

## DESIGN Expansion & Scale

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Scaling up or expanding the WFS strategy is more complicated than simply signing up more participants; it is a part of continuous improvement processes and systems change. The initial design of a WFS strategy should be made with scale in mind: what would the WFS approach look like at full capacity, and is the design for the initial implementation of WFS feasible at that level?

There is no silver bullet or “one best way” to scale. Local context, available resources, target recipients, delivery method and time constraints all drive unique approaches. When designing a WFS strategy for scale, you must consider institutional culture and constraints, institutional objectives and the potential or desire for change within existing systems. You might think of it as designing a landscape plan for a home. You select plants and place them according to how they’ll look when they’re fully grown; everything might look strange when there’s only new growth, but you have to be patient and nurture the plantings.

### **Changing the Way the College Works**

Scaling up is not always associated with securing additional funding support. Magnifying the impact of the WFS strategy requires an institution to change the way it does business. The college must align itself toward the goal of connecting all students with educational and economic success. Building the capacity and will to do that can happen in many ways, including: 1) changing the culture of the institution so that all faculty and staff buy in to the goal of clearing barriers to economic success for students; 2) reorganizing existing staff time so that more people play a role in supporting students; 3) making better use of technology to provide services to students so that face-to-face time with staff is reserved for difficult, individualized coaching and problem-solving, and 4) strengthening community partnerships to become part of a web of services that moves low-income community members along the path to better jobs and brighter futures.

### **Scope: Breadth and Depth**

The scope of the WFS strategy may vary as an institution plans for expansion. A college could go broad, reaching a large number of individuals with the chosen approach; a college also could go deep, increasing the intensity of services in order to increase the positive outcomes for a targeted group of individuals. The approach—a combination of program, practices and policy—depends on the institution’s culture and the needs of the individuals.

### **Categories of Scaling**

We have identified four general categories of scaling: person, place, thing and idea, just like the definition of a noun. Obviously there will be overlap in the implementation of any expansion; an institution may employ multiple types of scaling in a single solution. Each one will look different at each institution, depending on the breadth and depth of the chosen strategy.

- **Person:** This is generally the first thing that comes to mind when we talk about scale: expanding the number of individuals with access to integrated services.
- **Place:** This is another approach that fits into a typical definition of expansion: replicating the WFS approach in new locales.
- **Thing:** The WFS practice is replicated not in a new place, but in a new administrative home.
- **Idea:** This approach is focused on the individual delivering the WFS services. To scale an idea, a college can introduce new practices with the intent of changing behavior to improve the quality and increase the positive outcomes of the WFS strategy.

*Note: some of the content of this section has been adapted from [More to Most](#), MDC's guidebook on *Scaling Up Effective Practices at Community Colleges*.*



## Key Takeaways

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- The initial design of a WFS strategy should be made with scale in mind.
- Scaling up is not always associated with securing additional funding support. Magnifying the impact of the WFS strategy requires an institution to change the way it does business, which can mean: 1) changing the culture of the institution, 2) reorganizing existing staff time, 3) making better use of technology, and 4) strengthening community partnerships.



## Examples

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**Central New Mexico** plans to scale up by fundamentally reorganizing how the college delivers student services through staff reorganization and re-definition and by better using technology to respond to students' needs. Also underpinning this effort are policy changes on campus to promote retention and completion and engaging college faculty and staff in understanding their roles in student success through CNM Connect.

CNM is in the process of reorganizing its organizational structures, creating crosscutting "generalist" positions where staff will have essential knowledge in advising, financial aid and registration issues. Breaking down knowledge silos between these areas improves efficiency for students. It also frees up time for specialists in these function areas to step in and assist students with particularly thorny issues because they are no longer fielding the easy-to-answer requests.

CNM also is focused on using technology to leverage impact and increase efficiency. The college has a telecommunications call center and an innovative web query system that is set up to answer the most frequently asked questions posed by students and anyone else who contacts the school. They also have the capacity to arrange web cam meetings during coaching sessions so students who need help from a particular student services staff person or faculty member can make an immediate connection to resolve issues. It's quicker and more efficient than setting up an in-person meeting and more personal than a phone conversation, according to CNM coaches.

**Phillips Community College** at the University of Arkansas, using Career Pathways funds and other resources, has staged mandatory “poverty simulation” exercises with all faculty and staff to help them more fully understand the limitations experienced by students from a poverty background. “One of the most important things for us is that most of the educators have a middle-class background,” said Dr. Deborah King. “We may forget how difficult it is for our students to succeed.” To scale up their WFS efforts, PCCUA recognizes the need to change the culture of the entire college and the definition of how the college serves students.



## Tools, Materials, and Resources

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- MDC’s *More to Most* — <http://www.more2most.org>