



Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board  
Workplace-Based Learning Initiative  
Narrative Report

**Sub-Recipient Name:** Clark College

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### Overview

The Workplace Learning grant was a program that Clark College partnered on with PeaceHealth Southwest, the largest healthcare provider in the area, to deliver. The primary part of the grant was to take a cohort of low wage/low skilled incumbent workers, really some of the poorest paid workers at PeaceHealth, and provide development that would take this group to a tipping point where they could see themselves as being successful at college.

The key elements of the low wage/low skilled program were recruiting the employees, providing some shorter term skills building training (NAC and DSHS certifications), providing remedial education so they could be successful in a college level class and having 32 students complete two college credit courses. The training was to be held primarily at their work location.

Online learning was a key enabler to holding classes at the employer's location and it became clear that there was a need to develop a web based introduction to online learning that would help those new to online learning be both successful and comfortable with this type of training. A second goal was to help those who may oversee development of training understand the options, benefits and limitations of online learning.

The final piece of the grant was the development and pilot of the Community Health Worker program. This is an emerging, high demand role that offers a new onramp for workers new to healthcare to have a strong contribution.

We feel we successfully delivered on all three of the parts of the grant.

### Low Wage/Low Skill Program

In the low wage low skill program, the main component of the grant, the ultimate goal was to have 32 incumbent workers who were among the lowest wage employees of PeaceHealth developed to the point where they successfully completed 2 for-credit classes each. In the path toward completing the college courses they received the remedial training needed to be successful in college classes. A number of the students also received training in marketable skills, such as Nursing Assistant Certified (NAC) and Healthcare Preparation Classes and DSHS certifications.

The program helped the workers explore careers and all of the students indicated a desire to work as professionals in healthcare. Given this desire to work in healthcare, credit courses that are prerequisites



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for an Associate in Science Transfer Degree were chosen for the students. The credit courses offered at the workplace to this 24/7 working set of students were online or hybrid courses designed to work with their varied schedules. Courses taken were Blood Borne Pathogens and HIV, Communication Skills for Healthcare Workers, Fundamentals of Healthcare and Anatomy & Physiology. Each class was 1-4 credit hours.

The program started out with 43 incumbent workers. Over the course of the program we lost 14 workers and recruited 3 additional students to meet the grant requirements. Of the 14 that left, only three simply dropped the program. The rest were a result of getting a higher paid job due to their training and feeling they had accomplished their goals, or as a result of organizational changes, total unrelated to the grant, that PeaceHealth made while program was running. We ended the program successfully with 32 students taking two credit classes each. Some of the numbers are:

- Number starting program: 43
- Number who left program: 14
- Additional workers recruited: 3
- Number completing NAC training: 19
- Number scoring 80% or higher on remedial courses: 20
- Number scoring 80% or higher on healthcare prep courses: 15
- Total number receiving additional DSHS certifications: 11
- Total college credit courses taken by all students in the program: 69
- Number of students completing two for-credit classes: 32

The program was successful in getting 32 students through the credit courses, but there is a larger success story to the program. The progress in most of these students from day one to the end of the program was strong and positive.

- For many, they needed to learn how to be successful—it was a new experience
- For many, they learned to learn—many feel it is a new life skill
- Students are communicating their success, applying for jobs and advancing to new positions in PeaceHealth
- Most are demonstrating a higher level of self-esteem and ability to deal with, and overcome, obstacles to success
- A majority have taken steps to enroll in college after the grant.

#### Online Learning

With the focus on workplace learning, especially with this population that worked in an industry that runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the ability to offer online courses in the workplace was key. Unfortunately, many of the students were not comfortable with online learning and did not know if they could be successful with online learning. In addition to concerns from the students, we found some managers did not have a good grounding in modern online learning. As a result, we expended the grant deliverables to include a program to familiarize people with online learning. This Orientation to



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eLearning is meant to explain the types of eLearning, the strengths of eLearning, the weaknesses of eLearning, recent developments to eLearning and how to be successful with eLearning.

We started out with a pilot face-to-face Orientation to eLearning, that then moved to a hybrid form of the Orientation to eLearning and finally a fully online version of an Orientation to eLearning. While both the pilot and hybrid versions were everyone-takes-all, it became apparent that not everyone needed all the learning. As a result we developed the fully online version to be a, roughly, 3 hour course that is split into 22 modules allowing people to take the topics that were most important to them.

The learning was developed to be video based and engaging.

The fully online version of an Orientation to eLearning was launched in early June and will be available over the next year for use by anyone. To date 156 enrolled in the Orientation to eLearning, with 129 completing training and taking at least one of the quizzes successfully. The following are the numbers:

- Pilot Orientation to eLearning: 43 completed the program
- Hybrid Orientation to eLearning: 19 completed the program
- Fully online Orientation to eLearning
  - 28 completed some modules and passed the quizzes
  - 39 completed all the modules and passed all the quizzes
  - 27 registered but did not take the quizzes

#### Community Health Worker/Patient Health Advocate

During the period of the grant it was clear that the changes in healthcare, in part fueled by healthcare reform, had created the need for a new class of healthcare worker, the Community Health Worker and the more advanced “stackable” Patient Health Advocate. We worked on a regional basis with the 45 members of the Southwest Washington Regional Health Alliance, who represent most of the healthcare providers in the four county area, to develop the requirements for these new emerging, high demand, roles. We combined funding from the grant with resources from PeaceHealth to develop the curriculum with a target of running a cohort of 15 students through the Community Health Worker program.

The full curriculum for the Community Health Worker (Phase I) and Patient Health Advocate (Phase II) of the program was designed, developed and produced in a comprehensive format. Input from the members of the Southwest Washington Regional Health Alliance was used to define the scope and overall content of the program per the current needs of community health, healthcare and behavioral health organizations looking to add Community Health Workers or Patient Health Advocates to their workforce. Subject matter experts were recruited to develop 11 modules of curriculum, for a total of 100 hours of learning, including the following classes:

1. Advocate's Role in the Medical Team
2. Communication and Facilitation Skills



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3. Fundamentals of Mental and Emotional Health
4. Cultural Awareness for Healthcare Professionals
5. Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle
6. Interpersonal Effectiveness using DISC
7. Safety and Emotional First Aid
8. Patient Support and Documentation
9. Improving Health and Healthcare
10. Advocacy for Chronic and Acute Conditions
11. Coaching Skills and Change Management

The curriculum development process involved research and consultation with experts in healthcare, mental health, public health, communication, change management, DISC behavioral styles assessment, intercultural studies and a number of other related topics. The materials produced include instructor and student manuals, PowerPoint presentations for training delivery, extensive handouts and quick reference tools for application of learning on the job.

An initial 20 students were recruited. One student had to drop out of the program before it began, due to health issues. One student missed two days due to work commitments but is scheduled to complete the program with the next class. The remaining 18 students completed the Community Health Worker training and earned both a certificate of completion and continuing education units for the program.

PeaceHealth funded the second phase of the training, and as a result of these leveraged resources 15 students went on to complete the full, 100-hour Patient Health Advocate program. These students earned Patient Health Advocate a second certificate of completion and additional continuing education credits. An additional 3 students attended all but one or two days of the program and are scheduled to make up the class they missed, earning the second certificate of completion once the make-up classes have been taken.

Clark received very positive feedback from students and PeaceHealth on the program.