



Promising Practices in Immigrant Education– Submission Form

CCCIE keeps a repository of community college best practices in immigrant education. It is our hope to provide meaningful information to community colleges across the country serving the needs of immigrant populations. As a first step toward developing a brief narrative describing your program, please respond to the questions below:

Name of Community College Portland Community College

Title of Program Career Pathways

Type of Program (i.e. ESL, workforce training/career development, community outreach/partnership, providing access/support to undocumented students, citizenship/civics preparation, etc.) ABS Career Pathways (Adult Basic Skills Career Pathways)

Primary Division(s) or Department(s) involved: Career Pathways, Adult Basic Skills (ABS)—ESOL and GED/ABE, CTE

Key Partners (if applicable, please note other outside agencies or organizations involved in the program)

Community based organizations, Industry Partners, K-12, workforce partners

- 1. Need for Program** (Briefly outline the significant need or problem that the initiative addresses and how long the program has been in place.)

Portland Community College has over fifteen years of history providing VESL (Vocational English Second Language) trainings in the Portland Metro area. Until 2009, these VESL Career Pathways were non-credit, and prepared students for immediate entry into employment in high-demand occupations. In an effort to increase immigrants and non-native English speakers' opportunities to progress in their career pathway, with multiple options to enter and exit into college, the non-credit options were transformed into credit Adult Basic Skills Career Pathways (model detailed below). These credit Career Pathways increased the stackability for students, as they counted towards additional college certificates and a degree. They also increased student access, as credit Career Pathway certificates are eligible for financial aid when part of a student's longer career pathway and intent to complete one-year certificate or an associate degree.

- 2. Brief Description of Program** (Briefly explain the purpose of your program, including whether it is an academic program [credit or non-credit] or student service.)

Since 1999, Portland Community College's Career Pathways Initiative has been a proven, innovative student success and workforce development strategy. PCC's Career Pathways offer individuals short-term, stackable certificates that prepare them for employment in high-growth, high-demand industry sectors while also providing a stepping stone to an associate degree, bachelor's degree, and beyond. This evidence-based approach focuses on easing and facilitating student transitions from high school to community college, from pre-college courses to credit postsecondary programs, and from community colleges to universities and careers. Career Pathways support an individual's continued progression along this education and career continuum, by connecting high-quality training programs and student support services. They also respond to industry need, and prepare students for middle skill jobs. This approach of connecting high quality training, college certificates, industry-recognized credentials, student support services, industry demand, and multiple entry- and exit- points into



college sets students up for success, builds their technical and soft skills, and provides a springboard into the workforce with clear paths for career and education advancement over

time.

ABS Career Pathways are specifically designed to meet the needs of non-native English speakers, including immigrants, who may have a breadth of education and experience in their native country but need to develop their English communication skills, earn industry relevant credentials, and/or learn how to apply their skills and knowledge within the context of the local workforce and community. ABS Career Pathways are also designed to meet the needs of under-prepared college students, GED students, and those seeking additional academic and career supports.

Based on Washington's highly effective I-BEST model, ABS Career Pathways allow students to take credit Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses while simultaneously enrolling in a contextualized remediation course. . It relieves students of the burden of having to complete courses in ESOL, ABE, or developmental education prior to beginning their Career Pathways program – a process that can be expensive and time-consuming, placing students at greater risk of dropping out. This model helps students simultaneously master employer-requested skills and contextualized academic content in a timely and efficient way, while also earning an industry-recognized college certificate.

The model also integrates work-based learning, high-impact student support practices, and partnerships with community based organizations and workforce partners. To gain industry exposure, students have opportunities to access employer presentation/panels, informational interviews, job shadows, tours, internships, and/or jobs. Career Coaches provide the critical wrap-around support, including: intentional outreach, individualized assessment, assistance navigating college systems, educational planning, career advising, soft skill development, advocacy with faculty and staff, job skill development, and individualized support finding a job and accessing WIOA services. Community based organizations (CBO) and workforce development partners are a key source of referrals, resources, and ongoing support for students accessing and completing the ABS Career Pathways.

3. Specific Population Served

- Non-Native English Speakers, immigrants and their first-generation children, under-prepared college students, GED students/completers, Developmental Education Students, opportunity youth, re-entry students

4. Goals and Objectives (Describe the broad program goals, and then identify major objectives that define how these goals will be accomplished.)

- Get students farther, faster: offer accelerated models that increase students' college completion, skill development, and career options—Measured by credential completion, GPA during Career Pathway, quantitative student feedback, persistence in college, and job attainment
- Increase equity, access, and diversity in college Career Pathway programs—Measured by student demographics and referral source
- Increase economic mobility for students of color, low-income, under-prepared, and non-native English Speakers/immigrants and their children—Measured by employment rates, wage prior to Career Pathway Credential, and employment in careers that offers pathways for advancement into middle and high wage jobs



- Employer/Industry Feedback—Measured by qualitative input, work based learning engagement, and student employment

- Increase transition of GED, ESOL, and Development Education Students into Credit CTE college courses—Measured by referral sources

5. **Outcomes** (What has the program improved / corrected / increased / decreased by addressing this need, e.g. retention, student performance, student services, work force training, language acquisition etc? Please include any data regarding outcomes e.g. completion rates, employment, economic impact)

PCC has been a state leader in developing and implementing ABS Career Pathways. ABS Career Pathways offer non-native English speakers, immigrants, GED, and developmental education students an accelerated path to build their academic, language and job skills concurrently. Students take a contextualized remediation course in tandem with their college classes to earn a Career Pathway credential. This innovative model has shown very promising outcomes (2009-2015):

- 82% Career Pathway credential completion rate
- 88% continued education and/or went to work
- 3.61 average G.P.A.

The majority of students in these cohorts have either progressed from PCC's Adult Basic Skills programs (ESOL, GED) or Developmental Education courses, or have been referrals from community based organizations and have been students who would not have enrolled at the college had their not been the ABS Career Pathway available. This has been especially true for many of the immigrants, their children, and non-native English speakers.

6. **Collaboration** (If applicable, please note the role of each key partner organization—both internal across the college campus and external—involved in the program)

CTE: Instructors are supportive and willing to adjust their pedagogies and approach, to meet the needs of the students, while maintaining academic rigor, expectations, and outcomes

ABS: Faculty refer students and market the opportunities. ESOL instructors have led the development of the contextualized remediation support courses, by creating meaningful learning outcomes and developing relevant, contextualized curriculum. This has often included learning very technical subject matter, in the career and technical field. Instructors of the support courses have also needed to adjust their approach, to meet the diverse needs of the students in the class (academically under-prepared students, to non-native English speakers with exceptional academic skills in their native country, to GED completers coming from alternative secondary settings)

Career Pathways: Provide outreach, recruitment, enrollment, career coaching, cohort coordination, outcome tracking, work-based learning, job placement, support persisting, collaboration with external partners (case managers from CBOs, WIOA Career Specialist, etc.)

CBO: Student referral, support completing Career Pathway, connections with resources, holistic support for the family, support navigating and overcoming barriers

Workforce development partners: Student referral, WIOA services and resources to pay for training/tools/supplies/industry credentials, coordination of multiple CBO's and assistance with casting wide outreach net, employer and industry connections, sector strategies and guidance on region's workforce needs

7. **Success Factors** (What factors have been most critical to the success of your program?)

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The Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education is supported and hosted by Westchester Community College



The model, including the career coaching, have a transformative effect on the students. Not only do the students build relevant academic, communication, and

technical job skills, but the model also creates a learning community where students from very different backgrounds can learn from one another. The intercultural communication and learning that occurs benefits the college community, but will also impact the workforce by skilling up individuals whom are prepared for the jobs and ready to work on diverse teams.

8. Challenges Faced and Overcome Were there factors that created challenges? If so, how did you work to overcome those? Please note any current challenges as well.

Faculty, both ABS and CTE, have expressed the need to be flexible with curriculum. While the syllabus provides an essential framework, sometimes specific subject matter or skill areas require more or less time for students to master the content. Faculty have remarked that while the learning outcome goals are the same for the ABS students, it takes an Instructor who is willing to take different routes and approaches to get there to ensure all students are succeeding. Scaffolding learning, and alignment between the CTE and ABS faculty are key.

A large, ongoing challenge has been finding resources to sustain, expand, and improve the model and certificate offerings. The vast majority have funding has come from state and federal grants, that have end dates. There are also perception issues to overcome, with many leaders seeing the model and approach as too expensive or a “boutique” approach that is not scalable. Some of Washington’s research and those from Accelerating Opportunity have demonstrated the long term cost savings and return on investment. However, in a time of decreased investment in higher education and declining enrollments, it is difficult to find the resources necessary.

9. Funding and Sustainability (How was the program funded? If the program was funded through a grant, how will the program be sustained?)

- Grant Funding: Including, vast majority from TAACCCT 1
- State and local grant/foundation funds
- College CTE and ABS Department has picked up the costs for two cohorts per year, and college General Fund support can provide the Career Coaching and industry connections.

10. Contact Information

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See the PCC Career Pathways website at:

www.pcc.edu/cp