

DESIGN **Creating a Staffing Plan**

A staffing plan will depend entirely on how the college plans to deliver services. As the institution determines how to deliver services, it must consider how labor intensive the WFS strategy is and whether it requires skilled services. The planning team will need to clearly define the responsibilities and the availability of qualified people internally or externally. Begin by evaluating current staffing levels, noting any existing positions that could be redeployed or those that will see additional work volume from the implementation of WFS.

A staffing plan will need to include job descriptions for all positions— with details about the essential knowledge, skills and abilities required. There are a number of functional roles that must be covered: intake, data-tracking, counseling or coaching, outreach and management. Depending on the range and intensity of services that will be offered, there may be a need for specialists for specific service delivery. A service such as financial coaching requires a significant time commitment and probably requires dedicated staff, while connecting students with financial resources may require less dedicated staff time.

Creative Staffing

There are a variety of ways to fill those functional roles, and the college may be able to avoid redeploying existing staff or hiring new staff for some aspects of the work. Students who have received services are often willing to volunteer as student liaisons or peer mentors. Similarly, colleges may use students enrolled in work-study programs to serve in some capacity. If there are graduate schools in the area offering counseling degrees, the college may be able to take on as interns some of their students who need work experience. Consider the expertise of the staff of partner organizations—they may cover some functions that don't need dedicated staff at the college. Any time a college works with outside staff, attention should be paid to issues of confidentiality.

Ongoing Staff Development

While a team responsible for day-to-day implementation of a particular program can make a good start on a staffing plan, there are broader institutional considerations that may require support from the administration. Adding or redeploying positions necessitates discussions about a broader human resources strategy; does the institution have the capacity to recruit, train, retain and sustain the requisite expertise?

Of course, once personnel are hired, the institution should see to their continued development and training. A sustainable, scaled solution requires a professional development program that specifically addresses the needs of the staff, as well as clear processes and sufficient resources to ensure quality delivery and improvement.



Key Takeaways

- Consider how labor intensive the WFS strategy is and whether it requires skilled services for particular functions. Identify a staffing plan that fits with the level of services to be offered and determine how to finance the staffing plan.
- Think about the possibility of filling some roles with students or pre-professionals.
- Use the expertise of partner organizations.
- Prioritize continued staff development and training.



Examples

Des Moines Area Community College relies on many people at the college and in the community to support its WFS strategy, but they also have staff with time dedicated to WFS: program leadership and coordination; an achievement coach who oversees intake and orientation for WFS services; an employment specialist who sets up employment training courses and functions as an advisor and liaison between students and instructors; a transition coach who works with students to prepare them for interviews and has connections with employers to help with job placement; an outside contractor who provides financial education services; a dedicated staff person who inputs data on intake, use of services and outcomes into the college's data tracking system; coaches who provide wrap-around support, and community partners who offer additional support to meet specific needs such as substance abuse.



Tools, Materials, and Resources

- Sample organizational chart for WFS-related staff *Central New Mexico Community College*
- Sample job descriptions for WFS staff *Houston Community College Northeast; Central New Mexico Community College*
- Staffing configurations by type of service delivery *Tool developed by MDC*