

Challenges and Lessons Learned: Anne Arundel Community College

The grant is serving a high-need population but with limited funds to do so. Increasing access and removing barriers is an ongoing priority. This training is a high-touch, high-impact program effort. Career navigators and program coordinators work with students to overcome challenges and persist in their training through completion. Identifying both academic and personal barriers during the orientation phase of the program is critically important in supporting student success. With a structured approach to case management, career navigators assist students in navigating the program and provide them with the skills needed for future entry into career pathways. To ensure fit, students are made aware of the skill sets, academic requirements, and job responsibilities of the targeted occupation.

The coordination and daily administration of the project required existing college staff to perform new functions that they were not previously prepared to handle. Finding and allocating additional professional development dollars was necessary for staff and faculty training.

Implementation of the digital badge system at AACC was piloted with the Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project. AACC reviewed multiple digital badge programs at various price points before selecting an open badge system with Acclaim which allows students to electronically post badges in various social media venues for free. Working through the technical issues for implementation of the digital badge system required development of new administrative processes, but once we worked through those issues and the college's internal systems were synced, the digital badge program functions seamlessly.