

On-Ramps and Bridges: Building Community Pipelines to Community College Certificate and Degree Attainment

Recommendations from the Community College and
Community-Based Organization (CBO) Peer Learning Group

February 2009



Convened by Seattle Jobs Initiative

Support provided by the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development



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OVERVIEW

Ensuring low-income residents have the skills to be competitive for family wage jobs is the focus of a new initiative called the King County Funders Collaborative (the Collaborative). Last year, this group of ten private and public funders challenged themselves and their peers to rethink how education and training is delivered to low-wage workers. They agreed to *pool* and *align* their resources in order to dramatically increase the number of low-income residents who obtain postsecondary certificates and degrees. Presently, 75,000 King County residents are living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and lack a postsecondary credential or degree. Less than .5% of these individuals earn a credential each year. The Collaborative is taking action to address these alarming statistics.

The Collaborative seeks to bring together the key players -- employers, colleges and community agencies -- to create a system in which low-income adults can simultaneously work full-time and study full-time as well as access necessary supports so that they are able to earn credentials and degrees within a reasonable timeframe. The centerpiece of the Collaborative's strategy is the establishment of the College for Working Adults (CWA), a new delivery model that compresses and modularizes certificate and degree programs. The goal is to offer the CWA at all eleven King County community colleges. The first pilots will begin at five campuses starting in fall quarter 2009.

Investors in the Collaborative believe the CWA offers tremendous promise for low-income residents to earn credentials that have value in the marketplace. And, they recognize the CWA will serve the most college-ready individuals. Low-income residents who want to advance their education but are unprepared to enroll in college level courses will need additional assistance to be prepared for the CWA or other college level programs. The Collaborative has made this preparatory work a critical component of its overall investment strategy. Its goal is to build a pipeline that will prepare the large numbers of low-income residents who are not college-ready for entry into the CWA.

The Collaborative describes this pre-strategy in terms of establishing a series of On-Ramp and Bridge programs that lead to the CWA. These programs are designed for the 40-80% of community college students (depending on the campus) who must first take one or more remedial classes before enrolling in college level courses. Discouragingly, this large majority of students, many of whom intend to complete a certificate or degree, must start in Basic Skills because their reading, writing, language and math skills are below the 8th grade level or in developmental education because their skills are between 9th and 11th grade level and fall short of college level course work. In addition to education preparation, the Collaborative would like a system of On-Ramp and Bridge programs that help working adults prepare for the college-going experience by providing instruction in career planning, time management, test taking, accessing financial aid, and so forth. The Collaborative seeks to utilize community agencies and leverage current On-Ramp and Bridge programs to build pathways to the CWA.

While the Collaborative has outlined the need for such a preparation strategy, it has not prescribed how it should be implemented. It is looking for creativity and innovation from colleges, community agencies and other system players in developing the most effective strategy. The City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development, a member of the Collaborative, offered to jump start this process by asking Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) to lead a process to gather some initial thinking from colleges and community agencies on what a system of On-Ramps and Bridges could look like that will meet the Collaborative's objectives.

Last fall, SJI convened a Peer Learning Group for a series of discussions intended to develop recommendations to the Collaborative on an effective pre-strategy. The Peer Learning Group included staff from eight employment and training agencies and five community colleges. The initial group, which met for a total of sixteen hours over four months, included staff from Hopelink, King County Youth Work Training, Pioneer Human Services, PortJobs, Seattle Goodwill, SJI, YWCA and Youthcare, as well as Bellevue Community College, Cascadia Community College, Seattle Central Community College, South Seattle Community College, and Shoreline Community College. The preliminary recommendations developed by this group were shared with a wider range of community agencies who provided feedback. These agencies included the Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council, Pacific Associates, Building Changes, FareStart, King County Adult Employment and Training, TRAC Associates, Center for Career Alternatives, Neighborhood House and Asian Counseling and Referral Services.

Attachment A provides additional information about initial Peer Learning Group community agencies.

THE WORK OF THE PEER LEARNING GROUP

When the Peer Learning Group first convened to think about developing a system of On-Ramp and Bridge programs, participants recognized there was little clarity on key elements included in the Collaborative's strategic plan. The strategic plan did not define On-Ramps and Bridges. Further, there was no description of a skills continuum, no common understanding of the term college-ready, and no list of existing community college and community-based organization partnerships or the entities already engaged in On-Ramp and Bridge work. The group therefore set as its first task the drafting of relevant definitions and identification of existing On Ramps and Bridges in the local area.

The group established as its second primary charge to find out what colleges needed from community agencies to help low-income residents enroll and persist in training; and, similarly, to learn about what community agencies needed from colleges to achieve the same goal. The final task was to develop a set of recommendations for the Funders Collaborative for implementing an effective system of On-Ramps and Bridges to the CWA and postsecondary education.

Definitions

The definitions are designed to help focus conversations within and outside the Collaborative so that all stakeholders have a common understanding of key terms. These definitions can be used in future meetings on the Attainment Fund planning, Washington Families Fund planning, evaluation design, etc. They also can be modified as needed. Details about each definition can be found in Attachments A – E.

Proposed Skills Continuum Definition

A challenge in discussing pre-training strategies is understanding which populations are targeted by the initiative. Low-income residents encompass a broad range of skills. Some individuals may have low levels of English or Basic Skills while others may be one step away from college-level work. In addition to outlining a skills continuum for the low-income population, it is also helpful to know the education and training resources and financial support that exist in the community and at the college.

In developing the skills continuum, the group did not address personal barriers along the way. Just as low-income residents have a range of skills, they also face a range of training and employment barriers. Individuals with low skills can have multiple barriers such as homelessness, criminal background, and back child support payments, but those with higher levels of skills can face the same barriers. At the same time, both low-skill and higher-skill individuals might have few barriers. Each person's situation is unique and it is not feasible to make generalizations about the barriers faced by low-income individuals of different skill levels.

Attachment B outlines the skills, program resources and financial support available along the skills continuum.

Proposed Entry Points, On-Ramps and Bridges Definitions

In defining Entry Points, On-Ramps and Bridges, the goal was to describe where someone might enter and what services were necessary along the pathway into the CWA or other certificate and degree programs. There was agreement that all On-Ramp and Bridge programs need to orient towards the goal of further education at the community colleges. Community agencies recognize that the road to living wage jobs is tied to increased skills training and credentials and many want to play a more active role in helping their clients enroll and complete certificates and degrees. On-Ramp and Bridge programs linked to specific industry training at the colleges will help more low-income clients persist.

The group engaged in a healthy debate while drafting the final definitions. Some group members were concerned the definitions would be too restricting. Others questioned the need for a distinction between On-Ramps and Bridges—that all programs assisting a person onto the pathway to college should be On-Ramps. Another issue raised was the fact that the term “Bridge” had already been defined by the community college system as non-credit bearing courses. Some Peer Learning Group members agreed that it did not make sense to “re-invent” definitions but recognized that many community agencies use the term Bridge to describe hybrid programs that combine college preparation and/or basic skills development with credit-bearing courses, such as Youthcare’s 12-credit IT training program, SJI’s 17-credit manufacturing training or the I-BEST model.

In the end, the group agreed on the merits of having clear definitions to guide current and future discussions within the Funders Collaborative with a wide range of stakeholders. The idea was to make clear that individuals involved in Bridge programs would *most likely* be one step away from enrolling into college level courses. Other clients enrolled in On Ramp programs may be more than one step away from that goal. A compromise was reached to include both the college and community definitions. Thus there are two types of Bridge programs: 1) *Bridge* focuses exclusively on pre-college and 2) *Bridge Plus College* combines preparation courses with credit-bearing education and training.

Attachment C provides a definition for Entry Points, On Ramps and Bridges.

Proposed “College-Ready” Definition

The Peer Learning Group was equally challenged by the exercise of crafting a definition of college-ready. A variety of definitions exist and yet none seemed to fit the needs of the group. CBO staff were concerned that students who didn’t have the ability to meet some of the criteria on their own but had support to do so would not be considered college ready. College staff also pointed out that some students may be enrolled in college level courses and college prep courses at the same time. For example, a student could be taking a development education writing course and a college level computer course simultaneously. The group settled on a broad definition of college ready with the caveat of having support from a case manager or coach.

Attachment D provides a definition for College Ready.

College and CBO Partnership Examples

Several Seattle employment and training CBOs are experienced in connecting low-income residents to training at community colleges. These agencies provide case management and support services and match clients with tuition funding or financial aid available at the community college. CBOs pay for case management and support services with contract dollars from federal and state agencies like the Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-Adult, WIA-Dislocated Worker, WIA-Youth), or the state Department of Health and Human Services (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and Basic Food Employment and Training (formerly FSET). Local governments also provide these supports. The City of Seattle through its contract with SJI, King County through the King County Jobs Initiative (KCJI) and the King County Veterans and Human Services Levy, and the Port of Seattle with PortJobs, all provide critical support for clients enrolled in training. Finally, CBOs also use their own fund sources to pay for case management and support services. Hopelink, Youthcare, Goodwill and the YWCA all provide this added support.

While a majority of these dollars are targeted for personal support, some of the fund sources also pay for tuition, books, tools and fees. For example, WIA-Adult and WIA-Dislocated Worker funds will pay for up to one year of training; BFET matches dollars spent on tuition; SJI and PortJobs each have scholarship funds that pay for one- and two-quarter training for clients who do not qualify for other fund sources. (Goodwill is working on establishing a scholarship fund.)

The most common form of college - CBO partnerships are the ones described above, in which CBOs provide case management and wrap around supports and enroll clients in existing short-term training at the community college. Also known as the "slot in" strategy, CBOs place their clients into classes with other community college students. Organizations that engage in this strategy include PortJobs, WIA providers, TANF contractors, SJI contractors, and KCJI contractors.

Two other types of college - CBO partnerships require a higher level of involvement on both sides. In these instances, the CBO recruits a cohort of students to receive training either at the college or onsite at the CBO. This requires a tremendous amount of coordination around curriculum development, registration and enrollment, financial aid or support and monitoring student progress towards completion. Examples of these partnerships include the following:

- **Cohort Training at the CBO**
CBOs provide case management and supports and enroll clients in short-term community college training located at the CBO. The instructors are college staff. *Examples include PortJobs' Supervisor Training at the airport and Neighborhood House VESL training.* Another form of this partnership is a cohort training provided by the CBO in which the CBO instructor is certified to deliver college courses. Pioneer Human Services and FareStart are currently exploring how their respective entry level manufacturing training and culinary arts training can be part of a certificate and degree program at the community college. *Example: YouthCare's 12-credit IT program*
- **Cohort Training at the College**
CBOs provide case management and supports as well as employer connections and labor market information and work in conjunction with community colleges to deliver industry sector training at the community college. *Examples: SJI-South Seattle Community College's manufacturing and office "workplace expectations" training program; and Pacific Associates/WDC/Shoreline's automotive technology training program.*

In summary, the college - CBO partnership models are:

- **"Slot ins" to short-term training at the college**
- **Cohort training at the CBO**
- **Cohort training at the college**

Leveraging the expertise of both community agencies and colleges has resulted in many low-income residents completing short-term training in the Seattle area. CBOs and colleges report higher completion

rates when these partnerships are in place. These partnerships are an excellent foundation for the Collaborative's On-Ramps and Bridges efforts. The challenge is to align these programs with the longer-term outcome of certificate and degree completion.

Attachment E describes the various College – CBO partnership models.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE

Upon completing the draft definitions, the Peer Learning Group members discussed practical ways colleges and community agencies could do a better job – beyond the partnerships described above -- of supporting clients. Both entities recognize there is a long way to go to make college-going easier for low-income populations (or other students who want to enroll in college). The conversation focused on building a system of On-Ramps and Bridges into community college certificate and degree programs and the College of Working Adults.

College staff noted they are seeing many more low-income residents seeking training. Even prior to the economic recession, the number of lower-skill, low-income residents enrolling in college has dramatically increased. With the onset of the recession, increased demand for postsecondary training among low-income residents is now running up against increased demand from newly laid off workers, creating steep competition for limited spaces at the colleges. Often, low-income individuals seeking to enroll in college are coming to the campus for the first time and/or have not been in an educational environment in many years. As a result, these students require extra one-on-one assistance from college staff to be successful. Unfortunately, the colleges are unable to provide all that is needed.

In a wide-ranging discussion, college staff pointed to preparation as the single most helpful thing CBOs can do to support low-income students on their campuses. The following is a summary of the colleges' suggestions for CBOs:

- ◆ ***Help students develop clear career and educational plans***

Many low-income, low-skill students come to the campus unsure about their career interests and what to study. They lack employment goals and direction. Many are vague about the timeframe in which they would like to accomplish their goal – one quarter, three quarters, one year or two years. Without a clear idea, college staff are unable to help students create educational plans, plan for financial aid, or advise about the appropriate course schedule. To address this problem, college staff would like CBOs to help students become knowledgeable about labor market opportunities, identify career goals, learn how to navigate the college and prepare for assessment tests. Colleges are looking for CBOs to teach self-advocacy skills that will lead to a higher degree of autonomy and ability to handle expectations of the college environment.

- ◆ ***Avoid sending students to enroll at the last minute***

Many students arrive on campus one or two days before – or after - the quarter has started. Multiple steps are involved in the registration process. It can easily require a student to visit the campus 3-5 times in an effort to complete all the necessary testing, advising and paperwork. Showing up at the eleventh hour may jeopardize a student's ability to obtain financial aid. Often times colleges run out of appropriate forms of financial aid mid-year. College staff report this is especially true of Pell Grants and State Need Grants. They recommend that prospective students complete financial aid paperwork in January for enrollment in summer and fall quarters.

- ◆ ***Provide information about the availability of CBO services***

College staff encounter many low-income residents on their campus who could benefit from the services and support that are offered by local CBOs. However, they often don't know where best to refer students. If college staff have relationships with a particular CBO, they will often send students there. However, the high staff turnover at CBOs often make ongoing relationship-building difficult. Moreover, the CBO with which a college staff member has a good relationship may not always be the best match for a particular student's needs. A suggestion was made to create a directory of CBOs that lists the supports they provide and eligibility criteria. In addition, there needs to be more networking opportunities and venues for college and CBO staff to meet one another. Otherwise, colleges will continue to operate on a "catch-as-catch-can" basis.

- ◆ ***Create opportunities for joint staffing of students between college and CBO***

Colleges frequently work with students being supported by CBOs who drop out after a short period of time and "disappear". Colleges acknowledge they do not have a good way to make sure these students are progressing unless the student comes forth and asks for help. In most cases, however,

students don't ask for help until it's too late. Colleges would like to find ways for themselves and CBOs to share information about their joint students/clients so both entities can work together to respond to any troubles and determine what has happened to students who drop out.

◆ **Educate CBOs about the "Six Key Things to Know About Community Colleges"**

During the meetings, the college members pointed out there were six key things every CBOs should know about community colleges. The group and the follow up groups reviewed these key elements and provided ideas on current gaps, existing practices and recommendations for improvement. This information should serve as a basis for future training for CBOs by the colleges and development of tools and resources. It was also suggested that future information sessions for CBOs should include the funding guide used by the WorkSource partners that outlines all the funding options for low income adults at each of the community colleges.

For a description of the "Six Key Things to Know about Community Colleges", please see Attachment F.

THE COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE

Agencies that participated in the initial Peer Learning Group and the two follow up sessions identified key issues that, if resolved, would go a long way toward creating more effective CBO – community college partnerships that better meet the needs of students/clients. CBO staff represented a broad range of experience working with colleges. They included agencies have been connecting clients to short-term training for over ten years, to those who have less than one year of experience, to agency staff who are just beginning to connect their clients to colleges.

Several key themes emerged from the discussion:

- ◆ ***Improve navigation of the community colleges***

CBOs and their clients report being overwhelmed by the process required to navigate the colleges. CBO staff express frustration regarding the amount of time involved in discerning the colleges' program offerings and all the steps required to enroll, including signing up to take a placement test, securing financial aid, meeting with an advisor, and learning about the available supports on campus (tutoring, computer labs, etc.). CBOs cannot simply refer their clients to the colleges because often clients are confused by all the steps required to enroll and consequently stop mid-process. One CBO reported that its clients often turn their cars around before even arriving at the campus because they are so intimidated by the process. To add to the complexity, each college is organized differently. Therefore, CBOs are forced to learn and explain a different enrollment process for each of the individual campuses. This process varies further within each campus depending on what program a client wishes to enroll in (see "door into the college" discussion below). The absence of a system or standardization among the colleges has forced community organizations to "reinvent the wheel" at each campus.

- ◆ ***Develop "insider" knowledge of how colleges work***

In addition to issues around navigation, CBOs recognize there is a new community college lexicon they need to learn. This requires "insider" knowledge about placement tests, financial aid, non-credit bearing, credit-bearing, and credit-bearing towards a degree, as well as determining the appropriate "door into the college" (Basic Skills, Professional Technical, Workforce Education, or Academic Transfer) for prospective students. Also, college staff have the ability to waive requirements for courses and financial aid, and without this knowledge or access to the appropriate staff for this consideration, students may not be making the best educational choices and CBOs cannot provide the best guidance to their clients. All of these elements have major impacts on the types of education, funding, services, and supports a student will receive. With a deeper knowledge of how colleges work, CBOs can better support clients.

- ◆ ***Create a new culture of "community college-going" within CBOs***

CBOs recognize the need to link graduates of their job preparation and employment programs to additional education at the college. Several are starting to include this message as part of their orientation sessions. Others are hiring staff to serve as education navigators to help prospective students enroll and persistent at the college. CBOs would like to partner with colleges to deliver joint "community college-going" workshops to clients. This would also help reduce the intimidation factor many clients feel about the college by connecting clients with college staff even before they arrive at the campus.

- ◆ ***Train college and CBO staff on best practices of assisting new students/clients***

With the growing numbers of low-income and low-wage working adults entering community colleges and the diversity of these students, there is a need for soft skills and cultural competency training for college and CBO staff.

PEER LEARNING FEEDBACK ON FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY

CBOs and colleges commend the Funders Collaborative for taking on the challenging work of increasing post-secondary credential attainment among low income King County residents. Certainly, a great deal of energy is behind the Collaborative's effort to take the system in a new direction. The timeliness of the effort is especially fitting given the economic climate. Training is a good place for laid off and underemployed residents to ride out the economic storm. People are able to skill up so they can secure better paying jobs post recession. In addition, the Collaborative's initiative takes into account a long-term strategy after the economy rebounds when the Puget Sound will face worker shortages in key sectors.

Peer Learning members are pleased the Collaborative outlined a commitment to pre-strategies that seeks to help people who are not college-ready prepare for certificate and degrees. Of particular interest is the creation of an Attainment Fund that provides support along the way. CBOs and colleges recognize that increasing skills and access to credential and degrees is what will help low-income and low-wage workers advance to better paying jobs.

In addition to the work described above, the Peer Learning members had general feedback on the Collaborative's overall strategic plan. The comments included:

- **Wage targets.** The Collaborative should set target wages for the College of Working Adult certificates and degrees so prospective students have a clear idea of what jobs pay and what type of wage advancement they can expect.
- **Financial literacy.** Financial literacy should be included in On-Ramps, Bridges and the College of Working Adults. Many clients lack good information and skills in crafting personal budgets for short-term and long-term financial needs.
- **Benefit cliffs.** Initiate more research on the impact benefit cliffs will have a low-income student's motivation and incentive to complete certificates and degrees. CBOs would like clear information on benefit cliffs to help students plan.
- **Investing in Preparation.** Be prepared for significant investment in funding given the intensity and resources required to help prepare people to enter college level programs. This is not a short term investment.
- **Preparing for 4 year degrees.** The Collaborative should consider how the AAS CWA certificate and degrees will transfer to 4-year degrees.

ON RAMPS & BRIDGES RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE

The Peer Learning Group and the follow up participants made five general recommendations in their advising role on On Ramps and Bridges. Their suggestions focused on improving communications, expanding services and increasing coordination. They include:

Communication

1. Simplify the college enrollment and navigation process across King County college campuses

Create standardization among colleges around the enrollment and financial aid process so students and CBOs can easily find their way to the appropriate offices (i.e. color coded map). Develop an assessment tool that will ensure students enter the “right door” (Basic Skills, Prof Tech, Workforce Education, or transfer (academic) programs) the first time. As part of this effort, create a template for all career maps that clearly show which courses and programs lead to certificates and degrees and includes information about wages and occupations.

2. Organize regular community forums to share information about colleges and CBOs

Establish regular forums to increase knowledge and information exchange between CBOs and colleges. CBOs should present programs and services that link to colleges, while colleges should present program offerings, financial aid, fund sources and support services available to students from colleges and CBOs. Examples of information exchange opportunities include: 1) Annual best practices conference; 2) Brown Bag lunch series; and 3) Train-the-Trainer Opportunities (colleges train CBOs and CBOs train colleges).

3. Create an easy-to-use web site with On-Ramp, Bridge and Program information in King County

Help prospective community college students, CBO staff and college staff learn about the education, training and case management opportunities available to low income residents through a new web site linked to college and CBO websites.

Expanded Services

4. Support education navigators in the community

Create a network of education navigators to work with CBO clients and assist them with developing educational plans, enrollment, financial aid, fund sources and access to services. These navigators must be linked to case management services.

5. Support colleges and CBOs efforts to share responsibility for preparing prospective students to be successful

Colleges and CBOs should collaborate on delivering orientation sessions to prospective students, align programs for smooth transitions from the community into the college and create a shared understanding (vocabulary) around community college-going.

Increase Coordination

6. Support efforts that encourage college – CBO collaboration

Create funding strategies that allow for joint credit to be earned by both colleges and CBOs in helping clients achieve their goals. Funding that rewards both colleges and the CBOs for the specific contributions that help students succeed.

THE WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN

After discussing a wide range of issues that needed attention right way, participants realized there were several items that were either already underway or there was interest in getting things going. Group members quickly identified several item that were considered “low hanging fruit” and agreed to begin work right way. These items include and progress are as follows:

✓ **Researching Navigator Best Practices**

SJI organized a focus group of Seattle area education navigators to learn what was effective and challenging in connecting low income residents to further education at the community college. This information is included in a brief research memo on navigators included with this document. Another Best Practices session is scheduled for Spring. Please see Attachment G.

✓ **Standardizing Enrollment Navigation on College Campuses**

SJI convened a work group to flesh out the 5 main “dance steps” all students must complete in order to enroll in the community college. The goal is to provide students and CBO case managers with tool and an easy to use map of the campus that shows students where to go for each of the steps and how to prepare to complete the steps.

✓ **Developing “Community College Going Curriculum”**

Goodwill and YouthCare are each developing a curriculum to teach their participants about the labor market and how to be successful in college. (SJI is helping Goodwill develop a tool kit designed to help Goodwill graduates transition to community college.) SJI organized a subgroup to compare curriculum and develop a template for key curriculum components.

✓ **Creating Regular Networking Opportunities for Entry Points, On Ramps, Bridges**

Peer Learning participants want to create a more seamless system that links community programs to opportunities at the college by making sure both sides know one another. In furtherance of this effort, SJI is sponsoring a series of quarterly CBO-College Networking Events that will allow Entry Point, On Ramp and Bridge agencies and colleges to build a network. The goal is to help agency and college staff become familiar with the range of programs and services available in the system (as well as gaps), allowing them to connect their clients/students to appropriate resources to best meet their needs and to share best practices. The first meeting, held on March 24, was well attended with over 50 participants. Several staff members identified concrete next steps they were taking to partner with other agencies in the room as a result of the meeting.

Attachment A

CBO Peer Learning Group

	Training Offered at CBO	Training in Partnership with Community Colleges	Client Characteristics	Annual Job and Training Results	Other Client Services Provided By Agency
Goodwill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Basic computer skills training -- ABE and ESL -- Banking training -- Retail (paid) 	<p><i>Cohort training at college</i> -- Partnership with y college to provide intensive ESL (up to level 3) at college and then transition students to Goodwill for retail training (Marysville Goodwill)</p>	<p>Low income adults and youth Low basic skills 40% immigrants and refugees</p>	<p>Enrolled 230 in banking and retail programs Enrolled 700+ in computer skills training Place 230 in variety of industry sectors</p>	<p>Operate retail stores</p>
Hopelink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- ABE and ESL programs -- GED programs -- Basic computer skills training -- Workplace based ABE & ESL (at employer) 	<p><i>Slot-in at college</i> -- provide clients w/ case management and navigation support and connect to 1-3 quarter training programs funded by I-BEST, Opportunity Grants, Pell grants, and BFET</p> <p>(WDC grant targeted to 18 to 25 year olds in ABE/ESL and IBEST)</p>	<p>Low income adults and youth Major client base include Immigrant and refugees</p>	<p>[will provide info in next draft]</p>	<p>Financial Literacy Indiv Devlpmnt Accounts Cooking classes</p>
King County Work Training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Basic skills instruction -- GED preparation -- IT business essentials training -- Construction skills training 	<p>High-school drop-outs ages 16-24</p>		
PortJobs	<p><i>Community college comes on site to airport to provide training for PortJobs (see next box)</i></p>	<p><u>Airport Jobs</u> <i>Cohort training at CBO w/ college credit</i> --Community college instructors teach on site at airport: -- Supervisor Training (credit bearing) -- Computer courses (credit bearing) -- ESL Travel and Tourism (credit bearing)</p> <p><i>Slot-in at college</i> -- Offer scholarships for one quarter training at community college to low wage airport employees (no case management).</p> <p><u>AOP</u> <i>Cohort training at college</i> – Pre-apprenticeship training at SSCC</p> <p>Connection and support into union trade apprenticeship program through Apprenticeship Opportunities Project (AOP)</p>	<p><u>Airport Jobs</u> Low wage airport employees 80% immigrant and refugees</p> <p><u>AOP</u> Low income adults</p>	<p><u>Airport Jobs</u> Enroll 300</p> <p><u>AOP</u> Placed 147 in apprenticeship or family wage jobs (2007)</p>	<p>Center for Working Families (family coach links individuals to services)</p> <p>Working Wheels – assist with low cost auto purchase</p>

Pioneer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Basic manufacturing (<i>paid</i>) -- Food prep/culinary (<i>paid</i>) -- Warehouse (<i>paid</i>) 	<p><i>Cohort training at CBO -- In progress:</i> working with SSCC to obtain college credit for on-site basic manufacturing training linked to college certificate</p>	<p>Low income adults with a focus on ex offenders, homeless, and individuals in recovery from substance abuse</p>	<p>Enroll 484 Place 185 in PHS training Place 80% of difference (of the 484 enrolled) into jobs</p>	<p>Housing Substance Abuse Treatment Behavioral Health Treatment Work Release</p>
Seattle Jobs Initiative	N/A	<p><i>Cohort training at college --</i> manufacturing/welding and office occupations</p> <p><i>Slot-in at college --</i> provide clients w/ case management and navigation support and connections to short term training programs funded by BFET, and other workforce education financial assistance</p> <p><i>Cohort training at CBO --</i> VESL training provided by Highline community college focused on hospitality and janitorial sectors</p>	<p>Low income adults, city of Seattle residents 80% people of color 30-40% limited English 27% homeless</p>	<p>Enrolled 700 Placed 385</p>	<p>Job attachment services (IP)</p>
YouthCare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Tile Making Program (drop in program) -- Information Technology; (12 college credits; must be in school 50% time) -- Barista Training (must be in school 3 days a week) (<i>paid training</i>) -- Food Service, partnership with FareStart (<i>paid training</i>) 	<p><i>Cohort training at CBOw/ college credit --</i> Information Technology at YouthCare with 12 college credits towards a degree</p> <p><i>Slot-in at college --</i> provide clients w/ case management and navigation* support and connect to 1-3 quarter training programs funded by Opportunity Grants, Pell grants, and BFET.</p> <p>* Youthcare has two education navigators on staff.</p>	<p>Homeless Youth 47% youth of color 51% male; 49% female 90% basic skills deficient</p>	<p>Enroll 250 Place 188 (75%)</p>	<p>Drop-in center Free meal service Transitional Housing Emergency Shelter</p>
YWCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Basic computer skills training -- Transitional/Community Jobs Program (subsidized work experience for TANF clients) -- Older worker program 	<p><i>Slot-in at college --</i> provide clients w/ case management and navigation support and connect to 1-3 quarter training programs funded by BFET.</p> <p><i>Slot-in at college --</i> provide clients w/ case management and navigation support and connections to short term training programs funded by BFET, and other workforce education financial assistance</p> <p>Targeted program for ESL youth at Seattle Vocational Institute with help of education navigator</p>	<p>Low income adults and youth Homeless adults TANF and other public assistance clients 60% women 60% people of color</p>	<p>Enroll 250 clients Place 178 (71%)</p>	<p>Transitional Housing Shelter Domestic violence support Clothing bank</p>

Attachment B

CBO Peer Learning Group

		Basic Skills			
	Pre Literacy	< 5th Grade Levels (R, W, M)	5th to 8th Grade Levels (R, W, M)	9 – 11th Grade Levels (R, W, M)	> 12th Grade Level (R, W, M)
Community College Programs	Sometimes there are courses at Community College	ABE courses for levels 1-2 ESL courses for levels 1-4 ESL Computer levels 3-5 I-BEST (skills training) VESL	ABE courses for levels 3-4 GED/ASE Short-term voc training Pre-Apprenticeship Train	Workforce Education Prof Tech Cert & Degrees HS Completion Development Education Transfer Programs that do not have prerequisites	Transfer (Academic) Programs
Community Based Programs	DSHS funded OIRA programs at community agencies Other CBOS	ABE and ESL	Retail Training Culinary, Barista Training Information Tech Manufacturing Training Warehouse Training Community Learning Ctrs. GED		
Financial Aid/Scholarships Available at Colleges		BFET WorkFirst (TANF) I-BEST (dedicated funds) Waivers ABE & ESL	Worker Retrain Opportunity Grants WIA	Pell Grants State Need Grants College Fnd Scholarship 19-21 reduced tuition; Free college for HS drop outs	

Attachment C

King County Funders Collaborative

Proposed definitions developed through Peer Learning, updated 04/03/09

Entry Points	On Ramps	Bridge Programs	Bridge Plus College
<p>Organizations that provide services to low income populations and want to connect their clients to jobs and training for better paying jobs.</p>	<p>Basic or entry level skills training that helps individuals obtain a job and/or enter community college training for better paying jobs.</p> <p><i>Features:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- On Ramps provide basic skills training such as ABE, ESL, GED and computer skills. -- On Ramps provide entry level skills training for jobs in retail, culinary arts, warehouse, or others. -- On Ramps help individuals with labor market and industry sector information, career paths, goal setting, and assistance in navigating training and education options. -- On Ramps should offer personal support in the form of case management and support services 	<p>Pre-college reading, writing, math and computer skill building that prepares individuals for college level courses and the “college going” experience.</p> <p><i>Features:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Bridge programs provide reading, writing and math skill building that lead directly to college level courses. -- Bridge programs provide computer skills that allow individuals to navigate the college and complete assignments. -- Bridge programs prepare individuals for the “college environment” with information on tutoring, advising, time management, test taking, support services, etc. -- Bridge programs are sector based; the remediation and preparation is focused on a specific industry sector -- Bridge programs should offer personal support in the form of case management and support services 	<p>Pre-college reading, writing, math and computer skill enhancement, and college preparation combined with college credit courses.</p> <p><i>Features:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Bridge Plus College programs provide reading, writing and math enhancement that lead directly to college level courses. -- Bridge Plus College programs provide computer skills that allow individuals to navigate the college and complete assignments. -- Bridge Plus College programs prepare individuals for the “college environment” with information on tutoring, advising, time management, test taking, support services, etc. -- Bridge Plus College programs are sector based; the remediation and preparation is focused on a specific industry sector -- Bridge Plus College programs should offer personal support in the form of case management and support services

Attachment C (cont'd)

Examples

Entry Points	On Ramps	Bridge Programs	Bridge Plus College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food banks ▪ Transitional Housing ▪ DV programs ▪ Ex-offender re-entry ▪ Community Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Goodwill, Hopelink, and YWCA's basic skills and computer training ▪ FareStart Culinary Arts Training ▪ Pioneer Human Services' manufacturing training ▪ ACRS VESL training ▪ SF Works Biotech On Ramp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bellevue Community College Dev Ed/IT Boot Camp ▪ SF Works Biotech Bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pac Associates/Shoreline/WDC Automotive GST I-BEST ▪ SJI Manufacturing and Office Training ▪ Youthcare IT training ▪ PortJobs Supervisor Training ▪ King County Jobs Initiative, SJI, YWCA, Pac Associates, TRAC short-term training linked to certificates and degrees

Attachment D

Proposed Draft Definitions of College Ready

College ready students possess the *academic* and *personal* preparation to be successful in college.

A student who has the *academic preparation* is defined as:

- An individual who is ready to enter Professional Technical or Transfer Degree Programs.
- An individual who has the math, reading and writing skills necessary to enter their program of choice (Professional Technical or Transfer Degree)
- An individual student who has the computer literacy level required in their program of choice

A student who has the *Personal preparation* is defined as:

- An individual who has addressed or has support (case management) to address any barriers to program completion.
- An individual who is able to self-advocate (such as ability to seek out tutoring, obtain transcripts, request meetings with advisors or instructors) *or has support to do so*
- An individual who has good time management skills *or has support to do so*
- An individual who is goal focused *or who has support to do so*
- An individual who possess the practical skills needed for college: attending class, being prepared, using course materials, and collaborating with classmates *or has the support to do so*

Attachment E

Community Agency – Community College Partnerships

Within King County there are a variety of CBO – community college relationships. They can be characterized in the following:

LEAST INTENSIVE

Uses Existing College Programs; Requires navigation support

Regular Short Term Training

CBOs provide case management and supports and enroll clients in a variety of short term training at the community college. Examples: *YWCA, Hopelink, YouthCare, SJI, PortJobs (scholarship program), and others (WIA funded, King County Jobs Initiative funded).*

MORE INTENSIVE

Requires Negotiations and Coordination between CBO and College

Cohort Training Onsite at CBO

CBOs provide case management and supports and enroll clients in short term community college training located onsite at the CBO. The instructors are college staff. Examples: *PortJobs Supervisor training, Neighborhood House VESL*

Another form of this partnership is a cohort training provided by the CBO in which the CBO instructor is certified to deliver college courses. Pioneer Human Services and FareStart are currently exploring how their respective entry level manufacturing training and culinary arts training can be part of a certificate and degree program at the community college. Example: *YouthCare's 12-credit IT program*

Cohort Training at the College

CBOs work in partnership with community colleges to organize cohort sector training at the community college. Examples: *SJI-SSCC's manufacturing and office "workplace expectations" training program; WDC-Shoreline's automotive technology training program*

CBO Training that is Credit Bearing at Community College

CBOs provide training, case management and supports. The training is community college credit bearing and links to further training programs at the colleges. The instructors are employees of the CBO who have the credentials to certify credits. Examples: *Youthcare IT program; Pioneer Human Services is seeking to build this program*

Attachment F

Six Basic Pieces of Information to Know about Community Colleges, updated 2/17/09

BASIC INFORMATION	Information Gaps	Current Remedy to Address the Issue	Future Ideas to Improve
<p>Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CBOs are unaware of college offerings (which qtrs, time of day, etc.) ▪ Programs are not packaged together; so its difficult to know which classes are part of a certificate or degree program ▪ Courses do not articulate to other schools ▪ Career maps exist but no there is no uniformity within a college or among colleges; there needs to be template used <p><i>Students are often unclear about what to study or only have a general vague idea.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Colleges are seeking common course numbering among campuses ▪ SBCTC website has information about programs ▪ WOIS provides information about the labor market and college programs ▪ Workforce Explorer provides information about the labor market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unified data collection ▪ Creation of an easy to use website with program information ▪ Creation of standard career maps across campuses ▪ Hiring of navigators who are sector specific ▪ Providing advising appointments during the quarter breaks
<p>Getting Started</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Dance steps" are packaged together ▪ "Dance steps" not located next to each other on campus ▪ There is no information about which "dance steps" to do and at what time to do them ▪ Problems arise when "dance steps" are not aligned ▪ Bottlenecks can be created within the dance steps and students are unable to move on to the next step <p><i>Students must come to campuses multiple times.</i></p> <p><i>Students are discouraged by the enrollment process because of the multiple steps involved.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MOA by CBOs with colleges to fill a class ▪ Some college staff know exactly where to send people ▪ Workfirst students are a priority group and there are extra staff to help them along the enrollment process ▪ More CBOs are hiring staff to serve as navigators to take students through the process, step by step 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Color code the different "dance steps" at each campus and create a map that shows where they are ▪ Create a brochure or orientation session of the "dance steps" ▪ Colleges should consider locating all the "dance steps" next to one another ▪ Create a centralized one-stop to start the enrollment process ▪ Create a kiosk with information that can easily be accessed by prospective students

<p>Relationship Btwn ESL, ABE and Dev Ed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no specialized advising for Basic Skills or Dev Ed ▪ It is unclear where CASA and Compass overlap and where they are distinct ▪ There is a lack of knowledge about how financial aid fits with Basic Skills and Dev Ed <p><i>Students feel it takes too long to complete Basic Skills or Dev Ed; 12% of Basic Skills students move on? 1% get a certificate or degree?</i></p> <p><i>If Basic Skills or Dev Ed curriculum is not contextualized it is easy for students to lose interest</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic Skills and Dev Ed need a “warm and welcoming” greeter with good information so students can comfortably gain access ▪ IBEST is one strategy to help students progress along faster and with a contextualized format ▪ There is information about these programs on each colleges’ website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create navigators for Dev Ed students who also follow up ▪ Create a glossary of definitions for Basic Skills and DEV ED ▪ Examine how Applied Math can be taken vs Dev ED math
<p>Financial Aid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CBOs don’t know what is available ▪ CBOs don’t know the difference between financial aid and fund sources available to low income clients ▪ Decisions around granting financial aid can include a college staff’s professional judgement <p>Students are unaware of the various fund sources that are available. Some students report they dropped out in past because they didn’t have the financial resources to pay for school, only to realize the funding was there they just weren’t aware of it. “It’s amazing, I could have gone to college after high school, but I really didn’t know that.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students go to either the Financial Aid or Workforce Education office ▪ Individual resources depends on the program ▪ CCs host orientations for community agencies about available funding sources ▪ Fact Sheets about the various programs with financial support have been created ▪ College websites have the information and Shoreline has created a “Free Training” button to help simplify the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to create a simple, easy to use website with all college information including financial eligibility ▪ Create a shared vocabulary around financial aid and fund sources

<p>Support Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no comprehensive picture of the supports available at ccs and CBOs ▪ CBOs and students do not know who to talk to and how to access services ▪ There is no two-way exchange between ccs and cbos about students/clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students and CBOs are accessing students services but it is done on a very ad hoc basis and requires individual relationships between specific CBOs and colleges ▪ Both colleges nd CBOs offer support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map and coordinate services available from colleges and CBOs ▪ Creation of a navigator to help students access services
<p>Job Seeker Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Colleges do not know what CBOs job connections services are offered ▪ Where do job seeker service exist if there is no WorkSource on campus ▪ It is unclear how the relationship between colleges and CBOs could work better around job seeker services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Worksource is available to students ▪ Workforce Education office is available to students ▪ CBOs are linking students with jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should consider ways to develop shared outcomes between colleges and CBOs (both get credit for individuals making it through) ▪ Develop a shared vocabulary ▪ Increase personal connections between college and CBO staff responsible for job placement ▪ Create a consistent career path map across colleges ▪ Highlight ways CBOs and ccs work together

Attachment G

Early Lessons of Education Navigators, updated April 2009

Access to postsecondary education is an issue that is gaining considerable attention as a result of the efforts of the King County Funder's Collaborative (the collaborative). The collaborative aims to increase the number of low-income and low-skill adults that reach the "tipping point" and earn a one year credential. This credential can significantly boost the job opportunities for those living at the economic margins. With greater emphasis being placed on the importance of postsecondary education as a gateway to family supporting jobs, more low-income adults are entering training at local community colleges with support from community based organizations (CBOs) that are trying to ease the process of navigating the community college system. While navigation began as part of the case management function, it is a tenuous balance to maintain given multiple priorities and burgeoning caseloads. Thus, it has become clear that a new set of services, beyond case management and related supports, are needed to help participants maneuver through the community college system.

Enrolling in college is difficult given the multiple steps prospective students must take to move from the admissions process to class registration. Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) has begun to explore these processes or the "dance steps", which include: the admissions or enrollment process, placement/assessment testing, advising, financial aid, and registration for classes. Each dance step is comprised of multiple parts, which can be overwhelming and confusing, particularly for individuals who have had limited access to formal education. As a result, the process is a long and arduous one defined by pre-tests, multiple forms and applications, meetings with college advisors, and a complex menu of courses.

The navigation role responds to this complexity by targeting assistance to helping participants through each of the dance steps and providing referrals and coordinating with case managers to ensure that clients are receiving needed support. Navigators fill an important gap and support people -- largely low-income and low-skill -- in achieving educational goals, understanding complex systems and processes associated with the community colleges and ultimately assisting people in reaching employment goals.

The purpose of this memo is to:

- Identify the responsibilities and challenges of the emerging navigator role
- Share examples of current navigation efforts
- Propose next steps and areas for additional research

Methodology

Developing an understanding of the navigator role was developed by conducting internet research to glean whether and how the navigator role has taken shape nationally and to identify any best practices or lessons learned, if available. This research was augmented by interviewing staff from BuRRST, TRAC Associates, Pacific Associates, the Seattle/King County Workforce Development Council (WDC), the Oregon WorkSource system, and members of the Peer Learning Group, convened by SJI in 2008, all of which are focusing on providing some level of navigation or coaching services to help clients attain higher levels of education and family supporting employment. The Peer Learning Group consists of several agencies that were invited at the request of the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development to discuss both the opportunities and challenges of creating a more integrated workforce system in which there is stronger alignment between CBOs and the community college system, a primary vehicle for employment and training. Participating agencies include: SJI, Pioneer Human Services, YWCA, HopeLink, PortJobs, YouthCare, Seattle Goodwill, and the King County Worker Retraining Program. Community colleges also joined this group: Bellevue Community College, Cascadia Community College, Shoreline Community College, and Seattle Central Community College.

SJI also convened a separate workgroup focused specifically on navigation to explore this role in greater depth. Members of this workgroup included representatives from Pacific Associates, YouthCare, PortJobs, and Shoreline Community College. Both YouthCare and Pacific Associates

have a navigator staff role. The target population for YouthCare is homeless youth while Pacific Associates serves low-income, low-skilled adults with limited academic attainment. This workgroup has been convened to identify best practices and address both the challenges and system issues relating to access to community colleges. The group will also put forth the lessons learned from providing this relatively new support to clients.

Responsibilities and Challenges of the Navigator Role

Defining the Role

As a new concept, there is latitude in how the role of the navigator is defined and how organizations are tailoring the role to meet the specific needs of clients. Additionally, it is easy to confuse or morph this role with a case management or coaching function. However, based on the experiences of the navigation work group, one “school of thought” posits that navigation is distinct from case management and coaching because its primary function is to link clients to educational opportunities at local community colleges. The navigation workgroup, which met on January 30, 2009, outlined the following key responsibilities:

- *Connect to the Community College* - The main role of the navigator is to connect participants to education at the community college and mitigate each of the dance steps – enrollment/admissions, advising, financial aid, class registration, and career and education planning. This is a complicated, multi-step process, in which the navigator often acts as an advocate for the client. Essentially, the navigator acts as a liaison between the community college, community-based program, and the client.
- *Secure Funding for participants* – The financial aid process can be confusing given the number of funding options available. From completing an initial screening for potential funding sources to completing financial aid forms, navigators spend a great deal of time identifying the right mix of funding sources that can be woven together to support the client’s education.
- *Connect with Employers* – Knowledge about the labor market and understanding where jobs are in demand is another critical element of the navigator role. A relationship with employers also allows navigators to help inform curriculum development for training programs.
- *Partnership with Case Managers* - The main role of the navigator is to assist clients with their education planning and ensure that training is successfully completed. There are many barriers and challenges that can arise during training that may need case management assistance. Typically, the role of the navigator is to connect the participant with case management, *not provide* case management. In the instance when case management and navigation roles are combined it appears that the challenges and barriers supersede education as a priority.

Intrinsic to this work is the ability to establish relationships with a variety of service providers and community college staff members. Based on the information gathered from interviews, it is critical for the navigator to fully understand the “dance steps” and build relationships with community college staff members such as college advisors, financial aid staff, and counselors. The navigator must also have in depth knowledge of the various college entry points and develop partnerships with key staff members in the basic education, workforce education, and professional/technical education departments. Building relationships throughout the college will allow the navigator to address any challenges clients may experience when accessing the college system. Furthermore, navigators may also need to interface with college instructors, to ensure that such issues as attendance, lack of turning in work or lack of participation can be addressed and redirected to the case manager.

In terms of the how the navigation role is administered, the navigator may be located on campus, at a one-stop center or at a local CBO. When located at the college campus, the navigator can become more integrated with college staff, which can enhance accountability with regard to clients receiving the services they need. When based on at a community organization, the navigator can serve a specific program or serve as an

honest broker to a variety of programs. As an honest broker, the navigator refers participants to the best education and training programs that are appropriate for meeting identified goals. Whether the navigator role is co-located in the community colleges or placed at an agency or CBO, the navigator typically refers clients to colleges based on the client's educational interests and the type of training available. Thus, the navigator must be familiar with a variety of education programs across multiple campuses.

In some cases, navigators also conduct outreach to potential participants, which is often done at the CBO or agency providing the client's case management and support services. Outreach may also take place on the college campus, likely the workforce education office. In some cases, the navigator maintains a relationship with clients beyond education completion and job placement and works with the client on a career plan. Local WorkSource offices are another venue for recruiting clients for education and training opportunities.

Identifying Challenges

While the navigator's main role is to assist participants with creating an educational plan and helping students persist with training to meet long term career goals, the role can become confused with case management when clients need support services to stay on their educational path. Both YouthCare and Pacific Associates, in association with Shoreline Community College (Shoreline) and the WDC, discussed this issue in depth. As a result, the navigator must be able to properly address issues that arise during training such as childcare, housing, and transportation. Usually the navigator works with case managers to stabilize the issues. Depending on the need, however, navigators may need to gap fill and directly address issues and eventually transition the intervention back to the case manager. All of the navigators interviewed noted that the blurred distinction between navigation services and case management is a challenge because clients don't necessarily see a difference between the two. As a "one-stop" point of contact that provides a buffer against many systems – workforce, housing, community college, mental health, corrections, etc – the navigator can easily be confused with a case manager and is viewed as a key resource for managing crises as they arise.

Another challenge identified by the navigators was the procedural differences that exist across campuses. Learning the nuances of the "dance steps" from one campus to the next and identifying the appropriate partners on each campus requires intensive due diligence on the part of the navigator. A primary example of this issue is the variances between the colleges in how funding sources and financial aid are selected for students – it is difficult to know where exactly to start when seeking funding. The navigators play a critical role in working with clients to leverage funding sources so that the financial aid is used to support college level and credit bearing courses versus being utilized and used up on developmental classes, which don't count toward a certificate or degree. The navigators for YouthCare and Pacific Associates work directly with clients on completing financial aid paperwork and attend meetings with the financial aid office to ensure that students are using the right resources at the right time on their educational path.

Examples of the Navigator Role

The term navigation and how the role is implemented varies across organizations. It is an evolving concept with people adapting the role to meet the needs of clients, which can add to the confusion between a navigator, case manager, and coach. SJI has examined three agencies that have created navigator positions – YouthCare, Pacific Associates/WDC/Shoreline (in Seattle) and the Oregon WorkSource.

Pacific Associates/WDC/Shoreline Navigator Programs:

In 2008, Pacific Associates/WDC/Shoreline implemented the navigator role and has three navigators working across King County that are focused on career pathways in two industries: healthcare and automotive. The navigators specialize in an industry to understand the full spectrum of educational and employment pathways within it. The navigators also build relationships with employers in the automotive and healthcare industries and have an understanding of employers needs.

The automotive navigator is located at Shoreline Community College and works with students to ensure they successfully enroll and complete training. Key responsibilities include: recruit participants; build relationships and integrate with community college staff, case managers, and employers; determine funding options for students; and assist with job placement. To date, 60-70 people have been served, with 41 enrollees. Program retention is approximately 90%.

The healthcare navigator is located at both TRAC Associates and Pacific Associates but travels to local hospitals to recruit potential participants for training and education. Focused on incumbent workers, this navigator works with local hospitals in Seattle to provide access to training resources to help these workers move up a career ladder and earn better wages.

Typically, the pathway in the healthcare field is to transition from Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or Medical Assistant (MA) to licensed practical nurse (LPN).

YouthCare

YouthCare has two navigators, funded through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, that focus on linking youth to Opportunity Grant programs at local community colleges. These navigators are based at YouthCare's Orion Center, a multi-service facility open to youth ages 13 to 21, which includes case management, meals, showers, pre-employment training, etc. Homeless youth are the target population for YouthCare's navigation services, with the navigators doing direct outreach to the young people who receive services at the center. In most cases, the youth work with a case manager to address issues while the navigator focuses on the educational pathway of the student.

Because their clients are homeless youth, it is difficult for the navigators to procure relevant documentation to prove that the young people are Washington state residents, which leads to issues in admissions and securing funding. Thus, it is critical for the navigators to walk clients through each "dance step" and accompany them to initial meetings with advisors and financial aid, with the intent that their clients will eventually set up and attend these meetings on their own. The navigators at YouthCare act as neutral brokers and help clients identify the appropriate training that matches their interests. They do not affiliate with one specific college, but have noted which colleges are easier to access. As noted earlier, building relationships and finding allies within the college is a large part of the navigation role.

To help clients begin thinking about going to college and envisioning themselves as students, YouthCare also offers a three-day workshop, TACO (Talk About College Opportunities). This workshop introduces the college concept and the vocabulary used at the schools – financial aid versus a grant, admission, and a "pre-college" quarter (co-enrollment in a skill building class).

Seattle Jobs Initiative

SJI has begun to explore the navigation role in more depth and will be providing navigation services to PortJobs, Seattle Housing Authority, and potentially the Church Council of Greater Seattle. SJI is also providing consulting services to Seattle Goodwill and has helped the agency develop a navigator role and curriculum that is aimed at preparing Goodwill students for education and training at community colleges. While this work is in preliminary stages, SJI will share its findings and lessons learned with the Peer Learning Group and the collaborative.

Oregon-Disability Navigator

Oregon has created a navigator position to help people with disabilities or multiple barriers secure employment. The Disability Program Navigator Initiative is a federally funded program sponsored by the Department of Labor through a grant awarded to the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. As such, the navigator position is focused on serving clients receiving services from the one-stop system or WorkSource Career Centers. The main role of the navigator is to coordinate and communicate with various case managers in the region to make the system more accessible to people who are harder to serve and who have difficulty accessing services. The navigator is the primary point of contact for clients, which streamlines their experience with multiple systems in Oregon. The navigator provides the client with resources and

support to meet the goals that are outlined in his/her education plan. As part this role, navigators provide a Career Mapping Workshop that focuses on skill identification, strength based workshops, and specific employment goals, accessible to anyone. The Career Mapping Workshop helps the participant to identify a career and education path and the resources that will help to reach those goals.

The navigator also coordinates the integrated service team, which works together to provide resources that assist the client in completing training. The integrated service team includes the following: the prison system, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and the community colleges. This effort eliminates duplication of services and stretches resources to help clients reach their training and employment goals. The benefit of this service is that it is client focused with the education and employment plan originating from the client.

As previously mentioned, the navigator role can be confused with coaching and case management. A discussion of and/or plan for continuing with education can be part of the services of the case manager or coach. Typically navigators do not take on case management duties but rather include the case managers in the communication loop. A good relationship with case managers ensures that clients are receiving the needed support services, allowing the navigators to focus on the education and training plan. As practiced by many, the roles are distinct, but in practice the lines are often blurred.

Alternative Approach to Navigation: Coaching

In lieu of the navigator role, some organizations are using a coaching model in which navigation is provided as part of a larger menu of services. As a result, navigating the community college system with and for clients is not a primary responsibility. While coaches play a similar role to navigators, more emphasis is placed on support services. According to the Commonwealth Corporation in Boston, "the Career Coach works at the intersection of the employer, education and participant perspectives to translate expectations and develop a roadmap for individuals." The coach helps to figure out what resources are needed and provides support that *guides* "individuals in identifying and overcoming barriers." BuRSST, which serves as an intermediary connecting the community and its resources to generate prosperity for low-income residents in **Burien**, **Renton**, **SeaTac**, **Skyway**, and **Tukwila**, uses a career coaching model.

This model empowers the individual to navigate systems such as education, community college and childcare. The career coach provides the knowledge of how to support the individual throughout their educational pathway. The main objectives of the career coaching program are to develop individualized plans, conduct assessments, build navigation skills, promote skill and educational development, offer one on one coaching and post employment services including retention and further education.

In addition, the career coaches are focused on assisting the participant to earn a living wage along the entire career path. The career coaching plan provides comprehensive career development activities to address challenges and barriers of participants. The coach supports the client by using his/her vision of success as they work toward goals.

Currently, BuRRST are three coaches in training. In 2009, BuRRST will launch the coaching role and test the curriculum developed for the training as well as the efficacy of the actual coaching role. Once finalized the training curriculum will be shared with the community (CBOs and state agencies). A key element of the coaching curriculum is shifting the culture of case management from a focus on job placement to building relationships and developing an entire career path with clients. This shift will help create a mindset of building relationships and creating a holistic approach to career and education planning.

PortJobs currently has a coaching position through Pacific Associates as part of the Center for Working Families. The family coach serves working families at the airport and assists with accessing services such as childcare, public benefits, tax preparation, transportation, and asset building. In providing these services, the Family Coach visits each of the Airport Jobs (a program of PortJobs) classes.

Next Steps and Areas for Further Exploration

Given the complexity of the numerous steps associated with accessing the community college and the barriers many low-income and low-skilled individuals face, the navigation role is an important complement to case management or coaching services. Based on the experiences of the Peer Learning Group in assisting clients with obtaining a certificate or degree at local community colleges, it has become clear that a new resource, one focused on navigating the complexities of postsecondary education, is needed. As a result, efforts have emerged – YouthCare, WDC/Pacific Associates/Shoreline, Seattle Goodwill and SJI – to provide navigation.

Using these experiences as a guide, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration in formalizing the navigator role:

- **Develop a system-wide approach to the navigator role** – Identify the best practices and lessons learned from existing navigator positions and determine how this role can be implemented on a wider scale.
- **Clarify the distinctions between the coaching, navigation, college advising, and case management roles** - To alleviate duplication of services, developing a shared understanding and recognized definition of the navigator role is needed. As part of this effort, a strong communication plan is needed between all stakeholders to ensure that each agency is being responsive to client needs.
- **Coordinate the efforts of existing navigator positions** - Developing partnerships, providing referrals, sharing experiences, tools, and curricula can help streamline the ad hoc navigation services that are starting to emerge. Through coordinating these efforts, the navigator role can be formalized and executed using standard practices.

To develop a deeper understanding of the navigator role, additional information is needed in the following areas:

- **Target populations:** Who are the participants that the navigators are trying to serve? Is there overlap in who they serve?
- **Tools and Resources:** The navigator role is relatively new such that there is limited, if any, information related to best practices. What tools and resources are navigators using to shape their work? What kind of training has been developed to prepare people for the navigator role? Can these tools and resources be compiled as a guide for navigators?
- **Data Collection/Outcomes:** What are the outcomes for each navigator? What types of data are being collected? How is success measured? How are the results evaluated?

Conclusion

Although some overlap exists between case managers and coaches, the key distinction lies with the area of focus for the navigator, which is access to and persistence with postsecondary education and training. The navigator, through intensive relationship building, helps to ensure that clients are receiving the breadth of services needed to help keep them on track with their educational pathway and related employment goals. While the navigation role has been integrated with case management and coaching, it can become diluted in the midst of other functions associated with these roles. The following chart outlines the key distinctions between navigation, coaching and case management:

Navigation	Case Management	Coaching
Focused specifically on the educational pathway. The navigator works directly with	Emphasis is placed on stabilizing a client and barrier removal. Case management	Supports clients by identifying resources that will help them reach goals. Encompassed

<p>the client on admissions, financial aid, course registration, advising, etc. The navigator also coordinates with case management to ensure that support services are provided and barriers are being addressed.</p> <p>Examples include: YouthCare, the WDC/Pacific Associates/Shoreline partnership, and SJI's pilot with Seattle Housing Authority and potentially the Church Council of Greater Seattle.</p>	<p>is generally "high touch" and encompasses a wide range of services that includes: conducting an assessment, providing support services, developing an employment plan, and conducting job preparation, job placement, and retention services.</p> <p>Examples include: Seattle Goodwill, TRAC Associates, Center for Career Alternatives, ACRS, YWCA, Neighborhood House, Pacific Associates, among others.</p>	<p>within coaching is a philosophy in which clients receive guidance and some support that helps them in developing self-advocacy skills.</p> <p>Examples include: BuRSST and PortJobs.</p>
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With the increasing emphasis on postsecondary education, services providers are stepping up efforts to link clients to the training and education opportunities available through local community colleges. Understanding the nuances of the community college system points to a need for expertise in this area. Formalizing the navigation role can fill this gap without diluting the services that clients are currently receiving. Although navigation efforts are in the development stages, they hold a great deal of promise for improving educational and employment outcomes for low-income/low-skill adults.