

Best Practices in Widening Participation in Higher Education

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In the following report, Hanover Research provides a brief overview of best practices in widening the participation of women re-entering the workforce, foster/homeless youths, and unemployed adults in higher education.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In this report, Hanover Research provides an overview of best practices in widening the participation of women re-entering the workforce, foster/homeless youths, and unemployed adults in higher education.

KEY FINDINGS

Our research yielded a number of key findings, summarized below:

- **Successful program design attracting unemployed women, low-income women, or single mothers to higher education** should include elements that reduce time needed to complete a degree, reduce uncertainty, and reduce economic barriers for success. Notable program services may also include orientation sessions, activities increasing program awareness, student service resources, forums designed to encourage dialogue, services focusing on wellness and self-care, tuition grants or scholarships, and work experience training.
- **Core elements of successful campus support programs for foster or homeless youths** should include programs providing year-round housing and other basic needs, financial aid, academic advising, career and personal counseling, supplemental support, opportunities for student community engagement and leadership, as well as plans for transition to college.
- **Four major actions that institutions can take to enhance adult learning and success in higher education include:**
 - 1) Develop pre-baccalaureate, career-related certificate programs that incorporate academic credit that can be counted toward a degree
 - 2) Provide part-time degree programs
 - 3) Create year-round, accelerated and convenient programming
 - 4) Facilitate degree mapping

Exemplary practices recommended by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, a national nonprofit that creates and manages effective learning strategies for working adults, are also outlined in the report for eight broad categories: Outreach, Life and Career Planning, Financing, Assessment of Learning Outcomes, Teaching-Learning Process, Student Support Services, Technology, and Strategic Partnerships.

BEST PRACTICES IN WIDENING PARTICIPATION

In this section of the report, we examine promising practices in promoting the access and success of three student groups of interest: women re-entering the workforce, foster/homeless youths, and unemployed adults in higher education. Information presented below is drawn from various research studies of college and university programs targeting these disadvantaged populations. Common program elements identified by these studies include outreach activities, financial aid support, student support services, job skills training, career counseling services, and housing/basic needs support.

WOMEN RE-ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION/THE WORKFORCE

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

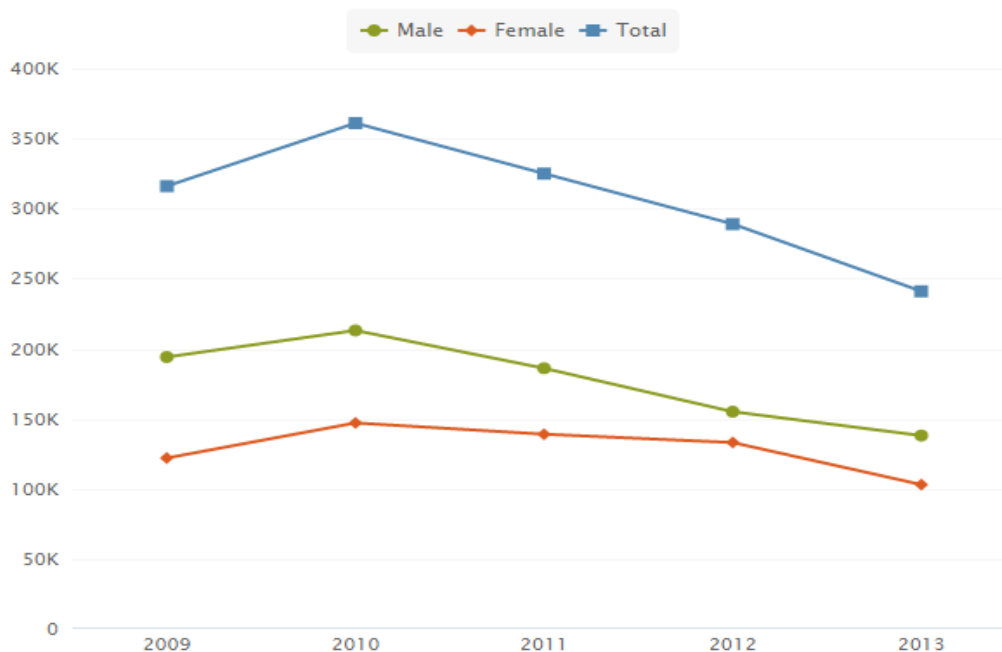
According to a recent report by the Women's Economic Security Campaign, unemployment rates for women who head households are significantly higher than other households. While widespread perception views men as the primary victims of the economic downturn, women are facing increased barriers to education, training, and job access. The report further describes the following trends to support its claim:¹

- In March 2010, the unemployment rate for women who maintained families was 11.3 percent – the highest rate in the past 25 years; by comparison, the unemployment rate for all women was 8.6 percent;
- Women of color have been especially hard hit – in March 2010, the unemployment rate for white women was 7.3 percent, compared with 12 percent for Hispanic women and 12.4 percent for African American women; and
- Women hold more poverty-level wage jobs – In 2008, for example, 69 percent of all workers ages 25 and older with earnings at or below the minimum wage were women.

In Washington, the unemployment data from 2009 to 2013 demonstrate a narrowing gap between women and men, with the unemployment rates for both genders being almost the same (8.4 percent for men and 8.2 percent for women) in 2012. Since then, the difference between the unemployment rates for women and men has been below 1 percent.²

¹ "Aiming Higher: Removing Barriers to Education, Training, and Jobs for Low-Income Women." Women's Economic Security Campaign. 2010. <http://community.thewomensfoundation.org/Document.Doc?id=170>

² "Unemployment by Gender, State Level." Kids Count Data Center. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/4698-unemployment-by-gender-state-level?loc=49#detailed/2/any/false/36,868,867,133,38/14,15,112/10995,10996>

Figure 1.1: Washington Unemployment Numbers by Gender (2009-2013)

Source: Kids Count Data Center

While many college students face difficult barriers to graduation, low-income, single parents typically face more barriers than traditional students. In particular, single mothers face many challenges correlated with decreased rates of college graduation. By definition, single mothers are independent students with dependents, and are more likely to be low-income. In addition, they are more likely to be older than 18-22 and more likely to be the first in their immediate families to attend college. As a result, they often lack information and knowledge about higher education in areas including what skills colleges expect a student to have upon entry, the existence of and application processes for various forms of financial aid, and course scheduling and meeting degree requirements.³

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

Women Employed, an organization that is fighting to ensure that all women can achieve their aspirations and support themselves and their families, provides thorough recommendations to improve women's access and success in higher education, as shown in Figure 1.2 below.⁴

³ "Low-Income Single Mothers at Community College: Recommendations for Practices to Improve Completion." Women Employed. 2012.

<http://womenemployed.org/sites/default/files/resources/LowIncomeSingleMothersatCommunityCollege2012.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

Figure 1.2 Programs and Services to Improve Women's Access and Success in Higher Education

SUPPORT AREA	RECOMMENDATIONS
Reduce Time to Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For lower-skilled students, offer options for acceleration, such as integrating career-related learning into basic skills courses and accelerate developmental (or remedial) courses; Reevaluate credit requirements and institute credential audits; Provide holistic academic and non-academic student services: colleges can build on existing TRIO SSS programs or partner with local nonprofits to expand services; Provide services at times and places accessible to parenting or low-income students.
Reduce Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require first-year seminars, including orientation, for credit; Increase guidance and intrusive advising; Create highly structured course plans and predictable hours to help students complete more quickly; Offer learning communities and cohorts for women students in need.
Reduce Economic Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide on-campus childcare, prioritizing spots for students' children; Provide grants to struggling women students, including emergency grants; Offer housing or housing assistance for students.

Source: Women Employed

Another study published by College Quarterly in Spring 2013 recognizes that female re-entry students concurrently struggle with family, work, and sometimes health issues. The aim of the study was to identify and understand how female re-entry students learned to negotiate support strategies and resources that they could utilize to offset potential stressors in their daily lives and facilitate program completion. Based on the research findings, the study offered the following recommendations for College Service Professionals, some of which overlap with suggestions from Women Employed:⁵

- Offer **orientation programs** targeted specifically to non-traditional students – offer the programs prior to and at the initial registration stages with an emphasis on informing students on the program's expectations and requirements;
- Create greater awareness** amongst college faculty and staff by offering or mandating professional learning opportunities to learn and/or address the specific needs and supports of non-traditional students;
- Reach out to women re-entry students** to survey their needs and support – this would be done annually to keep support current and reach new students;
- Post resources on a student services webpage** offering contact information and links to outside support networks designed for non-traditional students;

⁵ Josephine Oriana Filippini-Berardinelli. "Exploring Efficacy in Negotiating Support: Women Re-Entry Students in Higher Education." College Quarterly. Spring 2013. <http://www.collegequarterly.ca/2013-vol16-num02-spring/berardinelli.html>

- **Structure any forum designed to encourage dialogue** on negotiating support for women re-entry students in a way that will allow flexibility, attention to spousal or day care issues, parking costs, and any other issues that could impede participation;
- **Encourage college services to focus on wellness and self-care;** and
- **Re-assess the possibility of expanding tuition grants or scholarships** for women re-entry students.

Moreover, additional strategies and services may be applied to ensure that women re-entry students receive the appropriate supports and opportunities to gain meaningful employment:⁶

- **Helping Low-Income Women Connect to Programs and Services.** Families need support to access and succeed in education and employment. These supports, including childcare, transportation, housing and health services, are even more critical for single or low-income mothers struggling to balance work, training or education, and family responsibilities. Example practices include ***Focused Case Management, Connecting to Job Benefits, Navigating TANF rules, and Prioritizing Community College Services.***
- **Helping Low-Income Women Gain Work Experience.** Limited previous work experience and opportunities for on-the-job training pose a major barrier to low-income women hoping to improve their future employment options. Successful practices in this area include ***Hands-on Job Training, Developing Career Pathways, and Exposing Women to Different Job Options.***
- **Increasing Opportunity by Focusing on Employer Needs.** In order to increase economic security, training and education should be tied to real, local employment opportunities. This underscores the need for industry and job-specific training programs, while also pointing to the importance of creating more jobs with family sustaining wages. Sample practices in this field include ***Cultivating Employer Connections and Creating Jobs in Low-Income Communities.***

FOSTER YOUTHS AND HOMELESS YOUTHS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

According to the National Council on Disability (NCD)'s estimates, youth with disabilities are between 1.5 and 3.5 times more likely to have experienced abuse or neglect than youth without disabilities. In addition, children born with disabilities more frequently become part of state child-welfare systems.⁷ In school, foster youths are more likely than non-foster children to perform below grade level, score lower on statewide achievement tests, repeat

⁶ "Aiming Higher: Removing Barriers to Education, Training, and Jobs for Low-Income Women." Op. cit.

⁷ "Youth with Disabilities in the Foster Care System: Barriers to Success and Proposed Policy Solutions." The National Council on Disability. <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2008/02262008#Chapter3>

one or more grades, have high rates of absenteeism and tardiness, and drop out of school. Like many youth with disabilities, youth transitioning out of foster care tend to have very poor postsecondary education, training enrollment, and completion outcomes. They are less likely to take college preparatory courses; have access to special programs, advanced placement courses, and extracurricular activities; and pursue postsecondary education.⁸

While 70 percent of youth in foster care have reported a strong desire to go to college,⁹ a lower rate of retention among former foster youths contributes to a lower college graduation rate.¹⁰ Therefore, the provision of comprehensive, individualized school services in nonrestrictive environments that address challenges and barriers are essential to ensure the educational success of youth in the foster care system, especially those with disabilities.¹¹

Currently, challenges facing foster and homeless youths may include the following:¹²

- The child welfare system has traditionally done a poor job of encouraging foster youths to pursue postsecondary education; many foster youths are not given opportunities to explore their options or are not provided with information about applying to schools;
- Even if they have a high school diploma, foster youths may not be prepared for the academic demands of college, possibly due to frequent school changes disrupting their education;
- Unlike many of their peers, most foster youths cannot depend on their parents or other family members to help them pay for college;
- Foster youths are often unaware of the financial aid for which they are eligible;
- Foster youths are much more likely to exhibit emotional and behavioral problems than their non-foster peers; and
- Student services personnel at most postsecondary institutions are not familiar with or prepared to address the unique needs of this population.

In the State of Washington, according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, there were 1,412 foster care (0.1 percent) and 27,390 homeless (2.6 percent) students in the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, a large number of students (473,270) in the state's education system received free or reduced-priced meals.¹³

⁸ Thomas Lovitt and John Emerson. "Foster Youth Who Have Succeeded in Higher Education: Common Themes." April 2008. <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=4195>

⁹ "Foster Youth Who Have Succeeded in Higher Education: Common Themes." Op. cit.

¹⁰ Amy Dworsky and Alfred Perez. "Helping Former Foster Youth Graduate from College." Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. 2009. <http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Guardian%20Scholars%202009.pdf>

¹¹ "Youth with Disabilities in the Foster Care System: Barriers to Success and Proposed Policy Solutions." Op. cit.

¹² "Helping Former Foster Youth Graduate from College." Op. cit.

¹³ "Education Facts." The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. March, 2013. <http://www.k12.wa.us/Communications/HotTopics/HotTopic-EducationFacts.pdf>

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

In 2008, Casey Family Programs published a report titled *Supporting Success: Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care—A Framework for Program Enhancement*. This comprehensive resource manual was developed to provide the higher-education community with a practical guide for improving the effectiveness of support services to students coming from foster care. The term “campus support program” is used to describe a set of services provided to former foster youths designed to increase their access to higher education and promote academic success. The report identified the following services as core elements for successful campus support programs:¹⁴

- **Year-round Housing and Other Basic Needs:** Provide for 12 months of housing and other basic needs, such as meals, transportation and health insurance;
- **Financial Aid:** Ensure a comprehensive financial aid package;
- **Academic Advising, Career Counseling, and Supplemental Support:** Provide a well-informed and consistent academic advisor;
- **Personal Guidance, Counseling, and Supplemental Support:** Provide ongoing guidance, professional counseling, and supplemental supports necessary to student success in college;
- **Opportunities for Student Community Engagement and Leadership:** Provide opportunities for students to engage in college life, including developing a sense of community, and leadership and advocacy skills; and
- **Planned Transition to College, Between Colleges and to Employment:** Help youth plan their transition to college, between colleges and to employment.

On many campuses, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) or Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) play a central role in the coordination of services outlined above for foster youths. On other campuses, resources are based in the financial aid office. In addition, some campus support programs have separate program staff members who serve as liaisons with campus resources. Each approach has developed in response to the unique needs and resources available on different campuses.¹⁵

In addition, another study by the University of Chicago examined the effect of 10 campus support programs in California and Washington State by conducting telephone interviews with program directors and a web-based survey of current program participants. These programs’ efforts to address major challenges are described below.¹⁶

- In response to the concern about foster youths not being given or not having **access to information about postsecondary educational options, college admissions requirements, financial aid, or campus support programs**, some program directors

¹⁴ “Annual Report: Campus Support Programs for Former Foster Youth in California.” California College Pathways. 2007-2008. <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/8-ca-college-pathways-annual-rpt-07-08.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Helping Former Foster Youth Graduate from College.” Op. cit.

planned to provide foster youths information about several different campus support programs and encourage them to apply to more than one school.

- Nearly all of the campus support programs examined devote a considerable amount of time and other resources to **recruitment and outreach activities**. They send representatives to college fairs and other events attended by high school students; organize campus visits, tours, and information sessions; meet with individual students; and give potential applicants a chance to talk with current program participants.
- Efforts to **increase awareness of campus support programs** include conference presentations to professionals who work with foster youths, outreach to school counselors and designated foster youths liaisons at community colleges, mass mailings to foster youths and their caregivers, and working closely with independent living programs, local public child welfare agencies, and community organizations that serve this population.
- As many foster youths are not academically prepared for the demands of college-level, work, **remedial course taking** was especially common for the community college-based programs.
- In addition to providing academic support services, some program directors **continue to work with students who have dropped out** because they can be readmitted as long as they were in good academic standing when they left school. They will also refer students who are no longer eligible for the program to community resources.
- Because mental health problems or personal crises can adversely affect academic progress, campus support programs often make referrals to **student counseling services**. Moreover, because former foster youths may have a greater need for mental health services than typical undergraduates do, several campus support programs have negotiated a doubling of the number of sessions for which foster care students are eligible each year or have arranged to lift the cap altogether.
- Most of the programs examined provide **year-round housing**. This is critical for former foster youth who may have nowhere to go when school is not in session.

Lastly, a 2006 report from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators that focused specifically on undergraduates from foster care offered the following recommendations for postsecondary institutions. A series of systematic changes need to occur at institutions of higher education to ensure the needs of undergraduates from foster

care are being recognized and fulfilled before and after they are admitted. These changes are:¹⁷

- Encourage admissions offices to consider using non-cognitive variables (such as the students' life experiences and other non-quantitative factors that might demonstrate the students' ability to succeed in college) to assess undergraduate admissions applications;
- Extend a special invitation to foster care alumni to participate in summer bridge programs (which support the college adjustment process for first generation students, low-income students, and students of color) to help them transition to the campus environment;
- Ensure financial aid administrators use student financial aid information to identify incoming students from foster care;
- Require institutional researchers to track college access and success rates of students formerly in foster care;
- Establish a holistic "scholars" program that aims to recruit and retain undergraduates from foster care by providing academic and social support services that are unique to their needs;
- Provide complimentary health services to treat the number of mental and physical health issues before foster care alumni begin their first academic semester;
- Encourage financial aid offices to promote work study opportunities to undergraduates from foster care; and
- Ensure housing departments inquire about the housing needs of foster care alumni over breaks when school is not in session and make accommodations available if necessary.

THE UNEMPLOYED/ TAA-ELIGIBLE ADULT WORKERS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

By 2018, 63 percent of all jobs will require some postsecondary education; however, less than half the workforce holds an associate degree or higher level of education, creating a gap that calls for an additional 3 million credentialed workers. This gap cannot be closed by increasing the stream of high school graduates alone. The largest available population able to benefit from postsecondary education in the existing workforce is adults seeking to enter or re-enter the workplace. Reaching the projected 3 million additional credentialed workers requires broadened access for working adults through flexible, accelerated delivery models and new services tailored to adult learners that support their persistence to goal attainment.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ryan J. Davis. "College Access, Financial Aid, and College Success for Undergraduates from Foster Care." National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. July 2006. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543361.pdf>

¹⁸ Patricia A. Brown. "Degree Attainment for Adult Learners." The American Council on Education. <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Degree-Attainment-for-Adult-Learners--Brown.pdf>

However, one of the major challenges is that substantial portions of these students are at great risk of failing to complete courses and degrees. They typically struggle to balance work and family commitments, and often lack resources and generally must adapt to a system designed to serve younger, full-time students. Whether enrolled in community colleges or four-year institutions, adult students often follow nontraditional pathways, such as continuing-education and extension programs, contract education arrangements and programs offered online, at satellite campuses, or at for-profit colleges.¹⁹

A 2011 report by the National Governors Association (NGA) that examines adult learners' success points to the following major challenges many adult learners face:²⁰

- **Lack of Student Supports:** Many adults enter higher education without the basic skills necessary to succeed. However, remedial courses do not count toward an associate or a bachelor's degree, thus adults who must successfully complete these courses before taking credit-bearing courses incur additional costs to obtain a degree. The lack of support services, such as childcare, academic tutoring, transportation assistance, and career and personal counseling, can also prevent adult success in higher education.
- **Lack of Flexible Learning Environments:** Working adults can also be discouraged from seeking postsecondary degrees by the lack of asynchronous learning opportunities (e.g., online learning) that enable students to complete classes on their own schedules. In addition, the absence of credit transfer agreements across institutions and the shortage of modular or bridge programs that link remedial and credit bearing courses can create serious barriers to success for working learners.
- **Lack of Financial Resources:** The lack of financial assistance, both academic (e.g., tuition assistance) and nonacademic (e.g., Childcare) for working adults, particularly those attending postsecondary institutions on a part-time or episodic basis, can pose a significant barrier to degree or certificate attainment.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

To determine the characteristics of academic programs at four-year institutions that most influence adult learner success, a 2007 study published by the Lumina Foundation for Education conducted a series of 80 interviews at 20 four-year institutions and collected nearly 500 institutional and more than 900 student surveys. The findings point to the four major actions that institutions can take to enhance adult learning and success: 1) develop pre-baccalaureate, career-related certificate programs that incorporate academic credit

¹⁹ Brian Pusser, David W. Breneman, Bruce M. Gansneder, Kay J. Kohl, John S. Levin, John H. Milam and Sarah E. Turner. "Returning to Learning: Adults' Success in College is Key to America's Future." The Lumina Foundation for Education. March 2007. <http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/ReturntolearningApril2007.pdf>

²⁰ Linda Hoffman. "Complete to Compete: Improving Postsecondary Attainment Among Adults." The National Governors Association. 2010-2011. <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1102POSTSECONDARYATTAINMENT.PDF>

that can be counted toward a degree; 2) provide part-time degree programs; 3) create year-round, accelerated and convenient programming; and 4) facilitate degree mapping. In addition, the following factors are also identified as critical for adult learners' success:²¹

- Because many adults attend community college before enrolling at a four-year institution, **successful transfer** from two-year to four-year institutions is crucial;
- To accommodate the intermittent enrollment patterns of many adult learners, **financial support for less-than-half-time and intermittent enrollment** must be available;
- Courses should be made available to fit the daily routines of adult learners, and **evening, weekend, as well as hybrid courses** that combine face-to-face and online segments should be offered, along with accelerated courses; and
- **Degree mapping** for adult students that outlines the courses specific to each program of study and be linked to clear and reliable estimates of the time required to earn a degree is crucial.

Moreover, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), a national nonprofit that creates and manages effective learning strategies for working adults, summarizes effective strategies for serving adult learners into eight broad categories: Outreach, Life & Career Planning, Financing, Assessment of Learning Outcomes, Teaching-Learning Process, Student Support Services, Technology, and Strategic Partnerships. The definition and exemplary practices of each category are outlined in Figure 1.3 below.²²

Figure 1.3 Principles of Effectiveness of Serving Adult Learners

PRINCIPLE	DEFINITION	EXEMPLARY PRACTICE
Outreach	The institution conducts its outreach to adult learners by overcoming barriers of time, place, and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses a variety of special methods and venues to recruit adult learners, e.g., on-campus and off-campus information sessions, ad campaigns, on-line information, etc.; ▪ Addresses the personal needs and concerns of adults who are unaccustomed to viewing themselves in the role of a student; ▪ Helps adults to identify and overcome barriers that keep them from returning to learning; ▪ Assists adult learners in making an informed decision about how well the college matches their interests and goals; ▪ Employs faculty who do not limit themselves to the traditional role of lecturer in the classroom, and may perform in blended roles that include administrative duties, advising, teaching, and facilitating;
Life & Career Planning	The institution addresses adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engages the adult learner in a thorough process of education and career planning to determine their level of educational development upon entry, their educational and career goals, and a plan for reaching these goals as efficiently as possible; ▪ Uses education and career planning as a method of establishing

²¹ "Returning to Learning: Adults' Success in College is Key to America's Future." Op. cit.

²² Dr. Brian Noland, Chancellor. "Adult Learner Success Strategies." West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. 2011. <https://www.wvhepc.org/downloads/overview.pdf>

PRINCIPLE	DEFINITION	EXEMPLARY PRACTICE
	capacities to help learners reach their goals.	<p>long-term relationships with adult learners and encouraging them to take greater responsibility for their own learning;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages adults as active partners in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of their learning; Helps adult learners use assessment as the foundation for making educational decisions; Promotes opportunities to gain credit through Prior Learning Assessment; Creates pathways for adult learners to gain credit for learning from a variety of sources so that college-level learning acquired prior to enrollment can be accepted towards institutional credentials and degrees;
Financing	The institution promotes choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informs adult learners about convenient payment options available to them; Assists adult learners through deferred payment options when tuition reimbursement programs do not make funds available until course completion; Makes financial aid and scholarships available to part-time students; Assesses charges to learners incrementally during the course of a program and establishes equitable refund policies; Helps learners develop strategies for locating external funding to assist with education costs.
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	The institution defines and assesses the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experience in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designs educational experiences with learning outcomes in mind; Finds ways to integrate the perspectives of a range of stakeholders, such as businesses and the community, in defining learning outcomes; Embraces a variety of assessment techniques for measuring learning outcomes and assigning credit for prior learning; Documents what learners know and what they can do as a result of their educational experience; Uses learning outcomes to establish a foundation for those who wish to pursue subsequent degrees; Promotes the opportunity to gain credit through organizations' instructional programs to adult learners; Initiates a dialogue with community-based organizations to learn what knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed by organizations and the community, and then develops learning outcomes based on these needs; Regularly re-evaluates external instructional programs to ensure their relevance and rigor in relations to the institution's offerings; Creates pathways for adult learners to gain credit for learning from a variety of sources so that college-level learning acquired prior to enrollment can be accepted towards institutional credentials and degrees; Promotes opportunities to gain credit through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA);

PRINCIPLE	DEFINITION	EXEMPLARY PRACTICE
Teaching-Learning Process	The institution's faculty uses multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employs a teaching-learning process that includes a high degree of interaction among learners and between learners and faculty; ▪ Considers adult learners to be co-creators of knowledge (learning experiences and projects are often designed in cooperation with learners and directly relate to the adult learners' work and professional world); ▪ Offers multiple methods of instructional delivery to enhance convenient access to education and to provide choices about preferred learning modes; ▪ Uses assessment as an integral part of the learning process and in ways that enhance competency and self-confidence; ▪ Encourages faculty to build upon the knowledge, interests and life-situations that adults bring to their education to develop learning experiences; ▪ Supports faculty members' work with adult learners, staff, adjunct faculty, and local community resources in developing collaborative learning experiences;
Student Support Systems	The institution assists adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students' capacities to become self-directed, lifelong learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support systems are activated by an adult learner's initial inquiry; ▪ Academic support systems provide or work collaboratively with other organizations to assist adults who wish to become college-ready; ▪ Flexible time frames for enrollment, registration, and program participation are part of the academic and administrative structure; ▪ Faculty and staff provide individual attention to adult learners in order to inform them of the institution's programs and services designed to provide them with academic and personal support; ▪ Support services address the life circumstances of the adult (e.g., childcare, support networks, adult-centered orientation and advising); ▪ Faculty members are encouraged to participate in professional development activities related to adult learning theory and application; ▪ Staff and faculty work with employers and /or unions to develop mentoring and advising programs;
Technology	The institution uses information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses technology to build community among adult learners living in remote geographical areas; ▪ Uses information technology to provide flexible and timely education and administrative services (e.g., web registration systems, call centers); ▪ Uses technology to empower adult learners to better manage their learning process and to expand the choices available for learning modes (e.g., partial and full Internet-based courses, technology-rich on-campus instruction); ▪ Employs technology in the learning experience in ways that mirror the technology-rich environment in which many adults work;

PRINCIPLE	DEFINITION	EXEMPLARY PRACTICE
Strategic Partnerships	The institution engages in strategic relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeks relationships with organizations as a way to reach adult learners through organizationally-mediated programs; ▪ Helps establish learning goals that include the organization's future job opportunities and skill needs; ▪ Works with employers and /or unions to develop mentoring and advising programs; ▪ Helps organizations develop ways to encourage employees/members to pursue their education; ▪ Provides support for adult learners at times and places that are congruent with work schedules such as establishing education extension centers at or near work locations; ▪ Encourages employers to make telephones, computers, Internet access and video conferencing available for employees to engage in education related activities during hours when technology is not used for business-related activities; ▪ Develops options for using learning technology at work sites and on desktop computers; ▪ Works with organizations to establish ways to measure the impact of education programs on organizations' goals.

Source: West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

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