

Challenges and Lessons Learned: El Centro (Dallas County Community College District)

The greatest challenge this past year has been due to a lack of additional resources for student participants. The college currently offers students assistance with transportation by providing a semester bus pass. This pass is beneficial to those students who have access to public transportation, but does little to help those who live in suburban areas where there is no public transit system. Other resources, such as gas cards and day care assistance, have been limited with the Texas Workforce Commission experiencing a waiting list of more 6,000 participants. These barriers have had a negative impact on our retention rate, which currently resides at approximately 60 percent.

We also have issues with the availability of lecture rooms and computer labs. Once a student is processed and approved, we want him or her to proceed directly to the chosen program of study. However, with the shortage of computer labs, we are often unable to offer the classes when needed.

To address these challenges, we are currently developing partnerships with community organizations that offer training onsite at their facilities and have access to those additional resources that help reduce student barriers to success. As we secure additional community resources, we are reaching out to those students who were unable to complete the program in an effort to re-enroll them.