

Community Colleges Creating Brighter Futures for Dislocated Workers



A report of the
Walmart Brighter Futures Project

LEAGUE FOR INNOVATION IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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For more information about the project, visit www.league.org/brighterfutures.



The Walmart Brighter Futures Project features a cooperative effort between the Walmart Foundation and a select group of the nation's community colleges led by the League for Innovation in the Community College. The League received a \$3.5 million grant from the Walmart Foundation in March 2009 to implement a project involving community colleges across the country for two purposes:

- ✦ to help dislocated workers acquire 21st century job skills and obtain jobs that require those skills; and
- ✦ to increase academic progression, retention, and completion rates for dislocated workers.

Eight community colleges (see page 3) were selected through an RFP process that required local community colleges to define a project plan that would best serve the needs of dislocated workers in their service area. Participating colleges accepted the challenges of the project, believing that dislocated workers equipped with 21st century skills, additional education and training, and job search resources would be

more attractive and accessible to employers who are increasingly concerned about their ability to remain competitive and profitable. What was not known or predicted in 2009 was that the U.S. economy would continue to struggle, leading to additional job layoffs and high unemployment rates. These conditions created high demand for community college services but significant challenges for job placement.

Despite the challenges, during a brief two-year period, the eight colleges established and implemented their plans. In doing so, they reinforced the community college reputation as responsive to the needs of our nation's workforce and demonstrated that, through innovative practices, these institutions can react in ways that serve the specific economic needs of their service areas.

This report provides insights into eight areas of the United States, including what worked in each area to meet the overall project goals. A brief overview is provided on page 2, with a more detailed description of effective practices beginning on page 4.

Innovation Reaps Success

Although the efforts at the eight participating colleges varied, each institution developed innovative ways to better serve the growing number of dislocated workers. Colleges consistently reported higher retention and completion rates by students in the Walmart Brighter Futures Project than other populations of students. When comparing project participant outcomes to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, overall project student retention was 57 percent greater than the national community college average, and completion rates were 2.6 times greater than the national average.

A great deal of project attention was focused on identifying ways that this mature adult, disenfranchised, and often desperate population could be better served by community colleges. While responsive, community colleges have become large, complex organizations with policies and procedures geared more to recent high school graduates than to returning adults. Project colleges formed comprehensive task forces to investigate how to make enrollment, financial aid, job search, and training more adaptable to dislocated workers.

Project requirements included collaboration with other agencies and employers to serve dislocated workers. The eight colleges found ways to leverage project funds to expand and enhance services for dislocated workers. They also worked diligently to ensure that training programs coincided with job availability in their service area. Improved communication among the colleges, employers, and other agencies was realized.

Dislocated workers were able to access a vast array of training programs offered by participating colleges, including, for example, business management, accounting and bookkeeping, information systems, computer science, pharmacy technician, medical coding and billing, food service management, advanced manufacturing, patient care technician, nursing, hybrid electric vehicle technician, sheet metal assembler, certified nursing assistant, medical office assistant, energy management, residential weatherization technician, and drafting.

Although these accomplishments are laudable in the short term, the project was designed to cultivate innovative practices that would lead to increased success by dislocated workers in the community college. Perhaps the project evaluator, Alan D. Degner, put it best:

The key to inspiring innovation is creating an environment that fosters trust and honest exchange rather than competition, and the Walmart Brighter Futures Project did just that. Eight Project Directors became mentors to each other and to interested colleges across the nation. They openly shared their successes and their missteps so that others could accomplish as much as possible within the short duration of the grant. While their initial achievements are significant, it is through the continuation of this sharing that the project will reach its true success.

Success!



Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) in Charlotte, North Carolina, one of the largest financial centers in the U.S., experienced large numbers of financial industry layoffs during the economic downturn. CPCC established a Career Professionals Center designed to serve these dislocated workers and complement the existing dislocated worker program. Because of the new center's success in serving dislocated workers, it will continue to operate beyond the grant.

Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio, established Development and Transitions Centers on each of its campuses. The college staffed these centers with individuals holding human services skills to serve as career transition consultants. This approach was so successful it led to a major overhaul of the student service area of the college.

Lane Community College (LCC) in Eugene, Oregon, has a rich history of effective dislocated worker training programs. LCC built on that success by helping to increase the technology skills of dislocated workers, thus empowering them to access the many Web tools available to assist in career planning, job search, and career mapping.

Miami Dade College in Miami, Florida, established its first Back to Work Center for the college district. The center provided services such as financial assistance to dislocated workers. Midway through the project, a need for more short-term job skills training became evident. Given the volume of service occupations in the area, medical and financial programs were emphasized.

Moraine Valley Community College in suburban Chicago, Illinois, provided targeted services such as intake, in-depth assessment, career planning, remedial and vocational training, job placement assistance to dislocated workers, and services specifically designed to attract and assist military veterans.

Seattle Community Colleges in Seattle, Washington, opted to develop improved services for dislocated workers across the college district. A web-based financial-aid assessment tool was created that allows prospective students to determine their preliminary funding eligibility for workforce training, and education planning and orientation sessions were established across the college system.

Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, chose to supplement its very successful existing programs for dislocated workers through five key strategies: recruitment, case management, career advising/workshops, funding, and tracking. Project data clearly show higher retention and completion rates for those receiving these services compared to students who were not involved in the project.

St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri, used project grant funds with other funding sources to establish navigators at each of their colleges. The navigators worked with dislocated workers on admissions, financial assistance, career search and application, and worker training. The college reports that these services were welcomed and extremely helpful to dislocated workers.



Project Results by the Numbers

- * 8,383 dislocated workers were directly served* by the project.
- * 3,327 (38%) entered credentialed job training, and others took advantage of the other project direct services.*
- * Of the 3,327 that entered credentialed job training, 1,866 (56%) completed their training programs during the project. Additionally, 960 dislocated workers who began credentialed training during the project are expected to complete training.
- * Of the dislocated workers who completed training programs, 906 (48.5%) were employed full time during the project timeline; several recent graduates were still seeking employment when the project ended.
- * About half of those employed reported they took jobs at lower wages than they made prior to layoff.
- * 1,147 dislocated workers were awarded Walmart Brighter Futures Project financial stipends totaling nearly \$1 million.**
- * \$3.2 million was leveraged by project colleges through cash and in-kind funding from local foundations, government programs, and employers.

* Direct service includes activities involved in intake, job readiness skills, financial assistance, and credentialed job training.

** Colleges were required to allocate almost 20 percent of project funding for financial stipends awarded directly to dislocated workers.

Aha!

A major factor in the success of the Walmart Brighter Futures Project was the provision of additional services to dislocated workers through navigators, coaches, or counselors who were dedicated to five key strategies: recruitment, case management, career advising and workshops, funding, and tracking. Adults experiencing the traumatic effects of job loss need assistance in many ways, from just plain hand holding to using technology in identifying the correct next job. The use of these mentors was consistently found to contribute to student success.

As an example, the project led to a major change in the way Cuyahoga Community College provides services to returning workers. The change can be described as follows:

The new structure is a simple organization design focused on two deliverables: career development/job coaching and proactive employer outreach. The services will be centralized across the entire district with Career Development and Transition Centers at each campus staffed with career services specialists who will meet one-on-one with dislocated workers, providing immediate feedback and job search assistance as well as providing group workshops.

This example is by no means foreign to other colleges in the project, whose leaders noted that a case management style works well for dislocated workers in that it provides individual attention as well as a group process to help the students adjust to new surroundings and perhaps a new life.

Sustainability

Each college in the project was asked to develop plans to continue, as much as possible, the changes and services brought about as a result of the project. Given that most community colleges are being squeezed between unsurpassed enrollment demands and major budget cuts, any plans to continue grant-funded activities beyond the funding period are somewhat unlikely unless there is a measurable advantage to continuing all or some aspects. It appears that the project attributes of higher retention and completion rates for dislocated workers are being considered favorably in future college activities and budgets. In their final reports, several colleges indicated that major changes brought about during the project will enhance or replace existing practices. Some colleges have allocated budget funding to continue new activities and others are using project experiences to change existing intake, admissions, and case management practices.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kenneth Watlington

"As a person who was unemployed for 14 months, I feel that the CPCC Career Professionals Center was extremely helpful, provided a wealth of knowledge, and provided a nurturing program to help people rebuild their confidence—which is a big deal when you are unemployed—to make people better job seekers."

In March of 2010, Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) opened the Career Professionals Center funded by the Walmart Brighter Futures Project. This Center provides job search and career services for unemployed and underemployed professionals and paraprofessionals using a competency and assessment-based approach. The career center uses assessments and competencies to provide participants with specific data to generate more job search and career options for themselves, specifically identify their unique strengths, and communicate their strengths in a compelling manner to potential employers. Career coaches use a highly individualized approach in working with participants to understand their needs, walk them through the assessment process, and interpret their assessment data to identify transferable skills. The coaches also use an individualized approach to help participants choose which of the Center's services meet their specific needs.

The strongest lesson learned from CPCC's work in this project has been that dislocated professionals and paraprofessionals want and need data and one-on-one coaching. The most in-demand aspects of this work have been access to the assessments and the opportunity to work individually with a career coach to interpret and use the assessment data.

The impact of our work is best described by the participants:

"I have been better at describing my abilities and interests as a result of [the career assessments] and your explanation.... The hiring managers with whom I met over the last few days remarked how articulate I was in describing myself."

"After today's conversation [with a career coach], I believe I've got a better grasp of jobs I should be looking for. Thank you for that!"

"Thanks for your help with my résumé. After receiving no response from employers or recruiters for months, I got three phone calls within the first week after posting my new résumé."



Kenneth (Ken) Watlington has a B.A. in engineering, an M.B.A. from Wake Forest University, and a wealth of experience as a plant maintenance manager. He was laid off in April 2010 as a result of his company's withdrawal from its industry in North Carolina. Shortly after being laid off, Ken read about the opening of the CPCC Career Professionals Center. As he worked with the center's career coaches, he found updating his résumé to be the first daunting challenge. Ken actively worked to leverage all of the center's resources by registering with a networking group and attending multiple workshops, such as the Interview Prep workshop, to build his job search skills. He continuously used the staff and facilities to support his job search. In August of 2010, Ken also received a scholarship through the Career Professionals Center and completed Six Sigma training and certification, which strengthened his résumé. In June 2011, Kenneth Watlington received and accepted a job offer as a plant maintenance manager, where he is still employed. This position returned him to his previous salary.

CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ryan Karg

"A few short months ago, I was looking to find employment that would lead to a career in the field of IT networking. After taking the Cisco Voice and Cisco Wireless programs at Tri-C® I found that opportunity. My deepest gratitude to the Walmart Foundation for making this opportunity possible and helping me develop the skills and confidence to enter this field knowing that I have the ability to succeed."

Ryan Karg, a Cuyahoga Community College A.S. Science/IT graduate, came into the Career Development and Transition Centers in August 2010 seeking job search help in IT networking. Employers had told him he needed CISCO certification(s) in addition to his A.S. degree to be considered for an entry-level networking position; however, he was unemployed and could not afford the class fees. Ryan received a Walmart Brighter Futures Project Scholarship, which paid for the technical training program.

Based on the success of the Walmart Brighter Futures Project, Cuyahoga Community College recently reorganized its Career Development and Transition Centers and instituted a new organization design and service delivery model to increase outreach to region employers.

The new organization design includes a dedicated employer relations team accountable for proactive outreach to employers in growth industries that is both effective and productive. The five fundamental tasks of this team are to build talent pipelines that bridge the college and employers; identify immediate hiring needs, near-term employment opportunities, and develop a talent management strategic plan; establish dedicated two-way communication channels and a feedback process to route competitive intelligence to appropriate college departments; identify and track workforce development trends by industry; and identify and nurture potential advisory relationships between faculty and employers.

Under the new model, career transition services and student connections with employers—which had previously been decentralized on individual campuses—will be centralized under an Executive Director, Career Development and Transition Services. The centralized model will have a significant impact on building the college's capacity to increase the number and quality of experiential learning opportunities for students and identify employment opportunities for students, alumni, veterans, dislocated workers, community members, professionals, paraprofessionals, and tradespersons.

With the enhanced centralized structure, Cuyahoga Community College continues to provide free services that will help dislocated workers acquire skills and academic/technical credentials to qualify for current and future job opportunities, support retraining and accelerate re-employment prospects, and find meaningful employment in growth sectors with sustainable incomes.

The Career Development and Transition Centers' services support broader initiatives in flight for the region, build a high-performance workforce by increasing education levels and 21st Century skills, and accelerate economic recovery.



LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Walmart Brighter Futures Project came at a time when Lane Community College needed it most. It allowed Lane to change the way it delivered services to dislocated workers by enhancing services and engaging dislocated workers in higher quality decision-making, goal setting, and career planning activities through weekly workshops. The following best practices will be integrated into the existing workforce system at Lane and sustained over time.

21st Century Technological Skill Development. To increase the level of comfort and confidence on the computer, participants were required to use online Web-based tools in the workshops. Each participant received an identification number, email address, and access to all of Lane's online resources.

Enhanced Career Planning. Independently or with guidance, participants were able to access career planning Web tools that allowed them to realistically chart their career goals and assisted them in accessing career technical training.

Online Student Portal. The online student portal components were the heart of the Walmart Brighter Futures Project model. All of the career mapping and other

website tools will continue to evolve and be used in workshops with minimal maintenance required over time.

National Career Readiness Certificate. By preparing for and taking the assessments for the National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC), participants were able to work on their basic skills in reading, math, and locating information, and demonstrate to employers their readiness for employment.

Skill Upgrades in Workshops and Classes. Participants had access to workshops designed for the Walmart Brighter Futures Project. Workshop topics included Career Mapping; Enhanced Job Search; Career and Training Exploration; Math for the Workplace; and Basic Computer Skills.

At a recent student forum, a participant best summed up the experience by saying, "Thank you, Walmart, for your support to people like me who needed to go back to work but didn't have a map to get there. The Walmart Brighter Futures Project has helped me put the pieces of the pie together and is sending me on a road to future success. It has been a challenging but rewarding program."



Judy Smith

"Brighter Futures helped me to navigate the 'now what?' after I was laid off. Workshops and classes were great, and what I needed most came to me from the Success for Job Seekers sessions. It was there that I found the accountability and the encouragement I needed to persevere for the past 20 months."

Judy Smith was laid off from a job she loved and had been dedicated to for 14 years. Unemployed for 18 months, she applied for more than one hundred jobs. She had a solid résumé, was articulate, and possessed skills in program planning, event management, and public relations. After a handful of interviews, she still had no job offers. She began participating in the Walmart Brighter Futures Project because her confidence was waning.

A comprehensive assessment of her skills and abilities reminded her how talented she truly was, while having a routine schedule and tangible tasks helped her feel more productive and raised her job search to a more professional level. She learned how to use networking to build professional relationships that provided her with new information and opportunities, and after much hesitation and anxiety, she successfully completed the National Career Readiness Certificate. She decided to take a few graduate level courses in nonprofit management and fundraising to help refine her skills. The result for Judy was not one, but two good jobs: Family Liaison for a district high school specializing in the arts, and a part-time position coordinating events for the fundraising division of the community college.

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

STUDENT SUCCESS PROFILE

Emily Anozie

"I am so happy to say that I am finally working. The Walmart Brighter Futures Project jumpstarted my career. It was truly a blessing to have graduated from the program."

When **Emily Anozie** came to the Center in October 2010, she was down and out. She had been unemployed for seven months and was nearing the end of her limited resources. She signed up for Home Health Aide training. As part of a cohort, Emily joined her classmates in forming a support network to help each other as they learned new skills and confronted barriers to success.

Upon graduating from training, Emily applied for a job as an ICU Unit Secretary at Northshore Medical Center. She started work on March 7, 2011, just five months after coming to the Center, and she is still employed.

The Walmart Brighter Futures Project Back-to-Work Center provided dislocated workers an opportunity to train for new careers as home health aides and bookkeepers. Many of these unemployed, dislocated workers were anxious about returning to the classroom. To provide support, a cohort model was used to bind the students as a team. They attended day-long Saturday or evening classes as a group. Despite racial and social differences, sharing classes and lunches helped students find areas of similarity and common purpose.

Students completed a federal financial aid application, an online skills assessment, FDIC's Money Smart computer-based instruction, and 16 hours of service learning, and they participated in a Lunch & Learn Workshop. Students were given a small monetary award upon completion of all program components.

Service learning opened doors for students who volunteered at nonprofit agencies. Tamica Ramos, Wolfson Campus Director of the Center for Community Involvement, said, "I am thrilled that we expanded our reach and collaborated with the Walmart Brighter Futures Project to engage students enrolled in noncredit courses in service learning."

Project staff supervised the cohorts by interacting face-to-face, by telephone, and through email. This intensive case management approach with cohort members may be the reason for its success; 92 percent (139 of 151) of the students completed all requirements and received service awards.

Graduation ceremonies acknowledged individual accomplishments, marking the first time some students had ever received a certificate of achievement. Entire families came to the ceremonies to celebrate; there were few dry eyes in the house.

MORAIN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Over the past two years, about 2,180 veterans have returned home to Illinois from Afghanistan or Iraq, and many did not have jobs upon their return. Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC) currently has approximately 700 veterans enrolled in classes, with the Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Illinois Veteran's Grant (IVG) as the two main funding streams offering financial assistance. However, many veterans experienced delays in training due to the excessive processing time for veteran benefits. The Walmart Brighter Futures Project provided stop-gap funding that allowed these veterans to begin training programs while they waited for access to other benefits. Approximately 37 veterans used the project funds to enter training. MVCC will continue to offer Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services to assist veterans who qualify, but training services based on funding through the Walmart Brighter Futures Project will no longer be available.

MVCC's project staff were involved in a newly formed cross-campus veteran task force to assist veterans due to the economic downturn and to develop strategies to help veteran students. Effective practices included the development of mandatory advising, priority registration, and a veteran work-study program, as well as implementation of the Combat-to-College program. To foster communication, MVCC initiated monthly meetings between the Vice President of Student Development, the campus Veterans Coordinator, and a veteran representative. These meetings led to the creation of a designated veterans meeting space, designated veteran academic advisor and counselor, workshops for MVCC faculty and staff about issues affecting veterans, and creation of a Human Development course for veteran students.

Through partnerships with local businesses, MVCC developed a series of courses to teach specific 21st century skills that employers seek in their workforce. Survey responses from local employers ranked the importance of certain skills and characteristics of employees, including decision making, conflict resolution, teamwork, and communication. Using this input, the 21st Century Skills series teaches these specific skills, and is offered days, evenings, and weekends to accommodate dislocated workers' schedules. The college plans to sustain this practice by incorporating it into the WIA service model.

Peggy Heenan

"Thanks to the Walmart Brighter Futures Project, I received the financial resources and job search assistance I needed to successfully transition from displacement to re-employment. I am excited about my new career and look forward to sharing my experience with prospective students."

When the company **Peggy Heenan** worked for closed, she was unemployed for the first time in 32 years. Her job search quickly revealed that she needed more experience with Microsoft Office to have a competitive edge in today's job market. When she saw information about the Walmart Brighter Futures Project at MVCC, she decided to apply. After attending an orientation meeting, she was amazed at MVCC's resources for dislocated workers and adult students.

"I am so impressed with the help and encouragement from the Walmart Brighter Futures Project staff at Moraine Valley," Heenan said. "From newsletters about local job fairs and employment opportunities to providing individual assistance, everyone is dedicated to helping program participants get the education and training they need to re-enter the workforce."

Within weeks of receiving her grant, Heenan was in computer classes, applied for an admissions recruiter position at MVCC, and got the job.



SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The Seattle Community Colleges Walmart Brighter Futures Project provided financial assistance in the form of scholarships and emergency stipends to 176 dislocated workers enrolled in professional/technical training programs, enabling them to acquire the skills needed to compete for jobs in the new economy. This funding was of considerable help in assisting these students to remain in school.

However, the most significant legacy of the grant is the institutionalization of the two best practices identified and replicated throughout the Seattle Community College District. These best practices included a new Web-based financial aid assessment tool that allows prospective and current students to quickly and easily determine their preliminary eligibility for the four most common workforce education funding sources and to register for an education planning and orientation workshop. This innovation enables students to obtain this information without having to navigate, as in the past, four different processes at different campus offices.

Seattle's other best practice, ongoing Education Planning Workshops, was launched at North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central Community College, and South Seattle Community College in July/August 2010. These workshops use a common district curriculum with an overview of professional/technical programs available at the colleges, campus resources, career advising, and placement test preparation.

College representatives report that they operate more efficiently and effectively as a result of these innovations, with more staff time available to focus on individuals needing additional assistance. Students report being more informed and better prepared to attend college, improve their employability, and obtain stable jobs that provide a living wage.

Catherine

A stay-at-home mom for over 10 years, Catherine suddenly found herself needing to support herself and her children after a difficult divorce made even more difficult by the ongoing needs of an autistic child. Formerly a licensed massage therapist, Catherine had maintained an interest in medicine. Having previously toyed with the idea of becoming a registered nurse, she decided that now was as good a time as any. Two years after enrolling in North Seattle Community College's LPN-to-RN ladder program, her LPN license enabled her to pick up occasional work while finishing her RN training. It wasn't enough, however, to pay her remaining quarter's tuition. That's where a Walmart Brighter Futures Project scholarship came in, enabling Catherine to complete her final coursework on schedule. Three months later, newly licensed as a registered nurse, Catherine finally achieved her goal of obtaining a full-time job, working days – an unheard-of dream for most new nurses.

SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

For many displaced workers, making the transition to a college environment is a foreign and intimidating process. Furthermore, these individuals are entering the college campus with many at-risk criteria, such as job loss, loss of income, low college entrance scores, and personal or social adjustment. Research studies have proven the effectiveness of raising the level of success among community college students when they have a personal connection within the college. These factors led Sinclair Community College to develop an intensive case management strategy.

The provision of holistic case management for displaced workers has proven to be successful, demonstrated both anecdotally from students and in the differences in GPAs and retention of participating individuals. The holistic case management has been designed to provide the following three targeted interventions.

- ★ **Elimination of barriers to enrollment:** understanding and becoming acclimated to the college environment, connecting to financial resources, and making academic/career path decisions
- ★ **Quarterly engagement/intervention:** connecting students to resources as they progress in their academic coursework to provide them with academic support and career engagement, as well as continued intervention to eliminate barriers and/or make adjustments to academic/career pathways
- ★ **Completion:** working with students as they approach graduation, connecting them to career advising/workshops, assisting with job search, and/or assisting with planning for continuous education

A guiding tenet of community colleges is service to the communities. The success of this strategy and the continued need within the community has led Sinclair to continue to invest in resources to support displaced workers via intensive case management.



David Matthieu

David Matthieu was laid off in 2009 and enrolled at Sinclair Community College to pursue Automation Control Technology. David chose to work with the Displaced Worker Office in order to get connected with funding resources, career preparation, stress-management tools, and other displaced workers. By engaging with the Displaced Worker Office, he learned that he was not alone and there was support to help him with this transition.

Despite the challenges that come with being displaced after 17 years, David graduated in June 2011 with honors and has been successful in securing employment. Upon graduation, David accepted a position as an Automation Technician with Omega Automation. This position is directly aligned to his training and provides signs of career growth. David's new boss, Mark Wildermuth, states that, "Omega benefited by being able to hire a well-prepared individual, enabling us to put him to work with minimal training."

Ebony Gooch

"I am so glad for the referrals [I received] during my training, as well as covering the cost of uniforms and supplies. With small children, I wasn't sure I was going to make it."

ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STLCC produced two videos highlighting the project.

The first, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIXHT6JH7ok>, features an interview with key college staff and a representative from BJC Healthcare.

The second, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPH-6FTh-kY>, showcases Ebony's experience with the Patient Care Technician Training Program and her excitement about her new career.

Several promising practices can be cited as having had a significant impact on the dislocated worker students, faculty, and staff at St. Louis Community College (STLCC). Two of these promising practices are described in detail below.

Ebony was a stay at home mom after being displaced from her last job. She sought short-term training programs at STLCC. After meeting with the DW Navigators, who provided career counseling and career assessment testing, she was selected to participate in the Patient Care Technician Training Program. This industry-specific program combines five weeks of classroom instruction with three weeks of clinical practicum. The program prepares graduates for entry-level positions as Patient Care Technicians. Walmart Brighter Futures Project stipends were used to pay the cost of the training program, including required uniforms and supplies. Ebony completed her clinical training at Barnes-Jewish hospital and graduated from the Patient Care Technician program in July 2010. Upon completion of her clinical rotation, she was offered an interview and subsequently hired as a Patient Care Technician.

Dislocated Worker Task Force. Prior to the Walmart Brighter Futures Project, STLCC identified dislocated workers by eligibility through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to receive training assistance in one-stop career centers. As a critical first step in improving the services to dislocated workers, STLCC created a Dislocated Worker Task Force consisting of the college leadership, faculty, and staff. At the strategic level, the task force identified opportunities for accelerated programs; reviewed policies, procedures, and processes that impact enrollment, retention, and completion by dislocated workers; and facilitated cross-department communication and services. With the leadership of the task force, STLCC initiated the process of tracking dislocated workers at the admissions phase by adding targeted questions on the college entrance assessment tool, Accuplacer. These questions help identify students who are displaced workers. STLCC also added a cohort code in the Banner system that allows the admissions staff to identify dislocated worker students.

Dislocated Worker Navigators. To implement the continuous improvement actions identified by the Dislocated Worker Task Force, STLCC established three new dedicated positions, Dislocated Workers (DW) Navigators. The Navigators were guides, career coaches, advocates, sources of information and referrals, support and retention specialists, and change agents. Their sole responsibility was to assist dislocated workers in having a successful college experience. DW Navigators became the students' major support link. By having an advocate, the dislocated workers were more motivated to succeed in their course work, resulting in higher retention rates. The DW Navigators significantly reduced the confusion, stress, and anxiety experienced by dislocated workers returning to school, thus creating a sense of security and a feeling among these students that they were respected as adult learners.

The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international organization dedicated to catalyzing the community college movement. The League hosts conferences and institutes, develops Web resources, conducts research, produces publications, provides services, and leads projects and initiatives with more than 800 member colleges, 160 corporate partners, and a host of other government and nonprofit agencies in a continuing effort to make a positive difference for students and communities. Information about the League and its activities is available at www.league.org.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are proud to support initiatives that are helping people live better around the globe. In May 2010, Walmart and its Foundation made a historic pledge of \$2 billion through 2015 to fight hunger in the U.S. The Walmart Foundation also supports education, workforce development, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness initiatives. To learn more, visit www.walmartfoundation.org.

The opinions expressed in this book are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the League for Innovation in the Community College or the Walmart Foundation.

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This report is available online at www.league.org/brighterfutures.

When citing this publication, please use the following format:

League for Innovation in the Community College. (2012). *Community Colleges Creating Brighter Futures for Dislocated Workers: A Report of the Walmart Brighter Futures Project*. Chandler, AZ: League for Innovation in the Community College.

Printed in the United States of America



Funded by Walmart Foundation



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