Bridge Program Costs and Funding

CHAPTER III

Bridge Program Costs and Funding

This chapter discusses the costs of bridge program development and implementation and advises on sources of funding to cover these costs. It is extremely difficult to place a per-client cost on such programs.* This is because bridge programs require so many partners and each partner frequently contributes in-kind and other resources to the development and implementation of the programs, and because institutions who offer these types of programs piece together funding and try to minimize the costs of the additional strategies needed to support success and retention for underprepared students. However, this chapter should help the bridge program designer identify expenses and potential sources of funding.

Budgeting a Bridge Program

The bridge program budget will need to identify costs associated with implementation of the various bridge program components. The budget is not only a critical part of fundraising, it will also help the partners determine how to allocate financial responsibility for the program.

In general, costs will vary depending on the type of bridge program and the availability of institutional resources. For example, some bridge programs will require the purchase of occupational equipment such as a hospital bed or press machine. On the other hand, the program might be able to take advantage of existing and already-funded services such as college advising. The bridge program budget should include *all* the costs of the program, with institutional contributions indicated as revenue. Often resources can be leveraged through partnerships. For example, provided it is convenient for students, the program may be able to use a community technology center or community college computer lab for free during "off-hours."

Develop a Budget

There are two approaches to budgeting. One approach is to develop a budget according to *institutional cost centers*. This type of budget is often helpful to the lead institution for accounting purposes. Community colleges typically use three categories or "cost centers" to assign costs — direct instruction, instructional support, and administration. Regardless of the type of institution, the following is a list of typical "cost centers" that a bridge program would include:

Direct Instruction

- Staffing (salary or wage for all staff involved in program). Determine whether the individual will be part- or full-time and whether fringe benefits will be included. Examples of the types of staff needed to operate a bridge program are provided in "Staffing," pp. 76–80.

Instructional Support

- Consulting services (curriculum development, fundraising, evaluation frameworks, applied research, e.g., on the labor market, local employers' needs, career ladders, etc.)
- Collateral materials (books, assessment testing materials, promotional materials, etc.)
- Facility, equipment, software (cost of rooms, computers, computer software such as a database, occupational equipment)
- Support services (e.g., transportation vouchers, assistance with purchasing uniforms). Include support services provided by program partners and student wage subsidies
- Miscellaneous (refreshments, staff and student field trips, etc.)

Administration

- Administrative overhead or indirect costs (Some institutions might require a contribution from every program toward management information systems, accounting, etc.)

*One cost study showed that programs serving academically unprepared students tend to cost $2,500–$3,500 per student in addition to tuition. *The Costs of Serving Non-Academically Prepared Students: A Study of Three Community College of Denver Programs*, Elaine Baker. Funded by the Ford Foundation's Bridges to Opportunity Initiative.

The second approach to budgeting is to develop an *activity or program budget*. This sort of budget is useful for funders who are aksed to support a specific component of the program. An activity or program budget also can be used as support documentation for a cost-center budget, since it typically includes details as opposed to summary-level information. Program costs should total the same in both types of budgets; they are simply presented differently. The activity budget usually incorporates staffing-related costs into each activity, rather than as a separate line item. It is helpful to distinguish start-up costs from ongoing operating costs.

Start-up costs include:

- Staff recruitment and orientation (development of a training manual and staff-orientation process including field trips; include salary costs as determined by the percentage of time spent by staff to complete the task.)
- Program/curriculum development (calculate the time for all individuals involved in the identification of learning objectives, review of books and materials, development of lesson plans, etc. Do not double count with staffing costs if curriculum is considered part of the individual's job and is already included in program operations. Consider whether a curriculum-development consultant is necessary.)
- Partnership development, employer focus groups, etc.
- Facilities, equipment, and software (identification of space, purchase of computers, software, and other office or classroom support plus any technical assistance needed.)
- Fundraising
- Coordination of partnership and program development

Ongoing costs include:

- Student recruitment (marketing materials, staff salaries calculated as percentage of time spent for staff involved)
- Employer recruitment (marketing materials, staff salaries calculated as percentage of time spent for staff involved)
- Project management (salary of manager, generation of program-update reports)
- Program operations (teaching salaries, books and materials, field trips, speakers, wages for work experience)
- Support services (include staff responsible for job placement, counseling, college advising, tutoring, and case management; transportation vouchers)
- Facilities (rental costs)
- Fundraising
- Administrative overhead

Worksheets 12 and 13, pp. 68–69, will assist with the development of a cost center and program or activity budget.

Worksheet 12: Cost Center Budget

COST CENTER		TYPE OF COST	ACTUAL COST	COST CENTER SUBTOTALS (INSERT IN GREY BOX)	TOTAL
Direct Instruction					
	Staffing	# of FT staff x salary + fringe			
		# of PT staff x hrly. wage			
		# of students x hrly. wage/stipend			
Instructional Support					
	Consultants	Promotional material design			
		Curriculum development			
	General Materials and Supplies	# of books x students per year			
		Assessment testing materials			
		# of promotional materials x printing/ copying cost			
	Facility, Equipment, Software	Room cost			
		Lab cost			
		# of computers			
		Computer software (3 of licenses?)			
	Support Services	Transportation voucher amount x # of students x length of program			
		Cost of uniforms x # of students			
		Other			
	Refreshments	Cost of food/drinks x # of students x # of class days			
		Cost of food/drinks x # of students and guests for graduation			
Administration					
	Administrative Overhead	% of institution's budget			
TOTAL (sum of subtotals)					

Worksheet 13: Program or Activity Budget

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SALARY	BENEFITS	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	GENERAL MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES AND/OR CAPITAL OUTLAY*	OTHER EXPENDITURES	SUBTOTALS	TOTAL
Start-Up Costs								
Staff Recruitment and Orientation								
Program Development								
Equipment and Software								
Fundraising								
TOTAL START-UP COSTS								
Ongoing Program Operation Costs (define a time period)								
Student Recruitment								
Employer Partnerships								
Project Management								
Program Operation: Bridge Skills								
Support Services								
Facilities								
Fundraising								
Total Ongoing Costs								
TOTAL PRG. OPERATION								

* Sometimes calculated as percentage of total budget

Funding a Bridge Program

There are many existing resources that can be used and combined to pay for bridge programs. Because in most states there is no dedicated source of funding for bridge training, someone on the core team or a hired consultant will need to allocate time and energy to raise and/or encourage the redirection of funds.

The ultimate goal is to get the bridge program institutionalized so that it does not have to rely on discretionary or one-time project funding year after year. The program may have to run as a pilot for a year or two before it is generally seen as effective and is incorporated into an annual budget.

The discussion and examples in this section are designed to prepare the responsible program staff to answer the questions posed in worksheet 14, pp 72–73, and to complete the funding map in worksheet 15, p. 74.

Use Existing Funding Streams Innovatively

One fundraising option is to redirect existing funding sources to support a bridge pilot program. For example, in Wisconsin, a pilot is under way to enrich remedial programs with contextualized academic and vocational material already recognized by the college. These programs are credit-bearing, and therefore students can use Pell grants to pay for them. Additionally, federal work-study funds help subsidize the work experience for up to 19 hours a week.[13] As another example, the Illinois Community College Board used Workforce Investment Act incentive funds earned by the high performance of Illinois' adult education and Carl Perkins vocational education programs to provide support to community colleges in partnership with community-based organizations to develop bridge programs in health care and transportation, warehousing, and logistics occupations. Similarly, supportive institutional leadership may be able to make discretionary funds available to pilot the program. The advantage of using existing institutional resources is once the program proves effective, the core team can advocate for the financing to become a permanent way to support the program.

Explore Public Funding Options

Another funding option is to apply for public funding. It is important to note that public funding comes with many different eligibility requirements, including what type of institution can apply, what type of student can benefit, and what kind of activities can be supported. It is very important to pay close attention to the guidelines before applying to make sure the funding is a right fit for the particular bridge program. Also, public funding streams are implemented differently state by state, depending on established policies and priorities. Worksheet 14 will help map potential funds.*

The **Career Pathways** program at Madisonville Community College provides individualized one-on-one and small-group tutoring to help individuals who wish to enter the 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 on the nursing career ladder. 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 into 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.

*A detailed funding streams diagram can be found at: www.cjc.net/publications/02_Bridge_Programs_PDFs/bridge_funding.pdf and: www.womenemployed.org/docs/Bridge%20Funding%20Diagram.pdf

Instituto del Progreso Latino funds the **Manufacturing Technology Bridge** through many sources, 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 program has different eligibility requirements. NAFTA/TAA provides the most options for training and permits a longer and more comprehensive ESL component. In addition, Instituto provides customized training for employers for a fee. As with most community-based organizations, it also seeks support from foundations.

Find Private-Sector Contributions and Foundation and Corporate Giving Programs

Employer partners often contribute to programs. These contributions can take the form of in-kind or non-cash donations such as assistance with curriculum development, loaning employees to help teach or present to the class, lending classroom space, providing company tours for students, allowing employees to be "shadowed" by students, providing internships with the company, and lending or donating equipment. Employer partners will sometimes contribute resources directly to the program or provide tuition assistance or paid release time for incumbent workers who want to improve their skills and advance.

Foundations and corporate giving programs are also important sources of funds. However, it will be difficult to rely on foundation support for program operation over the long term because foundations often change priorities and/or limit funding to a certain number of years. Therefore, foundations should be considered for upfront or one-time expenses such as program development, convening of program partners and other stakeholders, evaluation, technical assistance, and tools such as literacy testing and computer software to assist with student tracking. A foundation or corporate giving program may also be interested in funding the program pilot, but will likely ask for plans for sustaining the program.

Worksheet 14: Funding the Components of Bridge Programs, pp. 72–73, will help identify potential funding sources for the various components of bridge programs. Worksheet 15: Mapping Bridge Program Funds, p. 74, presents a format for organizing funding stream information. For an example of a completed diagram for the state of Illinois, along with funding-stream definitions and potential funding scenarios, see www.womenemployed.org and www.cjc.net.

Funding and Supporting an Ongoing Bridge Program

The bridge program's ability to demonstrate positive program outcomes will be essential to securing ongoing financial support. The earliest funders will pay close attention to program outcomes to determine whether they want to make an ongoing or multi-year investment. New funders will likely provide support if they can see the program's success in helping low-skilled individuals find good jobs or advance in their careers. Finally, because the bridge program concept will likely be relatively new to public agencies, one or two successful programs may sway them to dedicate a larger amount of funds to bridge programs throughout the state or in the country. Holding an event to showcase the program's success — for example, an open house, reception, or graduation ceremony — can build wider support and encourage continued funding, and can also interest new funders. Conducting an evaluation is a good way to document outcomes in a credible way (see "Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement," pp. 83–88).

Employer partners contribute significant resources to the **Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy**. Participating employers provide tuition reimbursement for incumbent workers and, in some cases, pre-pay tuition so upfront costs will not be a barrier to employee participation. Industry also provides subsidies for 50 percent of the Academy space, in-kind donation of supervisors' time for clinicals, and funding for a career advisor.

Worksheet 14: Funding the Components of Bridge Programs
A step-by-step process to identifying resources to support bridge programs in your state

Step 1

Create a list of federal, state, and local funds that are available for workforce development in your state. Standard federal streams may include Perkins, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (including the governor's discretionary grant and any performance or incentive grants), and federal financial aid programs such as Pell. One resource for this type of research is the staff at your state or local workforce investment board.* Your state likely has dedicated funding for workforce development that may be available for bridge programs. Often these funds are administered by the state economic-development and/or higher-education agencies. The National Network of Sector Partners has conducted a state-by-state analysis of economic-development funds usable for sector-focused programming that may be useful in finding this information.[14] Your state's community college association or agency may have information about appropriate educational grants. Finally, you will need to investigate any local funds that can be used to support workforce development.

Step 2

Using the questions provided below, determine whether each stream can support bridge programs, and if so, what components of bridge programs. A note about federal funds: since federal regulations for these funding streams are interpreted differently by state and even by local area, you should look at how answers to these questions would be interpreted in your area. The examples given under each question demonstrate how state interpretations may or may not make funds amenable to supporting bridge programs. You might consider meeting with your local workforce board to discuss the possibility of exceptions or waivers. Answer these questions for each stream that you have identified.

1. What are the population eligibility guidelines required by the funding stream? To be useful for a bridge program, people with limited literacy or individuals without a high school diploma or GED must be eligible.

   Example: State interpretations of federal guidelines
   Although there is nothing in the federal regulations that prevent WIA Title I Training Funds (Individual Training Accounts [ITAs]) from being used for people with limited literacy, some local areas have chosen to require a high school diploma to be eligible for an ITA. Therefore, ITAs may not be available to support bridge programs. Another example can be found in the federal income eligibility guidelines for Title XX Community Services Block Grant Funds. These funds are amenable for use in bridge programs that target public-aid recipients and other low-income groups.

*See www.nawb.org to identify a contact for your state or local board information.

2. Do the laws or regulations restrict the types of services that can be offered (what can the money be spent on)? Determine whether there are funds that can support the various components of bridge programs: curriculum development, program operation, work experience, and support services. Because bridge programs offer a unique mix of literacy and occupational instruction, you also need to determine whether the funds will support one or both of these types of services. Finally, if you are developing a bridge program that does not offer college credit, you need to determine whether funds are available for non-credit programming.

Example: State interpretations of federal guidelines
Federal Perkins funds could support program operation, curriculum development, and support services depending on state interpretation. Likewise, some states use federal WIA Title II (Adult Education) dollars to support vocational adult education services, while others have a stricter interpretation and do not allow for funding any occupational programming. Finally, federal Pell Grants can be used only for credit programs, while some states may have a state need-based grant that allows for use in non-credit programs.

3. Do the laws or regulations limit the provider type (who can administer the funding stream)? It is necessary to determine whether the funds are accessible to community colleges, community-based organizations, proprietary schools, or other training agencies depending on who will administer your program.

Example: State interpretations of federal guidelines
Some states competitively bid TANF Employment and Training contracts with little restriction regarding provider type. On the other hand, states sometimes have state-funded job-training funds that are limited to community-based organizations and employer partnerships. This type of funding would not be available to support bridge programs at community colleges.

4. What are the regulations on how the funding is administered (formula, competitively bid, etc.)? Bridge providers need to be aware of what is competitively bid so that they do not miss out on proposal opportunities. Typically, colleges plan what to do with formula funding during a budget cycle. This requires advanced planning and requesting. Your state Workforce Investment Board might be able to help you find the answers to these questions.

Step 3
Complete a chart that lists each bridge program component and identifies funding streams that can support that component. List any caveats, special opportunities and circumstances, or provider limitations. Use worksheet 15: Mapping Bridge Program Funds, p. 74.

Worksheet 15: Mapping Bridge Program Funds

	PROGRAM COORDINATION	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM OPERATION: LOWER-LEVEL BRIDGE	PROGRAM OPERATION: HIGHER-LEVEL BRIDGE	WORK EXPERIENCE	SUPPORT SERVICES	NOTES: CAVEATS, STIPULATIONS
Federal Funds							
Federal Work-Study							
WIA Title I							
WIA Title II							
Perkins							
CSBG							
TANF							
Other (including incentive and discretionary)							
State Funds							
Child Care Subsidy							
Job Training							
Adult Education							
Local Funds							
Grants: Foundation and Corporate Giving							

Bridge Program Implementation and Management

CHAPTER IV

Staffing

Promoting, Recruiting for, and Marketing the Bridge Program

Bridge Program Implementation and Management

Staffing

Assign Roles and Responsibilities

To implement an effective bridge program, staff members will need clear responsibilities so that they are accountable for key functions and have clear roles in a team effort to move students through training to a career path. It is also important to define the staff functions so that there are clear linkages among them. The program design, showing the relationship of the major components, provides a starting point for identifying the required functions. The program designers will then be able to group the functions in specific positions.

Table 4, pp. 78–79, presents a generic list of staff positions, responsibilities, and functions for both community colleges and community-based organizations. However, the list of positions represents an ideal that may be beyond the reach of most organizations, so it is important to focus on the functions, which are critical to a program's success. Also, the functions on the list may be filled by different organizations.

The list of functions provides a basis for assessing the current staffing structure to determine what functions are already in place, what positions may be modified, and what new positions are needed. In large organizations, the functions will be spread among different positions, departments, and divisions. In such cases, a clear definition of functions and tasks will help determine which functions may be consolidated and how to integrate the work of the others into the bridge program through clear communication, processes, and procedures. It is important to note that several of these positions may not exist in community colleges, or if they do, it may be difficult for bridge programs to secure a regular commitment of some of their time. Strong leadership support may be necessary to help secure dedicated staff time. In any case, the program coordinator should take the necessary time to orient staff to the bridge concept and to build an integrated team as the program is implemented. It might be helpful to refer back to the list of benefits of bridge programs for internal and external partners and students presented in figure 5: Benefits of Bridge Training, p. 14.

All staff, including the core team, support employees, and the staff of partnering organizations, should thoroughly understand the purpose of the program, their roles and responsibilities, the roles and responsibilities of others, and how they fit into the bigger picture. This may be done in an orientation or workshop.

Although the organization's leadership may not be directly involved in the design or day-to-day operation of the bridge program, it is important to gain their buy-in and support. This may involve marketing the program to them in memos and meetings. Presentations should convey the purpose of the program, how it supports the organization's mission, expected results, how it will be funded, and what the leader could do for the program. Periodic updates regarding successes, challenges, issues, and recommended solutions are critical. Other techniques are described in "Promoting, Recruiting for, and Marketing the Bridge Program," pp. 81–82.

The Portland Community College/Mt. Hood Community College training team for the **Career Pathways Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers** 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. The program serves 120 to 150 students a year, in eight to 12 classes, with 12 to 15 students per class.

Find the Right Instructors

Good instructors are the key to the success of any bridge program. They must impart real skills that translate to increased employability and educational mobility. Thus, core teams must recognize and hire innovative and motivated instructors with experience teaching the program's target population and who have firsthand experience and insight into the world of work. Instructors for a field-specific bridge program should also have knowledge of the particular sector.

Instructor Duties, Qualifications, and Recruitment

The instructor's primary responsibility is to see that students actually learn the skills and competencies they will need to be successful on the job and at the next educational level. In addition, instructors need to work with other program staff to deliver a clear and continuous stream of student-specific services. Therefore, instructors need to:

- Adjust the curriculum to meet student needs
- Integrate experiential (hands-on) and team learning activities into curriculum
- Have knowledge of entry-level work environments, the career-path framework concept, and education and job-advancement opportunities
- Work with other bridge program team members to innovate new approaches to integrate basic skills, career exploration, and/or technical skills instruction
- Conduct ongoing evaluations of the curriculum and document changes
- Keep complete records of student progress
- Communicate student issues to appropriate program staff regularly

Depending upon the type of bridge program, the right set of teachers may be a mix of skilled reading and math instructors and technical experts from industry, or trainers or faculty with industry knowledge. Such a mix will require that instructors have opportunities to share their skills with each other so that the more academic instructors gain knowledge of the targeted sector, and technical experts can learn new teaching approaches and techniques that are sensitive to adults' education needs.

The central instructor qualification is the ability to connect with students in such a way that they learn new skills. Instructors must have excellent interpersonal skills and the sensitivity and strategies to motivate and support the targeted population. To find appropriate instructors for a bridge program, organizations must pursue many avenues. Usually, instructor recruitment means identifying existing faculty and trainers from across the organization who might be interested and qualified, as well as getting in touch with organizations that have extensive contact with training and trainers in both the industrial and adult education fields. To evaluate whether potential instructors are able to teach in context and function as learning coaches, ask them to prepare a demonstration lesson and conduct it for the hiring group. Candidates can be given a specific topic concept or principle or be allowed to select one. This is a more revealing method than asking potential teachers to answer a list of questions.

Instructor Orientation

Once appropriate instructors have been hired, it is important to integrate them into the bridge program to build a consistent understanding of the underlying philosophy, techniques, goals, and objectives, and to clarify expectations and procedures. This may be done at the level of the group and the individual.

Because the bridge program involves so many new approaches, it will be important to build a shared understanding of its principles and methods and of the fact that success will require a departure from current practices. This can be done through one or more orientation workshops focusing on these program elements:

- Substance of the bridge program, e.g., the career-path framework, the target audience, curriculum development, use of adult learning techniques, evaluating student progress
- Organization and structure, including all partners and their roles, timelines, communication protocols
- Procedures and expectations, including schedules of meetings, reports, registration, and student conferences

Table 4: Staff Positions, Responsibilities, and Functions

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS
President/ Executive Director	■ Provide leadership in building support and understanding of the bridge program internally and externally ■ Provide organizational support ■ Require accountability for advancement outcomes ■ Be an internal and external champion ■ Mention bridge programs in speeches, newsletters, and meetings ■ Attend graduations ■ Support fundraising efforts ■ Meet with key stakeholders (particularly employers) ■ Advocate for needed policies to decision-makers
Dean/ Director	■ Promote and help develop the bridge program's model of teaching and learning ■ Promote understanding, buy-in, cooperation, and faculty participation ■ Provide assistance and guidance in developing, managing, and sustaining the program ■ Facilitate linkages to advanced training and education ■ Ensure that the bridge program is an integral part of the division's or department's functions ■ Provide resources, staff, and support for fundraising ■ Facilitate meetings to help integrate bridge program principles into all activities related to its operation and success
Program Manager or Coordinator	■ Plan, manage, and monitor all aspects of the program, including staff and partnerships ■ Ensure that all staff have the required skills and knowledge to do their jobs ■ Develop and manage partnerships ■ Develop and maintain employer relationships ■ Provide initial training and orientation for staff and instructors ■ Support staff and provide feedback in writing and in one-on-one meetings ■ Coordinate with student services ■ Establish a communication system ■ Require and maintain accurate records of student and staff progress ■ Hold regular meetings with staff, partners, and leaders ■ Prepare progress reports for leaders, supervisors, funders, and partners ■ Inform stakeholders and customers of progress and results ■ Raise funds to support the program ■ Coordinate with evaluators
Recruitment and Intake Specialist	■ Provide all pre-program activities, including marketing, recruiting, providing information, assessing interest and capacity, and assisting students to select the most appropriate program ■ Maintain and distribute up-to-date information/marketing materials ■ Respond to inquiries ■ Maintain program information ■ Hold information sessions ■ Administer and analyze assessments ■ Assist students in selecting courses and registering
Career Services Advisor	■ Help students develop and pursue career and learning plans ■ Work closely with the placement coordinator (see below) ■ Provide information about education and training opportunities, careers, and jobs ■ Identify financial aid opportunities for education and training (or make referrals) ■ Help students determine which jobs are good steps to careers ■ Help interested students explore advanced education/training opportunities ■ Establish relationships with relevant educational organizations

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS
Instructors	■ Develop, deliver, and continuously improve curriculum and lessons ■ Participate in student recruitment ■ Support the efforts of all students and evaluate student performance ■ Submit reports ■ Prepare lesson plans ■ Teach courses ■ Coordinate experiential learning activities ■ Invite outside speakers ■ Evaluate performance ■ Advise students on progress and recommend steps to solve any issues ■ Track attendance and progress
Learning Coach	■ Provide tutoring ■ Support study groups
Placement Coordinator	■ Solicit employment and internship opportunities ■ Help define qualifications ■ Screen students ■ Assist students with applications ■ Follow up with students and employers ■ Research appropriate companies ■ Establish contacts with employers and other workforce intermediaries ■ Maintain job and internship data ■ Assist students with job search and applications ■ Help students set long-term employment goals ■ Review expectations for specific jobs, employers, and assignments ■ Establish manager/supervisor contacts for each internship and placement ■ Make regular follow-up calls to the manager/supervisor and the new employee, and respond to their calls and concerns ■ Regularly collect employer evaluations ■ Communicate with other staff to discuss student issues and opportunities ■ Troubleshoot employer recruitment and placement issues ■ Coordinate with service coordinators as appropriate
Case Manager/ Service Coordinator	■ Assist students in resolving non-educational personal issues that affect learning and program completion ■ Help students solve problems independently ■ Identify need for intervention ■ Conduct intake interviews to identify possible barriers to success ■ Construct individual service plans with students ■ Establish relationships with organizations that offer support services ■ Conduct regular conferences with students to discuss progress and identify needs for additional assistance ■ Maintain individual case files

The orientation workshops should emphasize that the program approach is new and exciting, and show how and why it differs from more traditional methods. Workshops will be most successful if they are highly interactive and participatory. Simulations of key program activities that allow instructors to experience the program from a student's perspective, role play, and solve the range of problems that will inevitably emerge can be very effective.

Figure 14 is an example of a class assignment from a two-week summer training course for adult education instructors in the Workforce Preparation Academy at the City Colleges of Chicago.

Figure 14: Workforce Preparation Academy Class Assignment

Topic: Job Search and Job Applications

Finding an appropriate job and submitting an application for it are complicated endeavors. In order to experience what our students encounter in the job-search process, and to prepare for Thursday's session on job search and job application, please complete the following assignment for Thursday:

- ✔ Find two entry-level jobs for which our ABE/GED or ESL students might apply (preferably in two of the critical skills shortage career areas—healthcare, manufacturing, service, or transportation).
- ✔ Use whatever means you would normally use to find these jobs—Internet, networking, classified ads, "Help Wanted" signs in windows, etc.
- ✔ Complete a hard-copy application for one job.
- ✔ Submit one an on-line application for a second job.
- ✔ Bring copies of both applications (if possible; you may not be able to get a copy of the on-line application, but try to get one), as well as the job descriptions or advertisements with you to class on Saturday, October 9.
- ✔ Also bring a list of the steps (1, 2, 3, etc.) that you took to locate the jobs for which you applied and to describe the process you went through to submit the application.
- ✔ Write a paragraph of three (3) to five (5) sentences that describes what you learned as a result of this experience, and bring this to Thursday's class with you, as well.

WPADI
Application Assignment #1
Developed by Cynthia A. Barnes, Ph.D.
City Colleges of Chicago 2004

Promoting, Recruiting for, and Marketing the Bridge Program

This section focuses on positioning bridge programs and developing appealing, stimulating messages about them. It offers points for promoting the program to partners and others, and for recruiting students. When marketing, it is important to let potentially interested audiences know that the bridge program connects students to higher learning and to a career in a manner that is interesting and designed to meet students' needs.

Promote the Bridge Program

Every interaction about the development and implementation of a bridge program is, in fact, a form of program promotion. Bridge programs need to be "sold" in a number of ways. Initially and throughout the program design and development, the bridge program idea needs to be promoted within the lead institution. The bridge approach is new to many faculty and administrators — it requires many new and different approaches to teaching methodologies, course sequences, student enrollment process, support services for students, and funding. (Resistance within the institution in the early stages of development and implementation is not unusual and makes early and ongoing communication a necessity.)

For many institutions, bridge programs will essentially serve students in a new way that needs to be clearly articulated. Promotion of the bridge program, therefore, needs to be designed to include the following points in a simple one- or two-page document:

- Clear statement of why the organization wants and needs to offer this type of program
- Identification of specific populations who will be served by the program and a description of their needs/challenges
- A definition of the bridge program elements and the departments/divisions responsible for delivering them
- Examples of other successful programs
- A timetable for when the program will begin
- Clear statements of what is required from institutional participants for the program to be successful

Ideally, the promotion activities will encompass the following types of things:

- Individual and small group meetings with senior administrators where all of the above-mentioned points would be covered.
- Identification of key players in the delivery of bridge programs. These individuals need to be brought in early through one-on-one meetings and eventually larger group meetings. Areas for potential inclusion are credit programs, adult education, continuing education, workforce development, contract training, counseling/career services, registration, and financial aid. Again, the elements mentioned above would be covered.
- Meetings with faculty members and academic and support-services departments to acquaint them with the needs of the bridge program students and the institution's desire to move in this direction.
- Regular, brief written updates to keep key people informed about the development of the bridge program.
- Meetings with prospective employer partners and industry associations.
- Feature articles in relevant local (institution) publications.

Recruit Students to the Bridge Program

Recruitment refers to efforts aimed at potential individual students. The key to determining the depth and breadth of recruitment, and potentially marketing activities, will rest on the program size.

Get in touch with potential students through:

- Presentations and flyers to students who would normally be placed in adult education or developmental education classes

- Visits by bridge program instructors to adult education classes, including ESL classes, and to developmental classes — face-to-face contact is often the best recruitment device
- Identification of college students who have not yet declared majors
- Use of counselors and others who might provide other types of program information and social services to potentially eligible students
- Information sessions in places where potential students are likely to be found — this might include one-stop career centers, schools, churches, community-based organizations, union halls, etc.; ideally, these sessions would involve and engage faculty members
- Regular contact with unemployment offices, other government agencies, churches, community-based organizations, and community colleges
- Employers whose entry-level workers need additional skills/education to work more effectively and be eligible for promotion
- Other training/education programs that might serve as feeders to the bridge program
- High schools and alternative high school diploma–completion programs

Market the Bridge Program

One of the most important early activities in program marketing is to create a name for the program that lets potential students know it is different than other programs. This is where the messaging begins. Examples from the programs profiled at the end of this guide include:

- WAGE Pathways Bridge Program
- Digital Bridge Academy
- College Gateway Program

Other messages that must be delivered through recruitment and marketing channels are:

- Clear statements of how the program will benefit the student and what the student will get as a result of completing it
- Curriculum elements outlined in a simple manner, with graphics, so the student can easily follow the sequence and logic of the coursework
- Specific descriptions of course schedules to let students know there is flexibility
- Availability of support services to help students with some of their most vexing issues, such as transportation and scheduling
- Examples of other students who have completed the same, or similar, programs and are now doing well in a job of their choosing

If it is appropriate, messages should be written in languages other than English to reinforce the point that the program is designed to meet people where they are.

Marketing strategies will ensure that information about the program is communicated broadly. This is primarily required if there is a shortage of qualified students identified during the recruitment process. It is important to design a marketing strategy that will reach the target audience for the program. Potential marketing strategies include:

- The development of brochures and/or flyers that can be mailed, posted in key locations, etc.
- Ads in local papers and on radio
- Feature stories in newspapers and on radio, highlighting the bridge program opportunities and individual success stories

Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

CHAPTER V

Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Developing a bridge program ideally is itself an evaluative process that seeks to identify the requirements of success for low-skilled adults at the next levels of education and employment, highlight gaps in existing education and employment programs that prevent low-skilled adults from advancing, and modify existing programs and services and add new ones to help bridge the gaps identified.

To evaluate a bridge program, it is essential to continue this process by staying abreast of the requirements for advancement to the next levels of education and employment, tracking how readily participants are in fact advancing, and using this information to modify the programs in ways that improve participants' outcomes.

The following steps will help evaluate and continuously improve the bridge program. The first set of steps involves collecting data needed to gauge the performance of students in a bridge program and track their outcomes when they leave. The second set, under "formative evaluation," outlines steps for evaluating how well the program is being implemented and how to improve program operations. The steps under "summative evaluation" describe how to tell whether the program is effective. The final, and in many ways the most important, steps involve using the findings from formative and summative evaluations to improve program operation and outcomes over time.

Data Collection for Tracking Student Program Performance and Outcomes

- Secure informed consent from every participant upon entry to participate in an evaluation of the program. Figure 15, p. 85, presents a sample informed consent form.*
- Collect data on the demographic characteristics of every participant upon enrollment in the program. The data elements listed in table 5, p. 86, are the minimum set necessary to conduct a summative evaluation of the project. Programs may want to collect other sorts of information on participants based on funding requirements and objectives.
- Collect data on the performance and immediate outcomes of every participant. Table 6, p. 87, lists a recommended set of data elements.

Formative Evaluation

- Interview participants, instructors, and staff around the midpoint and at the end of each initial program cycle to identify what is working with the program, what is not, and how it can be improved. Every effort should be made to interview participants who drop out to find out why they are leaving and what can be done to prevent attrition in the future.
- Regularly interview participants who have completed the bridge program, employers that have hired them, and faculty and support staff at the next level of education about the strengths and weaknesses of the program and ways it can be improved.
- Examine the performance of the program over time benchmarked against its own historical performance (or that of similar pre-existing programs) in terms of participant retention and completion rates, tested basic skills gains, job-placement rates and wage levels, and rates of advancement to higher levels of education and training.

*"Informed consent" is a process in which the risks, benefits, and requirements of a research study are explained to persons invited to take part in a study. Before entering the study (in this case, a program evaluation) a participant should sign an informed consent form, which should contain a description of the goals and methods of the study, the risks involved, and the steps that will be taken to protect participants' confidentiality. Participants can elect whether or not to take part in the study. If they opt out, information about them cannot be used.

Figure 15: Sample Informed Consent Form

PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EVALUATION OF THIS TRAINING PROGRAM

The training program you are in is provided by [NAME OF PROVIDER] with funding from [NAME OF FUNDER(S)]. Both [SHORT NAME OF PROVIDER] and the funding agency(ies) would like to see how effective this program is in helping you and other participants get better jobs and pursue further education and training.

We would like to have your permission to have access to information on your employment, wages, and participation in education and training for use in evaluating this training program. This information is available from state agencies such as the [UNEMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD]. All of the information we collect on you from these agencies will not be shared with anyone else, and no one will ever be able to connect this information with you personally.

You do not have to participate in this evaluation. If you choose not to participate, [NAME OF PROVIDER] cannot use information on you to evaluate the program.

Please read the following statement and then sign and date below if you agree to give [NAME OF PROVIDER] access to information needed to evaluate the program.

I hereby give [NAME OF PROVIDER] permission to use the information I have provided and information collected by state agencies on my employment and further education once I leave this training program. I understand that this information will be used to improve the quality of this program for future students, and that I will not benefit directly. All information about me and my job and education outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for evaluation purposes only. I understand that I do not have to give this information if I do not want to.

SIGNED:

____ ____________________

SIGNATURE DATE

____

PRINT FULL NAME

Table 5: Data Elements to Collect on Bridge Participants Upon Program Enrollment

MEASURE	DATA ELEMENTS
Personal Identifier	■ Social security number
Age	■ Date of birth
Gender	■ Male or female
Race/Ethnicity	■ White, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or other
Education	■ Earned high school diploma? (y/n) ■ Earned GED? (y/n) ■ Previously enrolled in job-training program? (y/n) - If yes, name of provider, program name, and date enrolled ■ Previously enrolled in at least one college-level class (y/n) - If yes, college name, program (or course) name, and date enrolled
Recent Work History	■ Currently employed? (y/n) - If yes, name of current employer, job title, and one-sentence job description - If yes, hourly wage - If yes, hours per week currently working - Receive health benefits from employer? (y/n) ■ Number of months employed in the past 12 months
Native Language	■ Native language is English? (y/n)
Disability	■ Disability that would require special support during the program (y/n) - If yes, nature of disability
Education and Career Goals	■ Main reason for enrolling in program ■ Main goal for employment in the next 12 months ■ Main goal for further education (beyond this program) in the next 12 months
Tested Basic Skills at Entry	■ Test reading and math levels

Table 6: Data Elements to Collect on Bridge Participant Performance and Initial Outcomes

MEASURE	DATA ELEMENTS
Personal Identifier	■ Social security number
Start Date	■ Date participant started in program
Retention	■ Participant successfully completed the program (y/n) - If no, reason for leaving the program
Tested Basic Skills at Completion	■ Test reading and math levels, using the same instrument used upon enrollment
Job Placement	■ Employed for at least 30 days within 12 months of program completion? (y/n) - If yes, new job held during the program? (y/n) - If yes, start date - If yes, name and address of employer - If yes, job title and one-sentence job description - If yes, hourly wage - If yes, hours worked per week - If yes, receive health benefits? (y/n)
GED Completion	■ Completed GED? (y/n/NA)
Certification(s)	■ Earned a certification recognized by employers and/or educational institutions? (y/n/NA) - If yes, name of certification and issuing agency
Further Education and Training	■ Enrolled in further education and training within 12 months of program completion? (y/n) - If yes, date enrolled - If yes, name of college or school - If yes, name of program and one-sentence description - If yes, participant's goal for the program

Summative Evaluation

- Document the main components of the program being evaluated, including program content, duration, and support services. It is important to accurately describe the eligibility criteria for program entry and the process by which participants are recruited and selected. Describe any major changes in program design made during the course of each cycle. Interview program faculty and staff to better understand the reasons for these changes. (This will make it possible to more accurately compare and contrast outcomes across programs and over time.)

- Analyze the full costs of the program to all partners, including costs for staff, materials and supplies, equipment, and administrative overhead. ("Bridge Program Costs and Funding," pp. 66–74, discusses costs in detail.)

- Track the further education participation outcomes of leavers (completers and non-completers) from each program level using data from partner institutions, the state, or, if data are not available from those sources, from the National Student Clearinghouse, which collects data on enrollment in undergraduate programs across the country.

- Collect data on employment and earnings of program leavers (completers and non-completers) for at least eight quarters prior to and eight quarters following program participation using unemployment insurance wage records.*

- Secure data on an appropriate comparison group with which to compare labor-market outcomes of program participants. Use a quasi-experimental design to compare the labor market (and, if possible, further education) outcomes of pairs of program participants and comparison group members matched statistically based on demographic characteristics (age, gender, race, education, and prior earnings).†

Continuous Improvement

- Bring together program staff, instructors, and partners to study the data from the formative and summative evaluation activities, discuss what is working and what is not, diagnose the causes of the barriers that prevent participants from succeeding and progressing to the next level, and decide on ways to modify the program to promote participant advancement.

- Track the effectiveness of program modifications in improving outcomes.

- Shift resources (people, money, facilities) to support program strategies that prove effective in supporting participant advancement.

- Start a network of other bridge programs to share lessons learned, best practices, resources and tools, approaches to team development, and so on.

***** By law, all employers with employees eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) are required to report to the state the quarterly earnings of every employee they employ in that state. States use this information to calculate unemployment insurance benefits. In most states, the employment security agency is responsible for issuing UI wage data. In most states, providers of education and training (or the state agencies that fund them) can gain access to UI wage data for purposes of evaluating and improving programs if they have the necessary consents from participants and sign a data-sharing agreement with the state agency that collects UI data.

† Hollenbeck and Huang (2003) used this method and data on Employment Service participants as a comparison group to assess the net impact of several workforce training programs in the Washington State workforce system.

Statewide Bridge Program Support

Statewide Bridge Program Support

This guide describes how to build a bridge program locally, from the ground up. In addition, state and local policy support of such programs can help individual programs succeed and go to scale. Policy support can take the form of focusing state agency resources on bridge program and career pathway development, funding pilot programs, offering technical assistance, developing evaluation standards, and developing state legislation, among others. This chapter describes statewide implementation efforts under way in four states: Washington, Kentucky, Ohio, and Arkansas.

In Washington State, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is supporting joint efforts by adult basic skills and occupational technical faculty and staff to build "integrated instruction" programs designed to prepare basic skills students to enter and succeed in occupational certificate and degree programs (see Integrated Instruction Guidelines excerpt on p. 31). The SBCTC is supporting pilots at ten of the system's 34 colleges with funding from the Federal Perkins and Adult Basic Education (WIA Title II) programs, and the state enrollment formula. (One of these pilot programs, the Child Development Associate Program at Tacoma Community College, is profiled on pp 100–101). The SBCTC staff is tracking both the educational and labor-market outcomes of students in the integrated instruction programs. The staff is also studying the full costs of such programs, which are initially more expensive than regular courses because they are jointly developed and co-taught by basic-skills and occupational faculty, in order to assess the cost-benefit of the integrated approach.

In launching this work, the SBCTC was motivated by a study conducted by the Washington State Training and Education Coordinating Board showing that, by itself, adult basic education has little net impact on students' wages in the short and long terms, and only a modest impact on rates of employment.[15] However, students who took basic skills courses concurrently with vocational training enjoyed a boost in both quarterly earnings and average rates of employment. A more recent study by the SBCTC showed that adult students who enter one of Washington State's community or technical colleges with at most a high school diploma need to take at least one year of college-level courses and earn at least an occupational certificate to achieve a significant earnings advantage over those with a high school education.[16]

The SBCTC has on several occasions convened staff and faculty in adult basic skills, workforce education (called occupational programs in Washington State), and student services from all colleges in its system to discuss how they can work together to support educational and career advancement by students, particularly those who come unprepared for college. The SBCTC has encouraged colleges to link these integration programs and the occupational programs to which they lead to the regional workforce and economic development activities of the state's "skills panels." These panels, comprised of representatives from industry, analyze labor-market demand and identify opportunities for career pathways within sectors experiencing high demand. Thus, the SBCTC is seeking to ensure that such integrated bridge instruction leads to careers in the state's regional labor markets.

The SBCTC is also trying to provide fiscal incentives to create stronger ties between adult basic skills and occupational programs. The SBCTC currently provides funding for integrated instruction under its "WorkFirst" welfare-to-work contracts. The "council" that represents lead staff and faculty from adult basic-skills programs from each college in the system is advocating to the SBCTC and the colleges' presidents that, in future requests for proposals for Perkins, high-demand job training, and other occupational programs, funding should be set aside for integrated instruction. (For more information, please contact Tina Bloomer, Director, Student Achievement Project, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, (360) 704-4325, tbloomer@sbctc.ctc.edu.)

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) is encouraging its colleges to develop bridge programs as part of a larger, system-wide effort to foster the creation of educational pathways to careers in fields of importance to the regions its districts serve. KCTCS has awarded funding to its 16 districts to build career pathways in selected industry sectors. (Madisonville Community College, profiled on pp. 108–109, is one of the districts receiving this funding.) Because KCTCS is emphasizing the potential of career pathways to help low-skilled adults and youth enter and succeed in postsecondary career education, all of the colleges are expected to integrate a remedial bridge component into their career pathways and to ensure that all students in pathways programs receive remediation as needed, whether it is through developmental education or adult basic education. KCTCS is encouraging colleges to involve degree program faculty from both occupational and liberal arts in the career pathway work as well as staff from adult basic skills, developmental education, and non-credit workforce development.

As part of the career pathway work, KCTCS is seeking to develop a feasible way to modularize curricula (and also fractionalize the credit offered) in both bridge and college-level instruction to allow the creation of programs that are responsive to the schedules of working students and the skills needs of employers. Like the staff of the Washington State Community and Technical College System, the KCTCS staff is putting in place a mechanism for evaluating the efficacy of career pathways to enable students to complete credentials, secure jobs in fields related to their training, and pursue further education. A key focus of this evaluation will be on the extent to which students in adult literacy programs are able to advance to and succeed in occupational certificate and degree programs. (For more information, please contact Shauna King-Simms, Director of Adult Education Partnerships and Transitions, Kentucky Community and Technical College System, (859) 256-3301, shauna.king-simms@kctcs.edu.)

In Ohio, the KnowledgeWorks Foundation is spearheading the development of career pathways as a strategy for addressing the fact that nearly a million working-age adults in the state can be classified as working poor. KnowledgeWorks is using its own funds, supplemented with grants from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Governor's Workforce Policy Board, to support the development of career pathway plans by colleges and other partners in 12 regions of the state and the actual implementation of pathways in six of them. (One participating program is the Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy, profiled on pp. 106–107.) In promoting the career pathways approach, KnowledgeWorks is seeking to cultivate clear connections among programs within the state community and technical colleges, as well as between these two-year colleges and the state's adult career-technical schools and adult basic literacy programs. The latter two serve individuals who tend to be from poorer families than the average community or technical college student. As it is, few students go on from the adult literacy or career-technical programs to college-level programs at the community and technical colleges.

KnowledgeWorks has organized a stakeholder group comprised of leaders from the various educational sectors, community groups, and employers to advocate for state policies supportive of career pathways. This approach of working both on the ground through the regional planning and implementation efforts and at the state policy level has succeeded in shaping the discussion at the local and state levels about how to promote educational and economic advancement, particularly for disadvantaged youth and adults. (For more information, please contact Brett Visger, Program Director, College and Career Access Program, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, (513) 929-1118, visgerb@kwfdn.org.)

In Arkansas, the Department of Higher Education (ADHE) has recently secured substantial funding from the state's welfare agency to strengthen welfare recipients' access to and success in postsecondary education. The ADHE is promoting the career pathway approach to its community and technical colleges as a promising strategy for helping welfare recipients enter and succeed in college and prepare for careers. Because the focus is on welfare recipients and other low-income individuals, many of whom are unprepared for college, building bridge programs will be a key emphasis of the Arkansas career pathway initiative. This initiative is looking to the bridge development work of Southeastern Arkansas College and the Southern Good Faith Fund, profiled on pp. 112–113. Following the lead of Kentucky and Ohio, the ADHE plans to use TANF funds to better connect existing programs through curriculum development and alignment, coordination of partners, and other capacity-building activities, rather than to create new special programs for TANF clients, which can stigmatize participants and are likely to disappear when the dedicated funding ends. The ADHE is also considering adopting Kentucky's Ready to Work program model in which counselors are assigned to ensure that TANF clients receive the wrap-around support services they need to complete their programs. (For more information, please contact Doug Miller, Director, Career Pathways, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, (501) 371-2035, dougm@adhe.arknet.edu.)

While differing in their particulars, these statewide efforts share the goal of creating better connections and transitions among educational programs and between those programs and the labor market. Each state is promoting the development of bridge programs to provide the critical first steps toward a career pathway for educationally disadvantaged adults. To ensure that these efforts are sustained, the agencies involved are seeking to integrate bridge programs into the mainstream of statewide education and workforce-development practice and to offer more dedicated support tied to established funding streams.