Educating Toward Economic Diversity (ETED) Partnership

PARTNERSHIP LEAD ORGANIZATION – NORTHERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (NWCCD)

SERVICE AREA
WYOMING: Campbell, Johnson, Laramie, Natrona, and Sheridan Counties. MONTANA: Yellowstone County; and serves the following cities: Billings, Montana; Casper, Wyoming; Gillette, Wyoming; Laramie, Wyoming; and Sheridan, Wyoming.

GOALS
★ Provide (re)training to qualified participants seeking entrance into high-growth, high-wage, and in-demand employment
★ Near tuition-free education and testing, leveraging other funds to mitigate costs the grant does not cover.
★ Apply intrusive case management practices to encourage participant completion, including connecting at-risk population groups to college and community resources
★ Address Work Satisfaction, Motivation, Reasonable Expectations, Clearly Defined Goals, Actionable Tasks, and Attainable Evidence of Success as key strategies in increasing retention, completion, certification/licensure, employability, and transfer to four-year university programs

TARGETED POPULATIONS
★ Adults with financial barriers necessitating tuition-free assistance are the primary target population
★ Adults with criminal records, disabilities, disadvantaged backgrounds, single-parent households, and persistent poverty
★ First-Generation college students, students from minority backgrounds, and U.S. Armed Forces veterans
★ Incumbent workers, displaced or transitioning workers, and unemployed/underemployed workers

TARGETED INDUSTRIES
Advanced Manufacturing  Educational Services  Financial Services  Healthcare  Information Technology

PARTNERS
★ Employers and Industry Representatives: Cheyenne Regional Medical Center; Computers Unlimited; First Interstate Bank; Manufacturing-Works, Inc.; University of Wyoming Family Medicine
★ Workforce Boards: Job Service Billings – Montana Department of Labor and Industry; Wyoming Department of Workforce Services; Human Resources Development Council
★ Economic Development Agencies: Big Sky Economic Development; Casper Area Economic Development Agency; City of Sheridan Planning Division; Energy Capital Economic Development; Wyoming Business Council
★ Education and Training Providers: NWCCD; Casper College; Laramie County Community College; City College of the Montana State University – Billings

ACHIEVEMENTS
★ The ETED Partnership is at 80% (643) of the target 804 participants served as of the beginning of Grant Year 2.
★ Average persistence toward completing a program of study is 81.5%
★ One college partner has a 100% pass rate for Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) certifications
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

★ Renewed focus on developing Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) methods to accelerate retraining for incumbent, unemployed, and underemployed workers
★ Use of CPL assessment to reduce seat time and student costs by crediting previous or non-traditional education and training, with the goal of increasing retention, completion, and transfer rates
★ Integration of intensive case management strategies into traditional advising to address the support needs of targeted at-risk populations
★ Use of short-term, non-credit training leading to industry-recognized credentials and licenses to return at-risk populations to the workforce, with the intent to remove financial barriers to traditional academic training programs

SUCCESS STORY

One student at NWCCD embodies almost every population group the America’s Promise grant is designed to serve. Tasha is a first-generation student and a single mother currently living at a secure Volunteers of America shelter following her release from prison, and is working toward an Associate of Arts in Social Science with an Addictions Practitioner certification. Prior to her incarceration she had been attending the University of Montana, but following the death of one of her children she fell victim to problems with addiction; part of what led to her eventual incarceration was her attempt to flee an abusive marriage with her surviving children, which resulted in her arrest. As a result of her imprisonment she defaulted on her student loans, which complicates her ability to afford her education.

Clean and sober for nine years, Tasha has been working toward completing her program of study while living in a controlled environment and no personal transportation; she currently works with the Gillette Abuse Refuge Foundation (GARF) assisting survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and the Council of Community Services. The America’s Promise grant has provided her with the tuition and fee assistance necessary to complete her education; combined with low income, she has been either denied or not heard back on scholarship applications in the past. NWCCD’s America’s Promise Grant Advisor has utilized intensive case management practices to assist Tasha in completing enrollment paperwork and connecting to community resources that may be able to provide additional support beyond what the college can offer. Following her anticipated release from the Volunteers of America shelter in May 2019 the advisor plans to continue an active engagement with Tasha in hopes of helping her avoid recidivism, and intends to help her locate employment while she completes her degree.

When her degree is completed in December 2019 Tasha intends to utilize the testing fee allocation the America’s Promise grant can provide to get an industry-recognized certification that will allow her to apply for jobs as an Addictions Rehabilitation Case Worker. With stable employment in an industry she is passionate about Tasha plans on eventually pursuing her baccalaureate in order to further advance her chosen career.