

DELIVERY **Employment and Education Services**

One reason funders have looked to community colleges to integrate services using the Working Families Success strategy is the mission of these institutions: to provide educational opportunities for students so they can find meaningful employment and support their families. Whether that occurs immediately after completion or after transfer to a four-year institution, community colleges offer the courses and training needed to prepare students for success in employment.

But the employment and education services offered through the Working Families Success strategy go beyond coursework. These services focus on non-academic preparation and guidance to allow students to attain a credential and living-wage, career-oriented employment.

Unlike the two other pillars of the WFS approach, education and employment services are usually already offered by community colleges. Thus, the opportunity is for colleges to more effectively integrate what they already offer with work and income supports and financial and asset building services.

Broadly speaking the education and employment services can be grouped into three main categories:

Career counseling: Information provided to allow students to make the educational choices needed to find quality jobs that lead to career advancement.

Job readiness training: Services focusing on traditional “soft skills” such as workplace culture, time management and interviewing techniques.

Job placement and career advancement services: Working directly with students to find positions, including assisting in resume preparation and meeting the educational needs of particular industries.

An added element, particularly at the medium- and high-level of intensity, is the introduction of contextualized training focused on a particular industry. Providing information about skills—even of the “soft” variety—that are particular to an industry gives a student a greater chance of finding employment and ultimately career advancement.

This matrix offers more information on the different levels of intensity for employment and training services. It does not cover all possible ways in which students can be reached.

	Low-Touch	Medium-Touch	High-Touch
Career Counseling	Group sessions on career options; referral to resources about potential careers and occupations.	Individualized interest through skills inventories; skilled assessment with personalized follow-on results and plans. Check-ins with students at least once a term.	Students are engaged in similar ways to medium-touch but with regular follow-up to discuss career options and ways in which particular opportunities such as internships fit into career plans.
Job readiness training	One week or less of instruction in general job readiness skills.	Multiple weeks of instruction in job readiness skills with added contextualization for particular industry.	Similar to medium-touch, but with at least 50% of the instruction focused on contextual skills for particular industry.
Job placement and career advancement services	General assistance provided through a career center that includes referrals to job postings, career posting, and some assistance around resume preparation and interview skills.	Limited one-on-one assistance with conducting job searches, building resumes, and practicing interview skills.	One-on-one assistance with students that includes a high level of contextualization around particular industries. High level services may include multiple check-ins, including post-employment, to encourage career advancement.



Examples

Des Moines Area Community College employs a full-time transition coach who works with students to prepare them for interviews and has myriad connections with employers to help with job placement. All students are encouraged to participate in a mock interview with an employer.

Skyline Community College's SparkPoint Center is closely aligned with the Career and Employment Service Center. This Center provides a set of services to students including strategies to perform well during job interviews, improve resumes, explore career options and train for high-demand professions.



Tools, Materials, and Resources

- LAHC career mind map