrillo College spent 19 months researching and developing this program, interviewing 125 experts who work with high-risk populations. It piloted the curriculum in five 40-hour sessions.

### Funding

The program is funded by grants from the National Science Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation.

### Outcomes

Piloting of the Digital Bridge Academy's two-week Light the Fire Within curriculum began in June 2002 and continued through the summer of 2003. The first cohort began in the fall of 2003. To date, 90 students have completed the Watsonville Bridge, 83 percent on average have successfully completed the accelerated Bridge Semester, and 94 percent of them are still in college.

### Contact Information

Diego James Navarro  
 Director, Watsonville Digital Bridge Academy and  
 Instructor, Computer Information Systems  
 Cabrillo Community College  
 (831) 477-5166  
 diego@cabrillo.edu  
 www.cabrillo.edu/academics/wdba/