

Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project: 2015 Work Plan Maricopa Community Colleges

Major Strategies	Action Steps	Expected Outcomes/Accomplishments	Target Date	Persons Assigned
I. Expand eligible programs	Identify additional middle-skill training programs where students can participate	Identify additional programs and begin outreach. Possible new programs: Aesthetician, Distribution Logistics, Nurse Assistant, CNC machinist, Hospital central service technician, HVAC technician, Certified Healthcare interpreter, Medical Billing and Coding, Computer Information Systems.	By March 31, 2015	College leads
II. Expand the “Pay for certification exam strategy”	Use student records to better identify students who are three months from taking certification exams	Significant number of new program participants achieving credentials. Shortens time to employment. Target 275 student certifications obtained in 2015. Use specific tuition stipend support for certain program.	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	College Staff
III. Increase resources for certification prep	Funds allocated for certification exam prep and other validated resources	Remove barriers to successful completion of certification exams.	By March 31, 2015	
IV. Promote program/expand outreach	Create marketing to target students who are ready to graduate and sit for certification	Web site featured marketing banners, print promotions in classrooms. New participants enroll. Promote as “My Career Start.”	Ongoing	District Marketing staff for media production, individual college leads

Two Maricopa colleges (Rio Salado College and South Mountain Community College) and two Maricopa skill centers have participated in the program to date.

College student services personnel report that although students may complete coursework and training, they often do not take the certification exams that would give them workforce entry credentials. One barrier is cost of the exams; for low income adults this can be a significant barrier. Student “test taking” skills can often be enhanced by targeted preparation through courses or review materials. Costs for exam and prep materials are not usually covered by financial aid so this leaves students in a bind.

The Walmart Brighter Futures program had the foresight and flexibility to step in and help students at the critical juncture at which they are trying to achieve their credentials. In the ongoing program and in the proposed expansion for 2015, financial resources are targeted to cover the cost of prep and the certification exams. Depending on the college these costs may be classified as stipends, scholarships or deferral of fees.