

## **Collaborative Partnerships: Santa Fe College**

The Walmart Brighter Futures Project partners closely with college and community organizations to alleviate many of the aforementioned “roadblocks to success”. Mutual referral for services is ongoing. Some of the most important collaborations, however, are partnerships to provide certificate and credential trainings. Because we are working with many students who are also working toward their high school diplomas or improving their English skills, we are looking for certification and credential programs that are beginning rungs in career ladders, so students will be poised for further educational training and employment upon exiting our program. These partnerships are invaluable in allowing us to meet our goals as they provide the basic first steps that are not available in many certificate and degree programs without a high school diploma or college level literacy skills.

Project YouthBuild is a grant-funded program through the Department of Labor administered by the nonprofit Institute of Workforce Innovation (IWI), a partner CSNCFL, and Americorps. Project YouthBuild enrolls low-income students between the ages of 16 and 24. Students in this program earn building credentials, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certifications, and CPR and first aid certifications while they are building Habitat for Humanity houses and repairing low-income housing in the community. These students learn leadership skills and get the opportunity to serve their fellow community members through volunteer placements. They are also working on improving their literacy skills and earning their high school diplomas. SF Adult Education Program and the Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project partners with this program by providing academic classes and testing, CPR and first aid training, employability skills training, and computer and typing classes.

Due to an extremely high demand for certified nursing assistants in the area and an equally high demand for C.N.A. programs, the C.N.A. program offered through Santa Fe College fills up far too quickly. Santa Fe College’s C.N.A. training program only accepts 12 students five times a year. This limited class size presented the Walmart Brighter Futures Project with a programming challenge that was not foreseen. To overcome this difficulty, and to meet the needs of our students and the community, the Walmart Brighter Futures Project reached beyond the confines of Santa Fe College to Express Training Services, a certified C.N.A. provider, for additional C.N.A. classes. A new partner is a local security guard training provider. Completing this credential is seen as the first step toward a career in the public service field, police officer, EMT, or firefighter, for qualified students. This is a new training opportunity for Walmart Brighter Futures students, and there is a lot of interest in upcoming training. Finally, collaboration with SF College’s Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED) Continuing Professional Education Program is allowing the Walmart Brighter Futures program to create training packages for various student populations. A food service package combining the ServSafe certification coupled with other food related trainings is being explored for students with interest in the culinary field. An OSHA training and basic tools package is also in the planning stages. This will be for students interested in the booming construction opportunities in Alachua County. Additionally, short-term online certifications through SF’s Continuing Education Program are offered to appropriate candidates.