

Funding for this program under the existing SBCTC contract enabled the four WDCs to continue and expand their efforts under the project's broad design. Three of the WDC's have worked on this project for upwards of twelve years with Spokane being the new comer at only ten years.

Each progressive year the projects have morphed themselves into an excellent and useful model that could be replicated anywhere in the state that had a regional Community College. The school is necessary for access and coordination with the Opportunity Grant students who are recruited annually to enter the Partnership internship packaging.

This most recent two year project saw the WDCs further explore alignment with regional economic and workforce development efforts that expanded the community benefits for both students and the host businesses. Originally the WDCs offered health care and an experience as CNAs or nursing assistants. Now options include manufacturing, public administration, professional services, construction, automotive repair, as well as health care. This broad set of offers has been valuable in recruiting students who are looking for opportunities in a wide variety of employment options. All of the WDCs are focusing on high demand career options that are specific to their employment and industry demands.

Excerpts from each project:

Northwest Workforce Development Council:

This program year, significant change continued to occur among the NWC, the Experience Work Project (EWP) and the SVC teams. In January, an additional EWP Coordinator was brought onboard part time to assist in the project. The result was a new synergy that enabled the team to more effectively recruit, match and place students to the employers with current and future needs.

The EWP/NWC team increased the number of new manufacturing and allied health tours offered to grant students this past quarter. An additional SVC instructor became certified to drive which allowed more flexibility with scheduling tours around students' availability. As a result, the EWP/NWC Coordinators were able to arrange manufacturing tours at Dakota Creek in Anacortes and 1-Tek in Bellingham as well as an allied health tour at Island Hospital in Anacortes. This served to maintain an average of OPP students per tour. This also facilitated an expansion of the program outreach across Skagit County by including Anacortes, and reaching into the unincorporated County. Our goal is to expand the project into Whatcom County and Whatcom Community College who schools a larger number of Opportunity Grant students than Skagit Valley College. This

would enable larger and more predictable results from the program investment.

The team continued to focus on improving efficiency and effectiveness this quarter. Due to the vastly reduced pool of students the team had access to this quarter; strategies were put in place to make every activity and interaction as effective as possible. The first strategy was to sort grant students who were ready for internships in similar disciplines and present them as a package to prospective employers. This gave businesses more options, which has proven to increase the chance of them hosting more than one intern at a time. The second strategy was to cease grouping students together from a specific discipline (i.e. Medical Assisting) under one coordinator and instead work collaboratively on the collective list of grant students. This allows each of the EWP/NWC coordinators a chance to develop relationships with various types of businesses and connect with students on a more one on one level.

To increase recruitment, the team agreed to meet only twice per quarter and do additional student presentations in lieu of the third meeting. During this quarter only 2 presentations were facilitated by Skagit Valley College allowing access to a total of 13 students. The EWP/NWC Coordinators are still facing a deficit of students and as a result, applications were reviewed, and students were approached from quarters as far back as the spring of 2016. Some of those students were no longer attending Skagit Valley College or they had other commitments that didn't allow them to actively participate in the program. The quantity of grant students continues to be an ongoing challenge.

There was also a challenge in the availability of the students. Many of them were taking an average of 15-18 credits while also working part time jobs and attending to family obligations. For those students who were nearing the end of their programs, scheduled practicums became an issue. In both cases, the team focused on what was most feasible for the student based upon their interest, and the time of year they had the most availability. For example, a portion of the students requested to be placed in either job shadows or internships during spring break since they would be out of school for almost 3 weeks.

The partnership of NWC and SVC with the Experience work Project (EWP) serves as a bridge between the business community and the local schools and colleges using relationship building and continuous learning processes. Both employers and students benefit from getting to know one another through job shadow and internship opportunities. This positive learning experience helps prepare students for the world of work and provides employers potential employees for the ever changing demands of a global and technologically driven economy.

- **South Central Workforce Development Council:**

This project year, efforts to recruit for the OPP program resulted in 43 student enrollments and 48 professional mentors identified to support students. YVCC's fall 2017 Opportunity Grant list contained contact information for 54 students, and the summer 2017 list included 29 students. Both lists were obtained late in the fall after several requests to the YVC Financial Aid staff. Then in winter quarter we received information on an additional total of 39 students. Then in an effort to upgrade our program we hired People for People, and they received contact information for an additional 43 students. Unfortunately, we had to request other College staff members for the information, and finally received the Opportunity Grant lists in a timely manner. This more complete information from the school resulted in more success.

Year-long recruitment efforts included bulk emails/fliers to program cohorts (Business Tech, NAC, MA, Education, IT students, etc.) with a follow up phone call or text message within the week. Students were invited to meet briefly with the OPC at either the Yakima or Grandview campuses. Emails sent to students were also sent CC to key YVC staff members (Department Heads or others who are familiar with and supportive of OPP). This was done to add a familiar element to an email from an unknown source; so that students could also inquire about the OPP to school staff members they already knew. Class presentations were made to two Business Tech classes in the fall and two NAC classes over the academic year. Medical Assistant students in Grandview also received a class presentation. To follow up with hard to reach students, contact was made in person after class dismissed for students.

While many students are interested and even enthusiastic about enrolling in OPP, the challenge lies in motivating students to want to complete the Mentorship or Job Shadow that they started. At a minimum, students are expected to complete four visits with Mentors. Of course, many students and their Mentors commit more time than that, but some students and community Mentors will not agree to this if the time commitment exceeds this. This year, to motivate students, completers were presented with Certificates of Completion and a notification email to the student's advisor/instructor of the student's successful completion.

Another new dimension added to OPP this year was the invitation to co-enroll students who had signed up for OPP to see if they were eligible for other programs and services within People for People. Students were helped with paid job experience, gas vouchers, job/career coaching, housing assistance vouchers, general support, and more. For

example, a Business Tech student was not only able to complete her Mentorship with office staff from the Yakima Police Department, but with co-enrollment with other People for People programs, she was able to get a paid position at the Yakima County Prosecutor's office, her primary goal. In addition, People for People solved the obstacles with shortfalls for housing and gas money. This student also received informal coaching on communication skills, norms for the workplace, and other soft skills. This is just one example of many students' whose lives have been changed after participating in People for People programs alongside of the Opportunity Partnership program.

Southwest Workforce Development Council:

The last several months of this year's project were very busy months for the program participants. We held classes on interview preparation, introducing yourself to potential employers, and how to follow-up on an application or after an interview. Participants were able to practice these skills at the April Career & Networking Fair. Over 20 employers were available to students to network with and inquire about jobs. Participants were also given the opportunity to get their resumes reviewed, give an elevator speech, and complete mock interviews both one-on-one and with a panel.

A key tactic that has been utilized the past two years is a hosted networking lunch with students and mentors to wrap up the program. Industry professionals shared final thoughts on employment and interviewing. After the luncheon, participants filled out thank you cards which were hand delivered the following week to employers by participants – each taking two/three cards and stopping by at the business locations to say thank you.

Our largest challenge to date has been the short program timeline. We have had a few challenges with student grades, but have come up with a good plan to assist those students through other departments on campus.

We continue to struggle with a large portion of our students facing challenges with housing. As a campus, we are building partnerships with local programs to ensure that our students have safe places to sleep and food to eat. This program allows us to provide opportunities to students to feel supported where other campus programs do not have the ability.

This was the first year that we have provided leadership training to project participants. It was very well received and many skills were learned on workplace communication and solving problems.

The MBTI leadership program is the same program that we deliver to regional employers; replicating it with students was just as rewarding and successful. This will be a repeated activity going forward.

Funds were leveraged to support the Leadership program totaling \$750. Salaries for Career Advisors and Educational Planners employed in the LCC Career Center were leveraged to support building participants' professional portfolios and coaching on interview attire to a sum of \$1300.

Spokane Area Workforce Development Council

The greatest success was our Navigators' shift to assist a student with completing and securing a mentorship. While in school, OPP participants were coached to adjust their professional introduction from job-seeker to a mentorship-driven pitch. While touring various worksites and working a job fair, OPP students mentioned that they were still studying in their respective programs and would like an opportunity to meet with someone from their business for two appointments to receive a more engaging mentorship session. This put the students in control of securing a mentorship that will mirror exactly how he/she will promote themselves when pursuing employment opportunities. Employers like CarMax, Excelsior Youth Counseling, and Christian Bros Automotive provided feedback to the Navigators about how impressed they were that a student was able to patiently take a different approach to career development. The 2018 spring quarter will be the last for these students and throughout the quarter, they have expressed interest to the employer about continuing mentorship sessions that could transition into volunteer opportunities.

When reflecting on the year-end achievements, the one not met were students *successfully completing studies*. The goal of 24 students earning their degrees was not accomplished for the following factors:

1. 1st – 6th quarter students may be eligible for the Opportunity Grant funding.
2. OPP does not require a student to be in his/her 5th quarter at the start of the new school year.
3. OPP ends one month into the start of the Spring quarter (April – June).
4. Due to the shorter OPP program year timeline, 10 students that have completed mentorships will not be counted toward *successfully completing studies*. An additional three students could also be counted toward the *successfully completing studies*, but have not completed the mentorship.

One OPP student was dual-enrolled into the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. Through WIOA participation, the student's mentorship interaction transitioned into a paid work experience providing additional employer interfacing. This prototype was successful

and will be added to the mentorship experience during PY18. *Note – students must meet eligibility requirements for WIOA enrollment.

Keys to this program’s success:

- 1) Start with a one-on-one meeting with a Workforce Professional.
 - Outline the mentorship flow and coach best practices in networking, self-promotion and asking the meaningful questions to engage an employer.
- 2) Allow the student to carry momentum into an industry tour/job shadow.
 - He/she will receive additional coaching from the Workforce Professional and take a self-sufficient approach to developing and scheduling mentorship activities.
- 3) During the mentorship, the Workforce Professional will provide a form that guides the student to ask questions about the industry.
 - The form is only an outline; the student will be encouraged to treat the interaction as conversationally as possible.
 - The student will also learn about the company’s culture and their hiring trends.
- 4) Mentorship to job fair transition
 - Through the one-on-one mentorship the industry professional provided, the student is encouraged to apply the insight learned to their preparation for a hiring event where multiple employers are looking to fill various positions.
- 5) Upon exit from the Opportunity Partnership Program, the Workforce Professional will initiate a review of key learning and encourage him/her to apply these steps when looking for employment of advancement within a business later on in their career.

Opportunity Partnership 2017-2018 Project Totals							
WDC	Enrolled	entered the program	completed	continuing in school	employed	drop out	Business hosts
Northwest	71	71	45	30	71	0	155
Spokane Area	30	30	30	21	7	2	16
South Central	43	40	31	28	2	2	46
<u>SouthWest Washington</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>30</u>
Totals	177	172	132	103	87	4	247

In summary a look at the overall project options for improvement:

Looking back over the past several projects and the efforts to improve the experience for the students, as well as the experience for the business hosts there are a number of improvements, both simple and complex that could be reviewed and changed .

- Active College participation in the effort.
 - In almost every project, the WDCs had difficulty obtaining contact information with the Opportunity Grant students from the registrar's office. This delay continues to affect the number of students served by forcing a late start to the recruitment process. Obviously Colleges need to understand the positive connection and results for their at risk students and provide the information requested on a more timely basis.
 - In addition most Colleges were not active participants in supporting the career connection opportunity being presented by this program. In the future the WTB will write a letter to the Workforce Dean seeking both recognition and direct support to improve the student participation and success.
 - If at all possible, the granting of a college credit for the program participation would massively improve the College's support and recognition of the value of this program as well as defining it's value to the Opportunity Grant student.
- Student schedules and more effective timing options:
 - Opportunity Grant students have very busy schedules with school, family, and in most cases some type of part-time employment. This time commitment often eliminates the ability for students to participate even though they have an interest and a need to gain the experience.
 - What is the potential of designing a funding package that would allow for the job experience and/or internship to take place over the summer so that time would be more available for the industry involvement?
- SBCTC invoicing schedule:
 - From the beginning, SBCTC has required the final program invoice to be received in late May. This was to discover if any unspent funds might be available for other uses. The May end date forces the WDCs to conclude their efforts before the end of school, short cutting the spring quarter and the ability to complete a full quarter of program activities.
 - Is there an opportunity to amend the end date to allow the spring quarter to be completed? This along with the opportunity noted above allowing for summer job exploration would significantly improve the experience and students ability to participate.

- WDC wrap around services:
 - Several WDCs noted the immediate and significant improvement in student success when they were able provide WIOA wrap around services. Those services provided a variety of resources and necessary purchases – specialty clothing, transportation, etc. that are not available under the state project funding.
 - Another key to success is the “navigator” who worked directly with the students to better understand their goals, challenges, and scheduling options. This “personal touch” proved to be extremely valuable in recruitment, eliminating drop outs, and supporting success and completion. Project funding that could be used for the adding of a navigator would greatly improve the program’s overall success.