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2017 Linking TANF Families to Employment and Economic Opportunities Meeting

Workforce Development Council of Seattle- King County Health Careers for All Program: Implementation Findings

Presented by:

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MEF Associates*

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The *Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) Study* is supported by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (Contract #: HHSP23320072913YC).

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What is PACE?

- Evaluation of nine different “career pathways” approaches that aim to increase education, training, employment and self-sufficiency among low-income, low-skilled adults
 - 3(+) are Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG)
- Study components
 - Impact study using random assignment methodology
 - Implementation study
- Sponsored by the Office for Planning, Research and Evaluation, ACF
- Led by Abt Associates, in partnership with MEF Associates, Urban Institute and University of Michigan

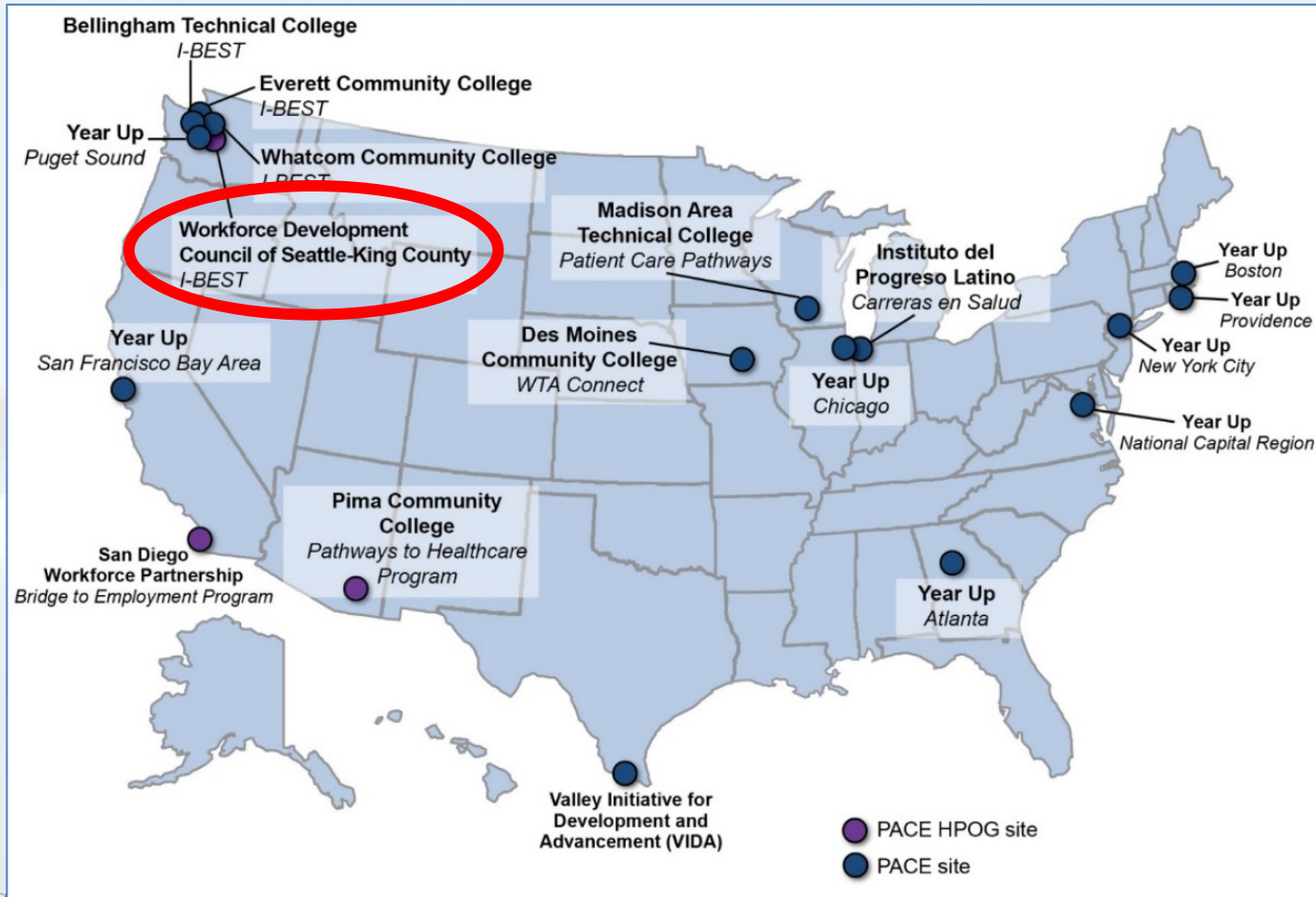


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PACE Sites



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Key Career Pathways Ideas

- A series of connected education and training programs and support services
- Enables individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance within that sector
- Each step prepares participant for the next level of employment and education
- Partnerships between education and training providers, social service providers, workforce
- Signature program components
 - Comprehensive assessment, basic and technical skills instruction, academic and non-academic supports, connections to employment



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Health Careers for All: Program Model

- Funded through Health Profession Opportunity Grants
 - Initial grant in 2010
 - HPOG 2.0 grant in 2016
- Key program components:
 - Tuition-free **occupational training**
 - **Navigators**
 - **Financial supports** for other needs (e.g., one-time rental assistance, assistance with utility bills)
 - **Employment supports**
- Targeted low-income residents of Seattle and King County, WA interested in health care careers
 - TANF recipients (goal was 1/3 of sample)
 - Income below 175 FPL
 - Barriers to training and employment



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Health Careers for All: Training Options

- Three levels of training:
 - Foundational (e.g., basic skills in healthcare context)
 - Entry-level (e.g., Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomist)
 - Advanced-level (e.g., LPN, RN)
- Two primary training approaches:
 - Individual training accounts (ITAs)
 - Prepaid cohorts at community colleges



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Study Sample

- 654 individuals were randomly assigned between September 2012 and December 2014:
 - 328 treatment
 - 326 control
- Recruited by navigators through:
 - TANF
 - Workforce system
 - Community colleges
 - Word of mouth



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Sample Characteristics

- 40% reported receiving TANF at baseline
- 80% reported receiving SNAP or WIC
- Low-income and most weren't working
 - Almost 2/3 had annual household incomes of less than \$15,000; ≈ 90% had income below \$30,000
 - 72% were not working
- Older than traditional college students
- Limited education
- Racially and ethnically diverse



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Success Recruiting TANF Participants

- Program exceeded its TANF recruitment goals for study participants
- TANF recruitment was a specific focus of program leadership
- Successful strategies, included:
 - Buy-in from TANF leadership in the region
 - Navigators co-located in TANF offices
 - Outreach to individual case workers
 - Shared access to TANF case management system
 - Training options aligned with TANF rules and timelines



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Navigation and Training Options

- Most participants had **clear occupational interest** at the outset
- Navigators provided participants with **guidance on available training programs**, but typically deferred to participants' preferences for training providers
- Participants often made **decisions about training providers based on schedule and convenience**
 - Resulted in **preference for private, for-profit schools**
- TANF recipients **could use ITA funds to cover costs of pre-requisites**



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Participation in Training

- 82% enrolled in any training
 - 45% began in occupational training
 - 55% began with pre-requisite (either basic skills or pre-reqs for nursing)
- Most participants trained to be Nursing Assistants (69% of those enrolled in training)
 - LPN was next most common – 9%
- More participants enrolled in private for-profit schools (53%) than community/technical colleges (42%)
- Completion rates were higher at private schools (72%) compared with community/technical colleges (48%)



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Navigation and Training Options

	Receiving Public Assistance at Time of Enrollment	Not Receiving Public Assistance at Time of Enrollment
Participated in Any Training	82%	84%
Prerequisites Only	17%	19%
Prerequisites and Healthcare Training	26%	27%
Healthcare Training Only	38%	38%
Enrolled in Nursing Assistant as First Training	50%	40%
Completed at least One Healthcare Training	47%	48%
Length of Stay in Training	4.4 mos.	6.0 mos.



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More focus on
Nursing Assistant



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Prerequisites Only	17%	19%
Prerequisites and Healthcare Training	26%	27%
Healthcare Training Only	38%	Shorter training spells
Enrolled in Nursing Assistant as First Training	50%	40%
Completed at least One Healthcare Training	47%	48%
Length of Stay in Training	4.4 mos.	6.0 mos.



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Employment Supports

- Provided by a combination of navigators and job developers
 - Individualized job search assistance
 - Job clubs
 - Job development
- Mid-program shift to earlier engagement with job-developers
 - Participation in job success groups prior to starting training



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Conclusions

- Implemented largely as intended
- Course-corrections to increase employment services
- Effective engagement of TANF population
 - Building on existing relationship fostered strong recruitment stream
 - Expanded training options beyond typical offerings for TANF recipients
 - Increased supports for recipients interested in healthcare careers



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Next Steps

- Final implementation and early impact report will be available at:
 - <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/pathways-for-advancing-careers-and-education>
 - www.career-pathways.org
- Intermediate and long-term outcome reports will present impacts at ~ 36 and 72 months after random assignment
 - Opportunity to learn about longer term impacts on earnings and career trajectories



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