



Integrating Success Coaches / TAA Navigators into TAACCCT Projects

Case Study Report

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community
College and Career Training Grants

The Transformation Agenda

Quinsigamond Community
College (Consortium)

Massachusetts Community College and Workforce Development
Transformation Agenda (MACCWDTA)

Worcester, Massachusetts

June 2014

Integrating Success Coaches/ TAA Navigators into TAACCCT Projects

Case Study Report

Program Overview:

By establishing formal working relationships between Massachusetts's community colleges, workforce development system, and local communities, the project is designed to build statewide capacity to deliver high-quality education and training programs that lead to "stackable" credentials and employment in six key industry sectors.

The strategy is to engage public agencies, leading industry groups, and leaders of government and private businesses to transform education and training targeted for middle skill jobs. Building on the best practices of the *Breaking Through* initiative, MACCWDTA will undertake such activities as: contextualizing curriculum; enhancing student services through a networked case management modality; aligning adult basic education (ABE), developmental education and related assessments; bridging from ABE to non-credit to credit; instituting flexible scheduling; developing articulation processes for granting credit for prior experience; enhancing and expanding employer partnerships, career mapping, and entrepreneurship training); addressing consistency in providing academic credit; and remediating learning deficits.

Consortium Members:

Berkshire Community College; Bristol Community College; Bunker Hill Community College; Cape Cod Community College; Greenfield Community College; Holyoke Community College; Massachusetts Bay Community College; Massaoit Community College; Middlesex Community College; Mt. Wachusett Community College; North Shore Community College; Northern Essex Community College; Roxbury Community College; and Springfield Technical Community College

Key Partners:

Partners HealthCare; Baystate Health; Massachusetts Community Health Care Centers Association; University of Massachusetts Memorial Hospital; Massachusetts Biomed Foundation; Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives; Fast Cap; Conservation Services Group; Massachusetts Hospital Association; Absolute Green Energy; and METSO Automation North America, Massachusetts Department of Labor & Workforce Development; Massachusetts Workforce Investment Boards and One Stop Career Centers;

THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS:

Type of Grant: Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants

Industry Focus: Life Sciences and Biotechnology; Information Technology; Health Care; Clean Energy; Advanced Manufacturing; Financial Services

Period of Performance: 10/1/2011-09/30/2015

Grant Amount Awarded: \$20,000,000

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education; Commonwealth Corporation; Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship; and AFL-CIO

Identifying and Overcoming Challenges

Initial Challenge: Communication

Massachusetts has decentralized systems for all public agencies. Community Colleges, One Stop Career Centers and Workforce Investment Boards all have local boards of directors or trustees but did not have a consistent and established vehicle of communication.



Overcoming the Challenge: Create a Shared Vision

The first challenge was to build trust and create a shared vision between all parties and the state agencies that oversee them. The goal was to establish a mutual understanding of success and the roles and responsibilities of each party. The Transformation Agenda team worked to establish a process of open and honest communication between all project stakeholders. They established a six month window where self-interested parties and those with a vested interest could come together to share ideas and have discussions about different facets of the Transformation Agenda. Outside facilitators and experts were brought in to moderate the discussion of challenge barriers and guide the group towards a collective decision as to the direction of the project.

Initial Challenge: Overcoming Barriers

Internally, community colleges needed to overcome barriers to student enrollment in their programs. One Stop Career Centers were not equipped to counsel students on the available college programs.

Overcoming the Challenge: Hire a College and Career Navigator

A team, made up of forty individuals from the One Stop Career Centers and the community colleges who worked on the front line with students, created a College and Career Navigator position intended to remove the barriers to enrollment. This community college employee is housed with the One Stop Career Centers and serves as the bridge between the community college and the career center. The College and Career Navigator helps the perspective students become familiar with the community college; what programs are offered, when the programs are starting, which high demand programs are available, as well as distributing other key materials. Not only does the College and Career Navigator help enroll the student in courses, but he/she also serves as a bridge back to the career center for help with career

placement.

Initial Challenge: Enrollment

Traditional enrollment processes may be challenging for underemployed or unemployed individuals.

Overcoming the Challenge: Revamp the Curriculum

The Transformation Agenda team removed enrollment barriers at several community colleges to provide off-cycle, accelerated, and stackable programming to accelerate a traditional two-year associate degree into a one-year degree. In this capacity, the Career and College Navigator provides an additional resource to educate prospective students on the options available to them to determine an adequate degree track or certificate program.

Activity Analysis: How activities can impact the outcomes and deliverables of your grant program.

Activity: Teamwork

Working as a team, the One Stop Career Centers at the various campuses, the Workforce Investment Board and the consortium developed the best programming for students to get into high demand careers. Having the right institutional state partners at the table to discuss a three to five year plan for the grant program has ensured that the correct resources are in place for continued success.

Activity: Counseling

New program choices mean that Career and College Navigators are able to meet with and enroll students in eight week modules. This removes barriers while simultaneously expediting the hiring process. Previously, community colleges rarely offered programming choices. Before assigning the position of Career and College Navigator, Institutions struggled with the capacity internally, both with the student record systems to integrate scheduling, and the student record systems to process financial aid.

Activity: Program choices

Leveraging the capacity building resources of the TAACCCT funds enables local partnerships with community colleges to sustain programs going forward. One hundred and fifty-one degree or certificate programs have been developed or redesigned to accelerate traditional degree programs in six different industry sectors at all fifteen partner colleges.

Due to interventions and local efforts between college and career navigators, significant successes have been measured which has led to a sustainability effort. The increase in student enrollment and the positive results of partnerships across the state have made a significant impact in the goals of college

● ● ●
17 Navigators in over
15 colleges have
worked with over 2,400
college students.

● ● ●

institutions and One Stop Career Centers. They are seeking to invest in the sustainable efforts of the Transformation Agenda project to provide them with the greatest benefits in the long run.

Key Lessons Learned:

- ☑ Planning before programming: plan for program capacity and not only for building sufficient programming methods to meet short term goals.
- ☑ Collaboration with the right parties at the state, institutional and local levels is essential to ensure project success.
- ☑ Working with local agencies to bridge the gap between student enrollment and job placement increases the student completion rate.

Outright communication of the goals of the project to the Department of Labor and the state leadership is important to properly set expectations. There was a sense of urgency amongst the community to deliver programming, but nine to twelve months was needed to lay the groundwork and develop programming that would meet the large demand of target goals and deliverables. It was essential to have project management convey the message that they were building a long term strategy to build capacity and have professional development completed before programs were rolled out. The strategy is exceeding expectations with not only the notable programming offered, but the intensity and numbers of programs running across the state as higher than expected.

Strategies for Sustainability:

Strategy 1: Improve Career and Placement Coordination

Working closely with the College and Career Navigators, the Transformation Agenda plans to improve program graduate career placement in the workforce. Programs are being sustained because of the number of students enrolling and their placement in high demand jobs across the state. Thus far, results show that job placement for graduates of the Transformation Agenda program have been higher than typical with eighty percent of students who completed programs being placed into high demand jobs.

80% of students have completed programs or are being retained

Strategy 2: Change Federal Financial Aid Policy

Federal Financial Aid does not currently line up with the initiative for off-cycle and off-semester college courses. Massachusetts is working with other states to alter this policy on a national level. The Department of Labor is supplying grant money to develop stackable programming for high demand industries, but Federal Financial Aid does not align with accelerated programming. This will hinder

enrollment for many students and decreases the incentive for colleges to change their internal systems to adopt the new accelerated programs, unless there is a change in Financial Aid policy.

Strategy 3: Invest in Technology

To make sustainable, systematic changes, Massachusetts is working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to test concepts of data sets on how to integrate disparate data to make it easier for all parties to access student records.

Community colleges, state agencies and One Stop Career Centers all have different records for the same student, but they are unable to share information across different sectors. Leveraging state investments with external investments to create the necessary technological infrastructure to a more integrated data sharing system amongst the organizations will increase the sustainability of the Transformation Agenda project. Standardization of applications such as Help Wanted Online and ACT (under development) will also assist in these efforts.

Keys to Replication:

Engaging the right institutional, state and local partners to develop a process that is built on open and honest team communications to set expectations and plan for the future is essential. Forging relationships, engaging and building team processes and sharing successes have all played an instrumental role in addressing local barriers and paving the way for success. The Transformation Agenda's leadership and persistence to stay focused on mutual goals was a key factor.

The position of the College and Career Navigator was also essential to the ongoing success of the program. Local teams at Community Colleges, One Stop Career Centers and Workforce Investment Boards have shown the value of this position which has led to increases in enrollment, completion and retention rates at the Transformation Agenda consortium colleges. This position is making a difference in the relationship established with the student and schools are finding ways to make sure their navigators are maintained.

Dale Allen, PD

QCC Vice President
Community Engagement

670 West Boylston Street,
Worcester, MA 01606

508-854-2733

dallen@qcc.mass.edu

DOL ETA TAACCCT

taa.ccct@dol.gov / www.doleta.gov/taaccct/