ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AACC is appreciative of the leadership at the Walmart Foundation for their commitment to this initiative. The Job Ready, Willing, and Able Initiative would not be possible without the support and guidance provided by the leadership, staff, and faculty at the 17 participating AACC member colleges:

Arkansas Northeastern College
Grossmont College (California)
Community College of Aurora (Colorado)
St. Johns River State College (Florida)
Kirkwood Community College (Iowa)
Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana
Hazard Community and Technical College (Kentucky)
Northeast Community College (Nebraska)
Jamestown Community College (New York)
Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio)
Umpqua Community College (Oregon)
Montgomery County Community College (Pennsylvania)
Northeast State Community College (Tennessee)
Tarrant County College District (Texas)
Snow College (Utah)
Northern Virginia Community College
West Virginia University at Parkersburg

Funding for this report was provided by Walmart Foundation
hand-in-hand partnerships to meet the needs of businesses and to engage career-seekers in training that connects them to the world of work, community colleges, education practitioners, and workforce development can approach these challenges with a shared understanding and aligned goals. The NWWB Forum is an annual event that offers education practitioners and community college leaders an unparalleled opportunity to converse as leaders, learners, peers, and friends to participate in key conversations, generate ideas, and determine how we will respond to our collective and individual challenges in a spirit of growth and collaboration.

National Governors Association (NGA)
www.nga.org

The National Governors Association is the bipartisan organization of the nation’s governors. Through NGA, governors share best practices, speak with a collective voice on national policy and develop innovative solutions that improve state government and support the principles of federalism. Specific NGA publications to consider include:

- State Strategies to Scale Quality Work-Based Learning, by Kimberly Haugh and Brent Parton
- America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow’s Jobs, by Garrett Groves
- Tracking Graduates in the Workforce, by Garrett Groves and Iris Palmer

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
https://cew.georgetown.edu/

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce is an independent, nonprofit research and policy institute affiliated with the Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy that studies the link between education, career qualifications, and workforce demands. AACC frequently promoted the resources which are readily accessible on the website to the JRWA Initiative Colleges given the depth and breadth of content ranging from detailed reports on majors, unemployment and earnings to thematic issues of recovery or economic resiliency. Communities are encouraged to visit the center’s website for publications (https://cew.georgetown.edu/publications/).

APPENDIX 3: OTHER RESOURCES


The research included in this report was made possible through funding by the Walmart Foundation. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report are those of the American Association of Community Colleges alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Walmart Foundation.
LETTER FROM WALTER G. BUMPHUS, PRESIDENT AND CEO

In 2012, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and its 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges initiated a plan for community colleges to better meet the needs of the nation’s students and the modern global economy. Closing the skills gap and preparing America’s workforce continues to be a major focus of AACC and its member colleges.

Vital to this effort is the unique relationship between community colleges and business. Community colleges are positioned to respond quickly to the needs in their area by developing and implementing training programs specific to the local job market. Our recent efforts have focused on ways to provide such programs while increasing their efficacy. The Job Ready, Willing and Able (JRWA) Initiative is an example of that effort and directly supports the recommendation of the AACC 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges to close the skills gap.

The JRWA Initiative is an example of the relationship required between education and business. With the support of the Walmart Foundation, AACC was able to work with member colleges to extend access to vulnerable populations and provide support services and benefits in an effort to increase completion rates. This work was a true collaboration between colleges, industry, and the public sector. We are grateful to Walmart Foundation for providing the resources needed to forward the work of the 21st-Century Commission. It is our hope that by sharing our findings will provide the tools you need to increase student success in your community.

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
President and CEO
American Association of Community Colleges

APPENDIX 2: AACC PARTNER RESOURCES

Each of the following national networks focused on workforce and economic development provided these resources to the network for JRWA Initiative colleges during the effort. AACC encourages member colleges to consider these partners and their respective resources to better inform local talent development efforts.

AACC Affiliate Councils

AACC’s Affiliate Councils offer a variety of demographic, geographic and industry-sector specific resources to the wider membership. Considering all the talent pipeline discussions on engagement, persistence and success, AACC encourages readers to leverage and engage with the expertise of the following:

- American Association for Women in Community Colleges
- American Student Association of Community Colleges
- COMBASE
- Community College Baccalaureate Association
- Community College Business Officers
- Community College Humanities Association
- Community Colleges of Appalachia
- Community Colleges for International Development, Inc.
- Continuous Quality Improvement Network
- Council for the Study of Community Colleges
- Instructional Technology Council
- National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators
- National Asian/Pacific Islander Council
- National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs
- National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers
- National Community College Council for Research and Planning
- National Community College Hispanic Council
- National Council on Black American Affairs
- National Council for Continuing Education and Training
- National Council for Learning Resources
- National Council for Workforce Education
- National Council of Instructional Administrators
- National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges
- National Council on Student Development
- National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-Year Colleges
- National Partnership for Environmental Education
- North American Council of Staff, Program & Organizational Development
- Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
- Phi Theta Kappa
- Rural Community College Alliance

International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
www.iedconline.org

The IEDC provides leadership in economic development. The council’s programs and services provide educational opportunities, analyze and disseminate information, and improve decision-makers’ responsiveness to economic development needs. It also provides information on trends and best practices, networking opportunities, professional development courses, and numerous other services.

National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)
www.nawb.org

Community colleges and adult education providers play a crucial role in training and upskilling the nation’s workers. Closing the skills gap and creating opportunities for learners will not be solved without the combined engagement of community college programs, career technical education, certifications and apprenticeships, and the workforce system. By creating
APPENDIX 1: COLLEGES AND SECTORS INVOLVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Arkansas Northeastern College</td>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Grossmont College</td>
<td>Accounting, Banking, Insurance, Office Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Community College of Aurora</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>St. Johns River State College</td>
<td>Business Administration, Public Service, Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Kirkwood Community College</td>
<td>Advanced Manufacturing, Finance, Insurance and Customer Service, Health Care, and Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>Hazard Community and Technical College</td>
<td>Utilities, Utility Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Jamestown Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Healthcare, Business Services, Educational Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Northeast Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Cuyahoga Community College</td>
<td>Trucking, Automotive tech, Healthcare, Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Umpqua Community College</td>
<td>Wine/Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Montgomery County Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing Office Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Northeast State Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Machining, Welding, Chemical processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>Tarrant County College District</td>
<td>Office Careers Pathway: Administrative, Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Snow College</td>
<td>Industrial Technology including Industrial Manufacturing, Industrial Mechanics, Machine Tool, and Welding Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Northern Virginia Community College</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WV</td>
<td>West Virginia University Parkersburg</td>
<td>Polymer, Petro Chemical, and Metals Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For 3 years, 17 community colleges across the United States engaged in the Job Ready, Willing and Able (JRWA) Initiative. This was made possible thanks to a 3-year, $4.1 million grant from Walmart Foundation that provided more than $2.5 million to local communities. The goal was to support unemployed and underemployed adults in credential attainment, college training completion, and job placement in middle-skill jobs (jobs that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a 4-year college degree). The colleges originally aimed to recruit and enroll 3,798 participants in middle-skill training.

Each college identified the relevant industry skills and credentials focus area, target demographics, and industry partnership(s) that would benefit their community. Examples ranged from unemployed miners in rural Kentucky becoming electrical linemen, to sector strategies including industrial mechanics and manufacturing in Utah, viticulture skills and entrepreneurship in Oregon, office assistants in Pennsylvania, and certified nurse aides in Colorado. The sites were charged to align, redesign or reimagine college outreach, support and retention strategies, and performance tracking for middle-skill job training.

In addition to education and job training, the colleges aligned college-readiness services (basic skills classes, English as a second language, and work-readiness training) and wraparound services (career counseling, child care referrals, transportation vouchers, and general access to public services). Moreover, the colleges were charged with increasing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications for eligible students as a means to support persistence and completion.

The lessons learned by AACC with the JRWA colleges about intentional delivery of student-directed services from entry through the attainment of credentials and employment are showcased in this report. These lessons will serve other communities in advancing economic resiliency through a fully optimized workforce.

This report is divided into three primary sections as follows:

Section 1. Middle-skill Training Design and Delivery, which incorporates industry sector training choices and outcomes including scope and results of the JRWA Initiative.

Section 2. Scalable Practices, including internal and external collaboration for collective impact, and effective student recruitment, engagement, and post-program tracking.

Section 3. Leveraging Resources for Sustainability, addressing internal and external strategic alignment of resources and services to best serve student and industry customers.

SECTION 1: MIDDLE-SKILL TRAINING DESIGN AND DELIVERY

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) offers valuable perspectives on workforce and economic development in a changing economy. This is particularly relevant to the importance of middle-skill job training and the role of the community college and business collaboration.

Economic developers increasingly must expand their focus in order to create jobs with specific wages and benefits. They must nurture the conditions, relationships, and resources to enable and encourage the private sector to do so on a steady and consistent basis. To accomplish this, economic development has had to move from a focus on specific transactions that measure the number of jobs per project to a focus on system-building, nurturing an economic engine to support and sustain industries that generate a spectrum of jobs with opportunities for advancement. It also means prioritizing the alignment of economic development with workforce development and education to ensure that people are being trained to meet industry needs. (Creating Quality Jobs: Transforming the Economic Development Landscape, IEDC, 2010)
The JRWA Initiative was designed to build the capacity of the community colleges and local college workforce and economic development partners to design ongoing middle-skill training pipelines and networks to support college completion, credential attainment, and job access.

To ensure successful outcomes, the colleges drew on the expertise of four mentor colleges selected for the initiative to share their experiences and offer guidance. The mentor colleges were Arkansas Northeastern College, Northern Community College (Nebraska), Northern Virginia Community College, and Umpqua Community College (Oregon). Working with peer institutions greatly empowered the mentee sites to ask questions about implementation and reduced learning curve time.

As the participating colleges began their work, they assessed the organization and delivery of middle-skill employment training and access for adult learners to include the following elements:

- **Industry sector choices.** What industry sector best aligns with local labor market middle-skill job needs and projections?
- **Counting what matters.** What measures need to be tracked and for what purpose? Are the jobs attained by completers middle-skill jobs at middle-skill wages?
- **Internal collective impact strategies.** How can departments within the college collaborate to support the delivery of student-directed services that enable access, retention, completion, and job attainment?
- **External partnerships.** What external collaboration and collective impact strategies support the effective delivery of student-directed services that ensure access, retention, completion, and job attainment?

### INDUSTRY SECTOR CHOICES

The first step in aligning labor market demand and supply required examining local labor data to identify high-demand jobs on the horizon and the associated skill set and credentials required to fill those positions. This required updated labor market information from government data sources and discussions with local industry, business organizations, and Workforce Investment Boards.

AACC reviewed industry data through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Virtual Career Network (VCN) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) confirming that each college chose industry sectors and employment opportunities aligned with the current, as well as the projected, needs of the local economy.

As colleges aimed to strengthen their workforce and economic development efforts, they recognized that adaptation and agility were essential for success. Over the 3-year period, industry sectors evolved, leadership and champions changed, and the colleges were diligent in their reassessments to reaffirm their course and momentum. Arkansas Northeastern College was challenged as their business partner, a new major steel company, pushed momentum. West Virginia University at Parkersburg also as their business partner, a new major steel company, pushed back its start time. West Virginia University at Parkersburg also experienced delays as local industry partner mergers and a reorganization influenced timing and the scope of their Earn and Learn program. Several of the JRWA colleges revised their target occupation training and placement emphasis to reflect changes in their local economies during the project. Other colleges expanded certification areas within the industry area to meet industry demands or strengthen career pathway options.

### COUNTING WHAT MATTERS:

#### JRWA INITIATIVE DESIGN AND OUTCOMES

The JRWA Initiative began with ambitious goals to develop innovative training strategies that assist job seekers in preparing for middle-skill occupations. The colleges used both qualitative and quantitative data, and current labor market demand information.

**Tools You Can Use**

A comparison of the colleges’ reported job placements were aligned with their corresponding Occupational Network (O’Net) codes to establish the level of skills proficiency. O’Net (www.onetonline.org) ranks occupations from 1 to 5 based on the relative complexity and the level of training and experience required to enter these fields. Middle-skill jobs rank 2 or 3 in this system. Of the 1,306 placements with reported wages, 93% were identified as middle-skill.

The reported placement data also indicated that the majority of job placements were associated with in-demand and high-growth occupations with promising career pathways as projected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ohroi). This was examined using national labor market demand projections, and where available, against regional projections.

The Virtual Career Network (www.vcn.org) also was used throughout the project as a career exploration resource by the colleges and as a performance measurement tool used to analyze results. Among the many features of the VCN are links to Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data, O’Net occupational data, and current labor market demand information.

**Agility.** Agility is particularly critical for colleges and workforce boards in order for them to respond quickly to current and future customer demands. This requires both partners having the capacity to identify market and employer needs and then to respond to the economic needs of families in the community-at-large. This holistic approach to a needs assessment is one that colleges and workforce boards must adopt as they look beyond the transactional to a strategic workforce development system, and the dynamic needs and assets of the region.

**Funding.** A critical factor in a dynamic and responsive system is having the financing to effectuate skills development and credentials attainment. The exploration of financing needs to include a broad analysis of available funding from federal, state, and local government resources, as well as from individual and collective industry sector business organizations; and an individual’s own contribution through tuition. Joint funding through apprenticeships and other work and learn programs are becoming more prevalent in the quest for sustainability of programs and career pathways.

**Advocacy.** Any in-depth analysis of the ability to meet a region’s workforce needs, should include an advocacy component. This can be a challenging conversation for workforce boards because of the prohibition of lobbying with federal funds. However, beyond lobbying, advocacy means showing local, state, and federal elected officials how their investments in economic development, housing, transportation, childcare, and tuition assistance result in regional growth and healthy economies. Joint discussions also can identify supporting or disruptive policies, as well as clarify misunderstandings about legislative intent or regulatory language. Ultimately, where financial resources restrict labor force preparedness community colleges and workforce boards need to work collaboratively to find a way to address them without running afoul of anti-lobbying laws. Advocacy must be directed at supporting a community’s efforts to move forward.

**Community.** Sustaining responsive workforce development systems is not some esoteric exercise. Workforce development is about community—our families, neighbors, government leaders, businesses and organizations. Conversations around sustainability can be complicated and may seem to reflect competing interests. Therefore, sustaining viable solutions to workforce and economic development needs is everybody’s concern. Community colleges and local business-led workforce development boards are the drivers of these solutions which must focus on both the transactional and the broader vision of a regional workforce development system.
Questions to consider to build sustainability and diversification from the outset

1. How do you tie college program sustainability into local and regional economic growth planning and strategies?
2. What is the role of local and state government in sustainability planning (e.g. Workforce Development Boards, U.S. Department of Agriculture SNAP E&T and tracking for accountability and ongoing investment? 
3. How can program success data be used in value propositions and funding proposals? (e.g. training completion and placement data in middle-skill jobs?)

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Sustaining the political and economic will be successfully plan for and maintain labor market demand and supply balance requires a significant commitment by local leaders, and colleges and their respective workforce partners are critical players in those discussions. Working together with the National Association of Workforce Boards during the JRWA Initiative, the colleges were consistently addressing and updating their plans related to the following. Colleges across the country are encouraged to model after their success and use similar discussions in their own communities.

Career pathways. Community colleges and local and regional business-led workforce development boards are anchors in their region’s workforce development systems. Colleges and the boards are most responsible for setting individuals on a career pathway and providing them with the credentials that make them competitive in the labor market; while simultaneously anticipating and meeting their regional businesses’ needs for skilled workers. One of the big policy questions around career pathways is how to put individuals on a path to both short-term and long-term employment, which speaks to both ensuring their resilience and adaptability to the market.

This becomes a critical issue in developing effective career pathways at a regional level. This is not simple as it requires both community colleges and workforce boards to engage in such transactional work as monitoring employers’ job vacancies, assessing individual’s skills, and conducting customized screening and training for businesses. These partners also have to rise above the transactional to engage in discussions around policy. Policy discussions are what ensure the resilience and adaptability of both the job seeker and the workforce development system in the region.

The customer. The discussion on resilience highlights the importance of serving two customers: businesses and individuals. Community colleges and workforce development boards must conduct an analysis of business needs and take that information to the next level of examining the region’s economic development projects and plans. This analysis will inform and identity changing and future worker needs. Economic development investments achieve full success when the workforce factor is taken into account. The workforce development system needs to identify the characteristics of the labor market, the composition of the labor force, the critical industry sectors, and regional training capacity and assets. The workforce development board also needs to adopt at identifying the factors that are necessary for the workforce development system to meet the opportunities being created by local and regional economic development.

TOOL YOU CAN USE

SUCCESS STORIES

Michelle, Umpqua Community College (Oregon)

Michelle is studying viticulture and enology at Umpqua Community College’s Southern Oregon Wine Institute (SOWI). She moved to the Roseburg area from Portland, looking for a career change. She worked in the SOWI cellar and vineyard, gaining hands-on winemaking experience. She also worked in the SOWI tasting room, and, in 2015, became beverage captain, which has given her leadership experience.

Working in the front of house has become her forte because she enjoys talking to guests about SOWI wines and giving tours of the facility.

“I’ve never had so much fun in a work environment,” Michelle says. “It really helps when you are passionate about wine.”

Lawrence, Kirkwood Community College (Iowa)

When Lawrence enrolled in Kirkwood’s Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE) welding program he was employed part-time through a temporary agency, working at a packaging company making $8.50 an hour. Lawrence was also working on his high school diploma when he first came to talk with KPACE staff. He recognized that he needed more training to get his life back on track.

During training, Lawrence was referred to career services for resume development and to work on his communication skills for interviews. Lawrence completed training in July 2015, with a production Mig welding certification, as well as GSHA and forklift certifications. He started working part-time through another temporary agency at Frontier Co-op on the production line and was later hired as a full-time, permanent employee with benefits making $13.80 an hour.

Lawrence is still working on his diploma. With his increased salary, he is working with his bank to improve his credit to buy a home.

Success stories reflect the range of programs leading to industry credentials offered by the college. Middle-skill training, entered and completed. 4,911 students entered middle-skill training. As of October 2016, 3,005 students completed training.

Credentials earned. A significant success of the JRWA Initiative was the number of degrees and industry-recognized credentials earned by participants. A total of 5,335 credentials were earned, with many students earning multiple credentials, reflecting the range of programs leading to industry credentials offered by the college.

Job placements. At the time of this reporting, the total of 1,733 job placements has met approximately 70% of the original 2,074 goal. This includes the number of incumbent workers who achieved wage gains as a result of the training. Of note is that AACC expects that many more participants will complete training and attain employment by the end of the grant period.

Wage increases (for incumbent workers). The attainment of new credentials clearly improved the employment prospects of participants who held jobs throughout the training. More than 650 of the JRWA participants reported wage increases that are directly attributable to the JRWA training they received.

These seven areas quantified student engagement and performance in local JRWA Initiative-directed activities. Narrative and quantitative analysis throughout the initiative. They tracked demographic data from entry into JRWA activities through training completion, credential attainment, job entry, and employment retention.

The JRWA Initiative encompassed more than just technical training. In order for some students to be successful with training or academic preparation, barriers had to be overcome and services provided. The following is a simplified look at the many facets of JRWA activities, performance, and data tracking.

College readiness. The JRWA colleges anticipated that many of their participants would need some educational development and counseling to succeed. No specific goals were established, but the colleges reported that 3,772 participants received college readiness support in the form of basic skills classes, English as a second language, and work-readiness training.

Wraparound services. The type of support services provided to participants was also accounted for in data reporting. These included work readiness, job search assistance, child care referrals, transportation, and general access to public services. Based on the anecdotal information collected, providing these resources to the participants helped improve the completion rate. Moreover, several JRWA Initiative colleges utilized grant funds to hire JRWA coordinators or success navigators whose job was to provide counseling, assess needs, and provide direct resources to students for transportation, supplies, or tools needed to fully participate in the program. A total of 11,000+ wraparound services were provided to JRWA Initiative participants.

SNAP applicants. A priority of the JRWA Initiative was making participants aware of the existence of SNAP benefits for those who qualify, with a goal to increase the number of SNAP applicants at the colleges. All of the colleges highlighted SNAP benefits in their outreach and admissions process and provided assistance where needed or requested to help facilitate the application process. A total of 3,941 new SNAP applications were submitted during the JRWA Initiative.

SUCCESS STORIES
SECTION 2: SCALABLE PRACTICES

This section of the report illustrates strategies and practices learned from the JRWA Initiative colleges and other research that reinforce key elements of successful industry-driven training. These focus on two major areas: 1) collaboration across the college and with its community partners to serve industry and student customers; and 2) student recruitment, engagement, and post-program tracking.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT STRATEGIES THROUGH COLLABORATION

Many community colleges are experiencing reduced budgets, lower enrollment, shifting labor market needs, and unemployed residents lacking requisite college or job ready skills to access or complete training programs. These populations include workers laid off from obsolete jobs, downsizing, or closures, limited English speaking immigrants, older workers needing to re-enter the workforce, veterans needing civilian job transition services, and low-wage workers looking for advancement.

The diverse needs of these populations, all seeking to advance their economic stability, have challenged colleges’ limited resources to fully address work readiness needs. JRWA colleges provided valuable insights into the use of internal and external partnerships or collaborative strategies to maximize resources.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

The “win-win” of collective impact strategies was seen across the board with the colleges. In some cases, support or career services had not been as accessible or targeted to non-traditional students or those in non-credit training areas. JRWA leaders, regardless of their location in the college, worked across departments to maximize resources for the targeted students. While community colleges are essential to the wellbeing and growth of local economies, they use differing strategies to address the diverse needs of community residents seeking college-level training.

By changing internal collaborations, the participating colleges were able to expand activities in five priority categories: developmental/basic education, career services, financial aid, student services, and employment placement.

EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT JRWA ACHIEVEMENTS:

- In the Tarrant Community College District (Texas), a career exploration track was developed in direct response to the JRWA Initiative. A working partnership was established with internal partners, including all five campuses and the Workforce and Corporate Solutions division of the Community and Industry Education (CIE) Services Department. Perkins Grant funds were targeted to advisors to provide service to the CIE students across the district for the first time in the history of the district.
- At Jamestown Community College (New York), JRWA advanced the college’s collaboration across silos to meet grant objectives. Academic affairs, student development, and continuing education discussed how to support all students regardless of enrollment in academic programs or continuing education pathways. For example, the college created a remedial course offered in the summer. The Affordable (C2I) courses in reading and math allow students to improve their skills and retest into college-level coursework.
- West Virginia University at Parkersburg incorporated a resume, interview skills, and personal dress presentation into the classroom.
- Snow College (Utah) ensured that collaboration with the college’s career services was better utilized. There were many staff members working on related workforce issues under different organizational umbrellas at the college. While they were doing good work, they were not necessarily communicating about that work or leveraging each other’s work. Some of the activities have been consolidated and the interchange between these departments and individuals has increased to better serve students.
- At Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio), JRWA leaders worked with financial aid to make sure program participants were referred to the Project Go program, an initiative that helps students sign up for SNAP, among other public assistance programs. A collaborative process also was put in place to ensure that students who had applied for and received SNAP were accurately tracked at all campuses.

COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

- Northeast Community College utilizes a strategic planning model framework on which it aligns the goals and strategies of new proposals and new programs with the college’s goals and strategies. Periodically the strategies and goals of the programs are measured as to their progress in attaining goals. In effect, projects will not be accepted or sustained if they do not meet the test of alignment with college goals, strategies, and practices. Specific to the JRWA Initiative, the college looked for means to incorporate the costs into the general operating budget, mobilize networks to promote the program, and promote stewardship for the betterment of the campus and community.
- The JRWA Initiative had a significant impact on Community College of Aurora’s (CCA) workforce practices in two ways: 1) the resources enabled them to expand health care programming to include short-term, high-demand health care certificate training options which they have leveraged to serve broader student markets, which in turn helped them to secure a 4-year, $3.3 million U.S. Department of Labor Strengthening Working Families Initiative grant; and 2) exposure to the SNAP Employment & Training resource opportunity set the stage for negotiations currently underway for CCA to become the first pilot college collaborating with the Colorado Department of Human Services to tap the 50% federal match funds and expand education and support services to SNAP recipients enrolling at CCA.
- Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and its training partner, Training Futures, have developed a revenue-sharing model in which NOVA shares a portion of tuition received by students in the program in consideration for Training Futures providing instructors, internship opportunities, marketing, and its share of administration. A formula for reimbursement of expenses from apportioned state dollars is allotted each year. Based on the 3-year grant period for the JRWA Initiative, NOVA projected that the Training Futures program would be self-sustaining at the end of the funding period (see table).

NOVA SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN CO-ENROLLMENT, REVENUE-SHARING MODEL

1. Contract - College and non-profit co-enrollment MOU
2. Co-Enrollment - Participant enroll in non-profit program; college credit and federal state aid
3. Leveraged Funding - College uses 100% of tuition and federal state aid for college credit
4. Sustainability - College shares % of tuition with non-profit for instruction, facilities & support services
5. Nonprofit Sustainability - Nonprofit uses new college funding stream to expand service capacity
6. Program Growth - Dissemination bring new courses and credit, locally qualified & new classrooms provided
7. College Sustainability - College uses tuition and state credit enrollment funds to augment its support for program

178
SECTION 3: LEVERAGING RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Job Ready, Willing and Able initiatives were challenged to leverage other resources to fulfill the intent and goals of their local JRWA Initiative activities. AACCC’s overall goal for leveraged funds was $7 million and by the October 2016 reporting period the colleges had leveraged over $9 million, surpassing their goal with an anticipated additional set of funds to be secured before the formal end of the project.

The colleges were required to incorporate sustainability strategies into their grant proposals. Progress on strategy implementation was reviewed in quarterly narrative reports.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING JRWA LOCAL INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES

The effective use of business and economic development partners, along with internal and external partnerships, are all a part of sustaining the JRWA Initiative’s promising practices at the local level. The involved colleges proposed various strategies for continuing the activities of their local JRWA activities. The most common first strategy was absorbing the costs and/or activities of local JRWA initiatives into the college as feasible.

Initial thinking and examples of evolved sustainability strategies include the following:

- Using JRWA funds for larger equipment costs set up longer term funding options with tuition, fees, and Perkins funds.
- Building the cost of support services into the operating budget as a long term goal (e.g., counseling and career and placement services within other college offices and departments).
- Justifying the cost benefit of the program through full-time enrollment increases, tuition, and state and federal financial aid.
- Using the success of JRWA to reframe organizational thinking, emphasizing a holistic view of students, reallocate personnel resources, and shape practices of counselors, advisors, and faculty.
- Creating co-enrollment models with community-based organizations. This model includes joint curriculum development and using adjunct faculty. Students get credit, so are eligible for financial aid. A revenue-sharing model brings long-term sustainability.
- Leveraging business and industry partnerships, colleges gained support in the form of donations of equipment, as well as funds to be used for scholarships or other program costs. Engagement from employers also led to paid internships, and help with recruitment and marketing.

Strategic partnerships with local workforce investment boards and career centers, as well as other government and community partners allowed the colleges to develop resources in the community to provide training and support services such as basic skills, job preparation, and placement activities outside of the college (e.g., Goodwill Industries, workforce centers, other community service providers).

- Build networks at all levels, including regulatory agencies, industry, and community to gain and sustain political support for the program.
- Leverage federal, state, and local funding opportunities (e.g., Learn and Earn, vocational rehabilitation, SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), TAACCCT, Appalachian Regional Council) to support JRWA activities. For example, encouraging eligible students to sign up for SNAP can increase the college’s resource pool through SNAP E&T Program reimbursements.

The Job Ready, Willing and Able Initiative colleges were challenged to leverage other resources to fulfill the intent and goals for the community and region.

1. Leadership commitment to workforce training that will meet labor market needs. Do college policies, strategies, and practices reflect both employer and student needs? Do college leaders recognize and support workforce and economic development as a core part of their mission and reflect this in their culture?
2. Conducting a labor market assessment. What business-centered organizations, including the local Workforce Investment Board, can provide accurate data on current and projected labor market needs?
3. Developing programs that align to labor market needs. How and where does the alignment to labor market needs take place in the community college? Are workforce training strategies and delivery systems being coordinated to best serve industry and students?
4. Defining the role of the business partner in community college workforce development. How do colleges ensure quality training, support student achievement, and meet industry needs? Are these models of business engagement that demonstrate progressive and more business-directed workforce investment?

The role of employers in community college workforce development cannot be overstated. Their assistance can include at least the following: 1) outlining and setting standards for academic and skill competencies necessary for industry careers; 2) recognizing industry and college credentials for hiring; 3) assisting in curriculum design and delivery; 4) participating in work-based learning, and internships, apprenticeships, and career fairs; 5) providing equipment, tools, and supplies; 6) becoming a strategic partner in meeting workforce and economic development goals for the community and region.

SUCCESS STORIES

Lauren, Northeast Community College (Nebraska)

Twelve males and one female. One can only imagine how Lauren felt walking into the first day of welding class. But Lauren was not intimidated at all. Lauren has proven she can hold her own in a weld shop as she wraps her education in May with a degree in welding.

Welding was not Lauren’s first attempt at college. She had attended classes toward a degree in police science only to find it was not as she expected. Between her first attempt at college and her decision to return, Lauren held numerous jobs, from working in a call center to working in the audio-visual field. In August 2014, Lauren decided she needed to return to school full time.

Lauren had never welded, but heard it was “a good field with lots of opportunities.”

“I am glad I tried it, because I love it,” she says.

Her greatest accomplishment was “when I first welded a basic bead.”

Upon graduating, Lauren has a full-time job waiting for her. As a certified Mig, Tig, and pipe welder, Lauren retains ample opportunities to choose the job she wants.

SUCCESS STORIES

Eric, Arkansas Northeastern College

Eric came to the Arkansas Northeastern College Workforce Orientation and Retraining Keys (W.O.R.K) program unemployed and with little experience. Eric especially liked the goal setting and problem solving, which focused him in a new, positive direction. He then completed the construction technology program. At the time, Big River Steel was hiring workers for their shipping area. Eric jumped at the opportunity and prepared for the interview. He felt more confident than ever before, and was subsequently offered the position at $12 an hour. When asked what helped him get to this point, Eric stated, “Staying focused on my end goal to reach the opportunity that I knew was out there. These things that we learned in goal setting in our first week of training propelled me. That stuck with me and I never let go of it.”

16
New Relationship------------- Working Relationship--------------- Strategic Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Level III</th>
<th>Level IV</th>
<th>Level V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Capacity-building</td>
<td>Co-designing</td>
<td>Convening</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial contact / new relationship</td>
<td>Establishing trust and credibility</td>
<td>Working relationship</td>
<td>Trusted provider and collaborator</td>
<td>Full strategic partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss hiring needs, skills, competencies, advise on curricula; contract training</td>
<td>Job site tours; speakers; mock interviews; internships; needs assessment; loan/donate equipment; recruiting</td>
<td>Curriculum and pathway development; adjunct faculty and preceptors</td>
<td>College-employer sectoral partnerships with multiple business partners</td>
<td>Multi-employer/ multi-college partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT JRWA ACTIVITIES:

- Arkansas Northeastern College formed the President’s Council for Underserved Communities, an advisory group comprised of civic and faith-based leaders, whose goal is to advise the college president on the most effective means to reach and serve at-risk populations. One of the early outcomes of this council’s work is the creating and filling of a new position: a grassroots recruiter/mentor of hard-to-serve students.

- Northeast State Community College (Tennessee) did significant community outreach and networking in order to reach the JRWA target population. The college now has collaboration and networking with 11 community organizations. New outreach strategies have brought community awareness of the JRWA Initiative and highlighted the training programs available at the college. Outreach also brought College Access Program staff into the community where they provided college and career planning to individuals that had little or no awareness or guidance.

- Hazard Community and Technical College’s (Kentucky) relationship with its Community Action Agency has grown as the agency works with students to develop resumes and provide wraparound services during the course of the program.

- In Montgomery County Community College’s (Pennsylvania) region, the local Career Link office referred a significant number of unemployed adults, as well as individuals on public assistance, to the JRWA program. In addition, the Workforce Investment Board assigned a case manager to not only assist with recruitment for the program, but to monitor student progress and assist them as needed.

OUTCOMES

As of October 2016, the JRWA Initiative affected multiple communities and individual lives, thereby improving the economic opportunities and career pathways for all. The following is a breakdown of the outcomes by demographic groups. AACC and the communities anticipate these counts to increase by the formal close of this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Multi-Ethnic</th>
<th>Unknown/ Unreported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools You Can Use</th>
<th>A Model for Assessing and Advancing Business Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are a number of business engagement resources developed by prominent economic and workforce development research and policy organizations. One example is Jobs for the Future’s A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers which can assist colleges in building partnerships that are strategic and sustainable. It proposes the evolution of the partnership from a new relationship to a strategic partnership (see table below).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Level III</th>
<th>Level IV</th>
<th>Level V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Capacity-building</td>
<td>Co-designing</td>
<td>Convening</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial contact / new relationship</td>
<td>Establishing trust and credibility</td>
<td>Working relationship</td>
<td>Trusted provider and collaborator</td>
<td>Full strategic partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss hiring needs, skills, competencies, advise on curricula; contract training</td>
<td>Job site tours; speakers; mock interviews; internships; needs assessment; loan/donate equipment; recruiting</td>
<td>Curriculum and pathway development; adjunct faculty and preceptors</td>
<td>College-employer sectoral partnerships with multiple business partners</td>
<td>Multi-employer/ multi-college partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SkillsCommons.org is the online repository for the U.S. Department of Labor’s $2 billion Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant, focused on workforce development education programs, including industries such as manufacturing, health care, information technology, and energy. As of October 2016, the TAACCCT initiative has created the largest open educational resource (OER) project in the world, with 250 grant projects representing 700 institutions. TAACCCT grantees have already uploaded more than 7,000 submissions, representing more than 33,000 files of content that are available for free to anyone to download and use. More than 355,000 materials have been downloaded to date. The JRWA colleges have been briefed on the content of the repository as well as techniques for retrieving relevant material including curriculum development ideas, student services materials, and marketing resources. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent Entering Middle-Skill Training</th>
<th>Percentage Completing Training</th>
<th>Percentage Attaining Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Youth (&lt;16)</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Percent Entering Middle-Skill Training</th>
<th>Percentage Completing Training</th>
<th>Percentage Attaining Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Ethnic</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/ Unreported</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERFORMANCE-TRACKING EXAMPLES FROM JRWA INITIATIVE COLLEGES

Students’ relationship with the college didn’t end once they completed the JRWA training program. Colleges were tasked with tracking students’ progress, which, in some cases, proved challenging. Many of the involved colleges indicated that tracking students after placement or graduations was challenging as contact information changed or students’ engagement lowered. The most successful path was to build a strong contact with students from the beginning of their college outreach as those students are more likely to keep in contact. Here are some techniques employed by the colleges:

- Confirmed student addresses, e-mails, cell phone numbers, and other social media addresses just prior to students leaving the program or participating in graduation. This proved most successful when done in person by faculty, staff, or others in close contact with students.
- Developed a system of follow-up with employers and students to track student career progress for a minimum of 1 year using social media and personal outreach.
- In addition to follow-up questions on employment standing, career or job changes, and wage gains, outreach included a notice of upcoming job fairs, alumni activities, or offers of assistance. This reinforced the value of the college as an ongoing resource to the student.
- Some JRWA colleges offered incentives (a gift card, for example) for completion of the employment survey.
- Followed up with employers to confirm student retention and engaged employed graduates in new student orientation or mentor roles.
- Developed agreements to track student employment and wages through UI data. Tracking student data through agreements with the workforce system provides accurate and long-term information on students and graduates. However, there is typically a 90-day delay in receiving confirmation of employment.

SUCCESS STORIES

Gloria, Tarrant County College

Gloria and her husband operated a temporary placement firm for 20 years in the area of radiology, placing technicians across the Dallas Fort Worth area and throughout Texas. She came to Tarrant County College with no computer skills after the economic downturn caused them to close their business.

Gloria learned computer operations, from the basics to Excel spreadsheet and other Microsoft Office Suite operations. Gloria attained employment with the college as an on-call, 30%-time administrative assistant earning $14 an hour.

“I am proud of my accomplishment to achieve a certification. I am determined to go all the way to obtain a degree,” Gloria says.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ENGAGEMENT, AND POST-PROGRAM TRACKING

The success of the JRWA initiative hinged on the success of participating students. The goal was to recruit and enroll participants in middle-school training, but recruitment and enrollment was only the beginning. The strategies employed to prepare students for access to training, successful completion, and transition to the workforce provided key insights into serving nontraditional populations.

SUCCESS STORIES

Gloria, Tarrant County College

Gloria and her husband operated a temporary placement firm for 20 years in the area of radiology, placing technicians across the Dallas Fort Worth area and throughout Texas. She came to Tarrant County College with no computer skills after the economic downturn caused them to close their business.

Gloria learned computer operations, from the basics to Excel spreadsheet and other Microsoft Office Suite operations. Gloria attained employment with the college as an on-call, 30%-time administrative assistant earning $14 an hour.

“I am proud of my accomplishment to achieve a certification. I am determined to go all the way to obtain a degree,” Gloria says.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ENGAGEMENT, AND POST-PROGRAM TRACKING

The success of the JRWA initiative hinged on the success of participating students. The goal was to recruit and enroll participants in middle-school training, but recruitment and enrollment was only the beginning. The strategies employed to prepare students for access to training, successful completion, and transition to the workforce provided key insights into serving nontraditional populations.

STATEGIC STUDENT RECRUITMENT

As with identifying an industry sector and business partner, recruitment of students was strategic among the JRWA colleges. Recruitment strategies had to be adjusted as colleges examined how best to reach a diverse group of under- and unemployed adult populations needing training.

AACC and the JRWA colleges identified two major questions in addressing successful recruitment for targeted populations:

1. What needs to be considered in crafting the right message for recruiting targeted students to skills training programs and student support services?
2. What are the most successful methods of recruiting the target population to training and support programs?

One of the lessons learned is that successful marketing messages should include the employment forecast for jobs to which this training program will lead, career opportunities, salary ranges, testimony from employers, and testimony from program graduates.

Recruitment was a challenge for some colleges based on factors such as low area unemployment rates (potential students were able to get jobs from anxious employers without further training); delays in a new employer’s building construction; reduced business partner’s support due to production or administration changes; limited resources or involvement of college marketing departments to address noncredit or nontraditional new student outreach; and lack of awareness or misperceptions of specific industry opportunities by the target population, particularly manufacturing.

The colleges used a variety of means to reach potential students: e-mail, social media, advertising on community partners’ websites, exhibiting at career fairs and other community events, and presentations at job centers, Goodwill, faith-based organizations, and other service agencies. Colleges also reached out to current and former students to inform them of the new training opportunities.

Some colleges found success co-branding the program with organizations that also serve the target population, or business organizations of potential employers. For example, some colleges found great success in targeting and aligning their JRWA efforts with their efforts to engage and support mature student populations.

Strategies typically focused on using existing college marketing activities and/or JRWA grant-supported outreach. However, college marketing activities are often targeted more to the overall college programs than to specific students or skills training areas. Some JRWA colleges used grant resources to support a more coordinated outreach to JRWA targeted students.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS USED IN PLANNING RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES:

1. Do you have accurate and current information on industries hiring, job opportunities, and wage levels to use in marketing and recruitment materials?
2. Do you regularly collect and promote success stories or testimonies from former students and employers in your outreach materials?
3. Have you identified where in the community or how your target group will best receive information about college training and career pathway opportunities?
4. Is there an organization such as AARP or veterans groups that could co-brand an outreach strategy for a population that they serve?
5. Is the college marketing department on board to assist in developing and supporting recruitment strategies for skills training programs?
6. Are training instructors, counseling, financial aid and other college staff collaborating to identify students at risk of not completing and may be in need of support services?
7. Are students identified at risk of not completing their training programs aware of—and do they have easy access to—support services and resources within or outside of the college?
EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

• At Montgomery County Community College (CCMC) in Pennsylvania, e-mail blasts were effective avenues for generating inquiries and registrations for the college's non-credit programs, including the office assistant program. One of the reasons the e-mail blasts were effective is that MCCC’s database consists of former and current students. The e-mail lists were tailored to reach certain groups of students or graduates who might be interested in this training.

• In Kentucky, Hazard Community and Technical College’s Workforce Solutions has a Facebook page where literacy information is updated regularly. Students and employers can post and comment and potential students can see what job and career opportunities the training supports.

• Tarrant County College District (Texas) collaborated with community partners such as AARP. The Women’s Center, and the Christian Women’s Job Corps. This strategy was very successful in making direct contact with unemployed women and men who are rebuilding their lives through community-based organizations. There is an ongoing partnership for referring participants to support services such as counseling and housing assistance while facilitating middle-skill training opportunities and making employment connections through the college.

• Northeast State Community College (Tennessee) set up a mobile career fair where a trailer with the virtual welder, virtual painter, and other advanced technology equipment was available to provide career exploration opportunities for interested community residents and students.

• To promote two programs—the WORK (Workforce Orientation & Retraining Keys) program and the Certificate of Proficiency in Construction Technology—Arkansas Northeastern College (ANC) initiated a direct mail campaign with separate program postcards. Big River Steel, a new steel mill, will employ 2,000 construction workers over the next couple of years and 500 plus permanent employees. ANC initially received enough response from the campaign to launch at least two cohorts for each program.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TO ENSURE COMPLETION AND SUCCESS

Building relationships and successes with students from the time they show interest in the college’s training and education programs is a noted factor in student persistence and completion. Some strategies employed by JRWA colleges to strengthen this student/college connection included the following:

• Developing a touch-point system for potential student contact (online, e-mail, in-person requests for information) to encourage, remind, and ensure student completion of application, financial aid, and to answer any questions.

• Using success coordinators or student navigators to follow up with students inquiring about college programs. A brief e-mail, postcard, or callback ensured potential new students that the college can be helpful if they need support to address a challenge during their training. Ivy Tech Community College, Indiana.

• Reaching out to interested students with opportunities to participate in college tours and activities, as well as career assessment. The workforce development system and other community agencies were valuable partners in working with potential students to provide them with college guidance and follow through support.

• Providing an opportunity for interested applicants and new students to meet with industry partners and employers for an orientation to the industry, its expectations, and opportunities.

TOOL YOU CAN USE

Using Student Agreements

In some of the colleges, an agreement was created and signed by a college representative and the student, serving as a reminder of the solidification of the relationship and commitment by both parties to success. These statements of understanding confirm that employment and career advancement are important factors in measuring student and college success. In most cases, the students commit to providing updated information periodically over an extended period thereby lending credibility to both the college and the students who complete programs. Updated job, career, and wage information should come to the college through a secure online data system. In turn, the college agrees to assist students in accessing updated job and career information through its career and student services activities, employer relations, and economic development partnerships. The agreement also secures permission from the student to follow up with employer partners where students attained employment, and with the government organizations that collect employment data. As a model for future colleges, the sites that chose this route recommend this practice as a means to regularly reaffirm the student and college connection.

A DELIBERATE FOCUS ON SNAP AS A MEANS OF COMPLETION

A priority of the JRWA initiative was making participants aware of the existence of SNAP benefits for those who qualify. A goal of 9,000 individual applications was set for the program. Colleges recorded 3,941 SNAP applications as of winter 2016. AACC expects that the actual number of applications based on the intentional focus was higher, as applications could not always be confirmed if students did not report an application receipt. Not all colleges and/or states use electronic applications, which also was a barrier to application confirmation.

Challenges in recruiting potentially eligible students for SNAP included issues of confidentiality at the college or SNAP granting agency, the organization of SNAP benefits information within the college structure, students in non-credit or short-term training not being eligible for federal financial aid and therefore possibly not being able to receive public benefits counseling or access, and the stigma of needing and accessing public benefits.

In addition to the Walmart Foundation resources provided to JRWA colleges to encourage the expansion of student awareness and use of SNAP, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided direct support via webinars and presentations to the colleges on the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T). The purpose of the SNAP E&T Program is to assist members of SNAP households in gaining skills, training, work, benefits, or experience that will increase their ability to obtain employment and eliminate the need for SNAP. The SNAP Office of Employment and Training works with state offices to build SNAP E&T programs. All states are required to have a state plan for the use of SNAP E&T funds. Community colleges are encouraged to align and leverage these funds for their students and communities. Many JRWA colleges focused and aligned effectively with their state offices, thus increasing their student’s completion and success.

As the colleges coordinated with AACC, the USDA, and among themselves to tackle these challenges, several promising models arose from the network. Three colleges were particularly successful in securing and confirming SNAP applications:

• Collaboration between program managers and financial aid officers targeting students without SNAP benefits through FAFSA.

• Creating marketing through flyers, postcards, and a presence of JRWA coordinators at school lunch areas or other school events to expose students to SNAP benefits.

• Working directly with county agencies responsible for SNAP to verify students on SNAP (numbers only) from a list of new college registrants.

• JRWA coordinators discussing SNAP benefits with groups of students in JRWA-identified classes and/or working with peer financial coaches who are familiar with benefits and comfortable referring fellow students.

Umpqua Community College learned how to track applicants, state logistics, financial aid requirements, and student needs. The college now has structure to the SNAP section of reporting through help from financial aid and the IT staff. SNAP resource use and management has also been brought up as a topic during advising sessions and within financial aid.

SUCCESS STORIES

Kibuuka, Training Futures (Virginia)

Kibuuka arrived in the United States as an asylee from Uganda. Kibuuka left a stable career in accounting in Uganda and knew he needed additional training to transition into a professional career in the United States.

Kibuuka learned about Training Futures from his case manager at Northern Virginia Family Services, which operates the Training Futures program. The 6-month curriculum focuses on technical, administrative, and computer skills while teaching critical, professional “soft” skills. Through a co-enrollment partnership with Northern Virginia Community College, trainees earn an 18-credit certificate in career studies.

Kibuuka thrived at Training Futures. His goal was to transition into a career that allowed him to interact with people. After interning at the Serve Shelter, he was committed to obtaining a position in customer service. When a Training Futures graduate called about a front desk position at her property management company, his charisma and friendly demeanor captivated the hiring team. Kibuuka accepted the offer with a 75% wage gain. In addition to starting a new career, Kibuuka became a permanent resident with a pathway to citizenship.
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TO ENSURE COMPLETION AND SUCCESS

Building relationships and successes with students from the time they show interest in the college’s training and education programs was a noted factor in student persistence and completion. Some strategies employed by JRWA colleges to strengthen this student/college connection included the following:

- Developing a touch-point system for potential student contact (online, e-mail, in-person) to ensure awareness and encourage correspondence.
- Using success coordinators or student navigators to follow up with students enrolling about college programs. A brief e-mail, postcard, or call reassured potential newcomers—particularly non-traditional students—and began a connection with the college that carried through completion and employment follow up.
- Building this early connection can increase successful applications, and also shows students that the college can be helpful if they need support to address a challenge during their training.
- Providing an opportunity for interested applicants and new students to meet with industry partners and employers through events such as career fairs or job shadowing programs.

TOOL YOU CAN USE

Using Student Agreements

In some of the colleges, an agreement was created and signed by a college representative and the student, serving as a reminder of the solidification of the relationship and commitment by both parties to success. Statements of understanding confirm that employment and career advancement are important factors in measuring student and college success. In most cases, the students commit to providing updated information periodically over an extended period thereby lending credibility to both the college and the students who complete programs. Updated job, career, and wage information should come to the college through a secure online data system. In turn, the college agrees to assist students in accessing updated job and career opportunities and middle-skill training opportunities and making employment connections through the college.

A DELIBERATE FOCUS ON SNAP AS A MEANS OF COMPLETION

A priority of the JRWA Initiative was making participants aware of the existence of SNAP benefits for those who qualify. A goal of 9,000 individual applications was set for the program. Colleges recorded 3,941 SNAP applications as of winter 2016. AACC expects that the actual number of applications based on the intentional focus was higher, as applications could not always be confirmed if students did not report an application receipt. Not all colleges and/or states use electronic applications, which also was a barrier to application confirmation.

In addition to the Walmart Foundation resources provided to JRWA colleges to encourage the expansion of student awareness and use of SNAP, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided direct support via webinars and presentations to the colleges on the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T). The purpose of the SNAP E&T Program is to assist members of SNAP households in gaining skills, training, work, benefits, or experience that will increase their ability to obtain employment and eliminate the need for SNAP. The SNAP Office of Employment and Training works with state offices to build SNAP E&T programs. All states are required to have a state plan for the use of SNAP E&T funds. Community colleges are encouraged to align and leverage these funds for their students and communities. Many JRWA colleges focused and aligned effectively with their state offices, thus increasing their student’s completion and success.

As the colleges coordinated with ACC, the USDA, and among themselves to tackle these challenges, several promising models arose from the network. Three colleges were particularly successful in securing and confirming SNAP applications: Community College of Aurora (Colorado), Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio), and Umpqua Community College (Oregon). Successful strategies employed have included:

- Collaboration between program managers and financial aid offices targeting students without SNAP benefits through FAFSA.
- Created marketing through flyers, postcards, and a presence of JRWA coordinators at school lunch areas or other school events to expose students to SNAP benefits.
- Working directly with county agencies responsible for SNAP to verify students on SNAP (numbers only) from a list of new college registrants.
- JRWA coordinators discussing SNAP benefits with groups of students in JRWA-identified classes and/or working with peers through financial coaching programs.

Umpqua Community College learned how to track applicants, state logistics, financial aid requirements, and student needs. The college now has structure to the SNAP section of reporting through help from financial aid and the IT staff. SNAP resource use and management has also been brought up as a topic during advising sessions and within financial aid.

SUCCESS STORIES

Kibuuka, Training Futures (Virginia)

Kibuuka arrived in the United States as an asylee from Uganda. Kibuuka left a stable career in accounting in Uganda and knew he needed additional training to transition into a professional career in the United States. Kibuuka learned about Training Futures from his case manager at Northern Virginia Family Services, which operates the Training Futures program. The 6-month curriculum focuses on technical, administrative, and computer skills while teaching critical, professional “soft” skills. Through a co-enrollment partnership with Northern Virginia Community College, trainees earn an 18-credit certificate in career studies.

Kibuuka arrived at Training Futures. His goal was to transition into a career that allowed him to interact with people. After arriving at the SERVE Shelter, he was committed to obtaining a position in customer service. When a Training Futures graduate called about a front desk position at her property management company, his charisma and friendly demeanor captivated the hiring team. Kibuuka accepted the offer with a 75% wage gain. In addition to starting a new career, Kibuuka became a permanent resident with a pathway to citizenship.

A DELIBERATE FOCUS ON SNAP AS A MEANS OF COMPLETION

A priority of the JRWA Initiative was making participants aware of the existence of SNAP benefits for those who qualify. A goal of 9,000 individual applications was set for the program. Colleges recorded 3,941 SNAP applications as of winter 2016. AACC expects that the actual number of applications based on the intentional focus was higher, as applications could not always be confirmed if students did not report an application receipt. Not all colleges and/or states use electronic applications, which also was a barrier to application confirmation.

Challenges in recruiting potentially eligible students for SNAP included issues of confidentiality at the college or SNAP granting agency, the organization of SNAP benefits information within the college structure; students in non-credit or short-term training not being eligible for federal financial aid and therefore possibly not being able to receive public benefits counseling or access; and the stigma of needing and accessing public benefits.

In addition to the Walmart Foundation resources provided to JRWA colleges to encourage the expansion of student awareness and use of SNAP, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided direct support via webinars and presentations to the colleges on the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T). The purpose of the SNAP E&T Program is to assist members of SNAP households in gaining skills, training, work, benefits, or experience that will increase their ability to obtain employment and eliminate the need for SNAP. The SNAP Office of Employment and Training works with state offices to build SNAP E&T programs. All states are required to have a state plan for the use of SNAP E&T funds. Community colleges are encouraged to align and leverage these funds for their students and communities. Many JRWA colleges focused and aligned effectively with their state offices, thus increasing their student’s completion and success.

As the colleges coordinated with ACC, the USDA, and among themselves to tackle these challenges, several promising models arose from the network. Three colleges were particularly successful in securing and confirming SNAP applications: Community College of Aurora (Colorado), Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio), and Umpqua Community College (Oregon). Successful strategies employed have included:

- Collaboration between program managers and financial aid offices targeting students without SNAP benefits through FAFSA.
- Created marketing through flyers, postcards, and a presence of JRWA coordinators at school lunch areas or other school events to expose students to SNAP benefits.
- Working directly with county agencies responsible for SNAP to verify students on SNAP (numbers only) from a list of new college registrants.
- JRWA coordinators discussing SNAP benefits with groups of students in JRWA-identified classes and/or working with peers through financial coaching programs.

Umpqua Community College learned how to track applicants, state logistics, financial aid requirements, and student needs. The college now has structure to the SNAP section of reporting through help from financial aid and the IT staff. SNAP resource use and management has also been brought up as a topic during advising sessions and within financial aid.

SUCCESS STORIES

Kibuuka, Training Futures (Virginia)

Kibuuka arrived in the United States as an asylee from Uganda. Kibuuka left a stable career in accounting in Uganda and knew he needed additional training to transition into a professional career in the United States. Kibuuka learned about Training Futures from his case manager at Northern Virginia Family Services, which operates the Training Futures program. The 6-month curriculum focuses on technical, administrative, and computer skills while teaching critical, professional “soft” skills. Through a co-enrollment partnership with Northern Virginia Community College, trainees earn an 18-credit certificate in career studies.

Kibuuka arrived at Training Futures. His goal was to transition into a career that allowed him to interact with people. After arriving at the SERVE Shelter, he was committed to obtaining a position in customer service. When a Training Futures graduate called about a front desk position at her property management company, his charisma and friendly demeanor captivated the hiring team. Kibuuka accepted the offer with a 75% wage gain. In addition to starting a new career, Kibuuka became a permanent resident with a pathway to citizenship.
**PERFORMANCE-TRACKING EXAMPLES FROM JRWA INITIATIVE COLLEGES**

Students’ relationship with the college didn’t end once they completed the JRWA training program. Colleges were tasked with tracking students’ progress, which, in some cases, proved challenging. Many of the involved colleges indicated that tracking students after placement or graduations was challenging as contact information changed or students’ engagement lowered.

The most successful path was to build a strong contact with students from the beginning of their college outreach as those students are more likely to keep in contact. Here are some techniques employed by the colleges:

- Confirmed student addresses, e-mails, cell phone numbers, and other social media addresses just prior to students leaving the program or graduating. This proved most successful when done in person by faculty, staff, or others in close contact with students.
- Developed a system of follow-up with employers and students to track student career progress for a minimum of 1 year using social media and personal outreach.
- In addition to follow-up questions on employment standing, career or job changes, and wage gains, outreach included a notice of upcoming job fairs, alumni activities, or offers of assistance. This reinforced the value of the college as an ongoing resource to the student.
- Some JRWA colleges offered incentives (a gift card, for example) for completion of the employment survey.
- Followed up with employers to confirm student retention and engaged employed graduates in new student orientation or mentor roles.
- Developed agreements to track student employment and wages through UI data. Tracking student data through agreements with the workforce system provides accurate and long-term information on students and graduates.
- However, there is typically a 90-day delay in receiving confirmation of employment.

**PERFORMANCE-TRACKING EXAMPLES FROM JRWA INITIATIVE COLLEGES**

- Community College of Aurora found that employment tracking spreadsheets for specific projects maintained by the lead department was the best way to track outcome data. Strong relationships between students and department instructors and support staff are essential to getting students to report employment outcomes and are still no guarantee of a strong response rate.
- Hazard Community and Technical College set up a private Facebook page for each class. HCTC provides information and links to job openings on that page. Working graduates also provide updated information from their workplaces.
- This strategy serves as a vehicle to gather job placement and retention information for workforce investment board partners. HCTC is looking into adding this communication and tracking method to other programs in the department.
- St. Johns River State College (Florida) maintains strong relationships with CareerSource (WIB) and program deans, directors, and staff to obtain placement and retention data. This project has reinforced the requirement of administration, faculty, and staff to use the college’s internally built workforce development data system to compile placement information. The college may explore adding some of the JRWA initiative data fields to the system to make it more comprehensive.
- California’s Grossmont College sends information to graduates, as well as invitations to program events (Mentor Night and assorted fundraisers) throughout each semester. Successful graduates who have earned promotions keep in touch to advertise new employment opportunities.
- For Kirkwood Community College (Iowa), the Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 and JRWA reporting requirements were the impetus for the college to develop a Career Pathway Database for staff to determine individuals’ eligibility for these projects, as well as with other revenue sources, and gather detailed demographics, as well as employment and retention information after training. This database will support career pathway reporting after the JRWA Project.

**ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS USED IN PLANNING RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES:**

- Do you have accurate and current information on industries hiring, job opportunities, and wage levels to use in marketing and recruitment materials?
- Do you regularly collect and promote success stories or testimonies from former students and employers in your outreach materials?
- Have you identified where in the community or how your target group will best receive information about college training and career pathway opportunities?
- Is there an organization such as AARP or veterans groups that could co-brand an outreach strategy for a population that they serve?
- Is the college marketing department on board to assist in developing and supporting recruitment strategies for skills training programs?
- Are training instructors, counseling, financial aid, and other college staff collaborating to identify students at risk of not completing and may be in need of support services?
- Are students identified as at risk of not completing their training programs aware of—and do they have easy access to—support services and resources within or outside of the college?
New Relationship -------------- Working Relationship -------------- Strategic Partnership

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT JRWA ACTIVITIES:

- Arkansas Northeastern College formed the President’s Council for Underserved Communities, an advisory group comprised of civic and faith-based leaders, whose goal is to advise the college president on the most effective means to reach and serve at-risk populations. One of the early outcomes of this council’s work is the creating and filling of a new position: a grassroots recruiter/mentor of hard-to-serve students.

- Northeast State Community College (Tennessee) did significant community outreach and networking in order to reach the JRWA target population. The college now has collaboration and networking with 11 community organizations. New outreach strategies have brought community awareness of the JRWA Initiative and highlighted the training programs available at the college. Outreach also brought College Access Program staff into the community where they provided college and career planning to individuals that had little or no awareness or guidance.

- Hazard Community and Technical College’s (Kentucky) relationship with its Community Action Agency has grown as the agency works with students to develop resumes and provide wraparound services during the course of the program.

- In Montgomery County Community College’s (Pennsylvania) region, the local Career Link office referred a significant number of unemployed adults, as well as individuals on public assistance, to the JRWA program. In addition, the Workforce Investment Board assigned a case manager to not only assist with recruitment for the program, but to monitor student progress and assist them as needed.

A Model for Assessing and Advancing Business Engagement

There are a number of business engagement resources developed by prominent economic and workforce development research and policy organizations. One example is Jobs for the Future’s A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers which can assist colleges in building partnerships that are strategic and sustainable. It proposes the evolution of the partnership from a new relationship to a strategic partnership (see table below).

OUTCOMES

As of October 2016, the JRWA Initiative affected multiple communities and individual lives, thereby improving the economic opportunities and career pathways for all. The following is a breakdown of the outcomes by demographic groups. AACC and the communities anticipate these counts to increase by the formal close of this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Percent Entering Middle-Skill Training</th>
<th>Percentage Completing Training</th>
<th>Percentage Attaining Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Ethnic</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Unreported</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SkillsCommons.org is the online repository for the U.S. Department of Labor’s $2 billion Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant, focused on workforce development education programs, including industries such as manufacturing, health care, information technology, and energy. As of October 2016, the TAACCCT initiative has created the largest open educational resource (OER) project in the world, with 251 grant projects representing 700 institutions. TAACCCT grantees have already uploaded more than 7,000 submissions, representing more than 33,000 files of content that are available for free to anyone to download and use. More than 355,000 materials have been downloaded to date. The JRWA colleges have been briefed on the content of the repository as well as techniques for retrieving relevant material including curriculum development ideas, student services materials, and marketing resources.
SECTION 3: LEVERAGING RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Job Ready, Willing and Able Initiative colleges were challenged to leverage other resources to fulfill the intent and goals of their local JRWA Initiative activities. AACC’s overall goal for leveraged funds was $7 million and by the October 2016 reporting period the colleges had leveraged over $9 million, surpassing their goal with an anticipated additional set of funds to be secured before the formal end of the project.

The colleges were required to incorporate sustainability strategies into their grant proposals. Progress on strategy implementation was reviewed in quarterly narrative reports.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING JRWA LOCAL INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES

The effective use of business and economic development partners, along with internal and external partnerships, are all a part of sustaining the JRWA Initiative’s promising practices at the local level. The involved colleges proposed various strategies for continuing the activities of their local JRWA activities. The most common first strategy was absorbing the costs and/or activities of local JRWA Initiatives into the college as feasible.

Initial thinking and examples of evolved sustainability strategies include the following:

- Using JRWA funds for larger equipment costs set up longer term funding options with tuition, fees, and Perkins funds.
- Building the cost of support services into the operating budget as a long term goal (e.g., counseling and career and placement services within other college offices and departments).
- Justifying the cost benefit of the program through full-time enrollment increases, tuition, and state and federal financial aid.
- Using the success of JRWA to reframe organizational thinking, emphasize a holistic view of students, reallocate personnel resources, and shape practices of counselors, advisors, and faculty.
- Creating co-enrollment models with community-based organizations. This model includes joint curriculum development and using adjunct faculty. Students get credit, so are eligible for financial aid. A revenue-sharing model brings long-term sustainability.
- Leveraging business and industry partnerships, colleges gained support in the form of donations of equipment, as well as funds to be used for scholarships or other program costs. Engagement from employers also led to paid internships, and help with recruitment and marketing.

Strategic partnerships with local workforce investment boards and career centers, as well as other government and community partners allowed the colleges to develop resources in the community to provide training and support services such as basic skills, job preparation, and placement activities outside of the college (e.g., Goodwill Industries, workforce centers, other community service providers).

- Build networks at all levels, including regulatory agencies, industry, and community to gain and sustain political support for the program.
- Leverage federal, state, and local funding opportunities (e.g., Learn and Earn, vocational rehabilitation, SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), TAACCCT, Appalachian Regional Council) to support JRWA activities. For example, encouraging eligible students to sign up for SNAP can increase the college’s resource pool through SNAP E&T Program reimbursements.

SUCCESS STORIES

Eric, Arkansas Northeastern College

Eric came to the Arkansas Northeastern College Workforce Orientation and Retraining Keys (W.O.R.K) program unemployed and with little experience. Eric especially liked the goal setting and problem solving, which focused him in a new, positive direction. He then completed the construction technology program. At the time, Big River Steel was hiring workers for their shipping area. Eric jumped at the opportunity and prepared for the interview. He felt more confident than ever before, and was subsequently offered the position at $12 an hour. When asked what helped him get to this point, Eric stated, “Staying focused on my end goal to reach the opportunity that I knew was out there. These things that we learned in goal setting in our first week of training propelled me. That stuck with me and I never let go of it.”

- JRWA leaders at Umpqua Community College (Oregon) developed several internal collaborations to assist and advance student retention, participation and accessibility, including work with student advising and testing, financial aid, accessibility services, and veteran’s services. The result has been an increase in student enrollment of more than 230% with retention rates more than doubling from an average of three terms completed to most students earning a degree or certificate.

SUCCESS STORIES

Lauren, Northeast Community College (Nebraska)

Twelve males and one female. One can only imagine how Lauren felt walking into the first day of welding class. But Lauren was not intimidated at all. Lauren has proven she can hold her own in a weld shop as she wraps up her education in May with a degree in welding.

Welding was not Lauren’s first attempt at college. She had attended classes toward a degree in police science only to find it was not as she expected. Between her first attempt at college and her decision to return, Lauren held numerous jobs, from working in a call center to working in the audio-video field. In August 2014, Lauren decided she needed to return to school full-time.

Lauren had never welded, but heard it was “a good field with lots of opportunities.”

“I am glad I tried it, because I love it,” she says.

Her greatest accomplishment was “when I first welded a basic bead.”

Upon graduating, Lauren has a full-time job waiting for her. As a certified MIG, Tig, and pipe welder, Lauren retains ample opportunities to choose the job she wants.

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

Most JRWA colleges reported strengthening or expanding of strategic partnerships with workforce and community organizations. These partnerships helped to: 1) develop pipelines for new recruits, 2) strengthen wraparound services through local community organizations, and 3) build work access through individual businesses and the local workforce development system. These partnerships serve the mission and goals of all partners and through community college leadership, extend resources for community economic growth and optimal workforce engagement.

Critical elements and questions to ask that advance partnerships between community colleges and businesses incorporate at least four areas:

1. Leadership commitment to workforce training that will meet labor market needs. Do college policies, strategies, and practices reflect both employer and student needs? Do college leaders recognize and support workforce and economic development as a core part of their mission and reflect this in their culture?
2. Conducting a labor market assessment. What business-centered organizations, including the local Workforce Investment Board, can provide accurate data on current and projected labor market needs?
3. Developing programs that align to labor market needs. How and where does the alignment to labor market needs take place in the community college? Are workforce training strategies and delivery systems being coordinated to best serve industry and students?
4. Defining the role of the business partner in community college workforce development. How do colleges ensure quality training, support student achievement, and meet industry needs? Are there models of business engagement that demonstrate progressive and more business-directed workforce investment?

The role of employers in community college workforce development cannot be overstated. Their assistance can include at least the following: 1) outlining and setting standards for academic and skill competencies necessary for industry careers; 2) recognizing industry and college credentials for hiring; 3) assisting in curriculum design and delivery; 4) participating in workforce-based learning, and internships, apprenticeships, and career fairs; 5) providing equipment, tools, and supplies; 6) becoming a strategic partner in meeting workforce and economic development goals for the community and region.
anecdotal information informed the processes and challenges that impacted performance. The greatest challenge for the majority of the JRWA initiative colleges was tracking student job placement and employment retention.

SECTION 2: SCALABLE PRACTICES

This section of the report illustrates strategies and practices learned from the JRWA initiative colleges and other research that reinforce key elements of successful industry-driven training. These focus on two major areas: 1) collaboration across the college and with its community partners to serve industry and student customers; and 2) student recruitment, engagement, and post-program tracking.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT STRATEGIES THROUGH COLLABORATION

Many community colleges are experiencing reduced budgets, lower enrollment, shifting labor market needs, and unemployed residents lacking requisite college or job-ready skills to access or complete training programs. These populations include workers laid off from obsolete jobs, downzoning, or closures, limited English speaking immigrants, older workers needing to re-enter the workforce, veterans needing civilian job transition services, and low-wage workers looking for advancement.

The diverse needs of these populations, all seeking to advance their economic stability, have challenged colleges’ limited resources to fully address work readiness needs. JRWA colleges provided valuable insights into the use of internal and external partnership collective impact strategies to maximize resources.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

The “win-win” of collective impact strategies was seen across the board with the colleges. In some cases, support or career services had not been as accessible or targeted to non-traditional students or those in non-credit training areas. JRWA resources enabled colleges to provide or coordinate needed services by hiring student navigators or success coordinators.

Leaders, regardless of their location in the college, worked across departments to maximize resources for the targeted students. While community colleges are essential to the wellbeing and growth of local economies, they use differing strategies to address the diverse needs of community residents seeking college-level training.

By changing internal collaborations, the participating colleges were able to expand activities in five priority categories: developmental/basic education, career services, financial aid, student services, and employment placement.

EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT JRWA ACTIVITIES:

• In the Tarrant Community College District (Texas), a career exploration track was developed in direct response to the JRWA initiative. A working partnership was established with internal partners, including all five campuses and the Workforce and Corporate Solutions division of the Community and Industry Education (CIE) Services Department. Perkins Grant funds were targeted to advisors to provide service to the CIE students across the district for the first time in the history of the institution.

• At Jamestown Community College (New York), JRWA advanced the college’s collaboration across silos to meet grant objectives. Academic affairs, student development, and continuing education discussed how to support all students regardless of enrollment in academic programs or continuing education pathways. For example, the college created a remedial course offered in the summer. The affordable (20$) courses in reading and math allow students to improve their skills and retest into college-level coursework.

• West Virginia University at Parkersburg incorporated a resume, interview skills, and personal dress presentation into the classroom.

• Snow College (Utah) ensured that collaboration with the college’s career services was better utilized. There were many staff members working on related workforce issues under different organizational umbrellas at the college. While they were doing good work, they were not necessarily communicating about that work or leveraging each other’s work. Some of the activities have been consolidated and the interplay between these departments and individuals has increased to better serve students.

• At Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio), JRWA leaders worked with financial aid to make sure program participants were referred to the Project Go program, an initiative that helps students sign up for SNAP, among other public assistance programs. A collaborative process also was put in place to ensure that students who had applied for and received SNAP were accurately tracked at all campuses.

COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

• Northeast Community College utilizes a strategic planning model framework on which it aligns the goals and strategies of new proposals and new programs with the college’s goals and strategies. Periodically the strategies and goals of the programs are measured as to their progress in attaining goals. In effect, projects will not be accepted or sustained if they do not meet the test of alignment with college goals, strategies, and practices. Specific to the JRWA initiative, the college looked for means to incorporate the costs into the general operating budget, mobilize networks to promote the program, and promote stewardship for the betterment of the campus and community.

• The JRWA initiative had a significant impact on Community College of Aurora’s (CCA) workforce practices in two ways: 1) the resources enabled them to expand health care programming to include short-term, high-demand health care certificate training options which they have leveraged to serve broader student markets, which in turn helped them to secure a 4-year, $3.9 million U.S. Department of Labor Strengthening Workforce Families Initiative grant; and 2) exposure to the SNAP Employment & Training resource opportunity set the stage for negotiations currently underway for CCA to become the first pilot college collaborating with the Colorado Department of Human Services to tap the 50% federal match funds and expand education and support services to SNAP recipients enrolling at CCA.

• Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and its training partner, Training Futures, have developed a revenue-sharing model in which NOVA shares a portion of tuition received by students in the program in consideration for Training Futures providing instructors, internships, opportunities, marketing, and its share of administration. A formula for reimbursement of expenses from apportioned state dollars is allotted each year. Based on the 3-year grant period for the JRWA Initiative, NOVA projected that the Training Futures program would be self-sustaining at the end of the funding period (see table).

NOVA SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN CO-ENROLLMENT, REVENUE-SHARING MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contract - College and non-profit co-enrollment MOU</td>
<td>College and non-profit co-enrollment MOU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Co-Enrollment - Participant enroll in non-profit training &amp; college credit program</td>
<td>Participant enroll in non-profit training &amp; college credit program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leveraged Funding - College shares % of tuition with non-profit for instruction, facilities &amp; support services</td>
<td>College shares % of tuition with non-profit for instruction, facilities &amp; support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nonprofit Sustainability - Nonprofit uses on-campus college funding stream to expand service capacity</td>
<td>Nonprofit uses on-campus college funding stream to expand service capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. College Sustainability - College uses tuition and state credit enrollment funds to augment fee support for program</td>
<td>College uses tuition and state credit enrollment funds to augment fee support for program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Program Growth - Dissimination bring new revenue streams, locally qualified &amp; new classrooms provided</td>
<td>Program Growth - Dissimination bring new revenue streams, locally qualified &amp; new classrooms provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. College Sustainability - Perkin Grants allow for reimbursement of expenses from apportioned state dollars according to 3-year funding period (see table)</td>
<td>Perkin Grants allow for reimbursement of expenses from apportioned state dollars according to 3-year funding period (see table)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the composition of the labor force, the critical industry sectors, and regional training capacity and assets. The workforce factor is taken into account. The workforce development system needs to identify the characteristics of the labor market, Community colleges and workforce development boards must conduct an analysis of business needs and take that
The discussion on resilience highlights the importance of serving two customers: businesses and individuals.
This becomes a critical issue in developing effective career pathways at a regional level. This is not simple as it requires both community colleges and workforce boards to engage in such transactional work as monitoring employers’ job vacancies, assessing individual’s skills, and conducting customized screening and training for businesses. These partners also have to
The customer. The discussion on resilience highlights the importance of serving two customers: businesses and individuals. Community colleges and workforce development boards must conduct an analysis of business needs and take that
Community colleges and local regional business-lead workforce development boards are anchors in their region’s workforce development systems. Colleges and the boards are most responsible for setting individuals on a career pathway and providing them with the credentials that make them competitive in the labor market while simultaneously anticipating and meeting their regional businesses’ needs for skilled workers. One of the big policy questions around career pathways is how to put individuals on a path to both short-term and long-term employment, which speaks to both ensuring their resilience and adaptability to the market.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
Sustaining the political and economic will be successfully plan for and maintain labor market demand and supply balance requires a significant commitment by local leaders, and colleges and their respective workforce partners are critical players in those discussions. Working together with the National Association of Workforce Boards during the JRWA initiative, the colleges were consistently addressing and updating their plans related to the following. Colleges across the country are encouraged to model after their success and use similar discussions in their own communities.

Career pathways. Community colleges and local and regional business-lead workforce development boards are anchors in their region’s workforce development systems. Colleges and the boards are most responsible for setting individuals on a career pathway and providing them with the credentials that make them competitive in the labor market while simultaneously anticipating and meeting their regional businesses’ needs for skilled workers. One of the big policy questions around career pathways is how to put individuals on a path to both short-term and long-term employment, which speaks to both ensuring their resilience and adaptability to the market.

Questions to consider to build sustainability and diversification from the outset
1. How do you tie college program sustainability into local and regional economic growth planning and strategies?
2. What is the role of local and state government in sustainability planning (e.g. Workforce Development Boards, U.S. Department of Agriculture SNAP E&T, and tracking for accountability and ongoing investment?)
3. How can program success data be used in value propositions and funding proposals? (e.g. training completion and placement data in middle-skill jobs?)

SUCCESS STORIES
Michelle, Umpqua Community College (Oregon)
Michelle is studying viticulture and enology at Umpqua Community College’s Southern Oregon Wine Institute (SOWI). She moved to the Roseburg area from Portland, looking for a career change. She worked in the SOWI cellar and vineyard, gaining hands-on winemaking experience. She also worked in the SOWI tasting room, and, in 2015, became beverage captain, which has given her leadership experience. Working in the front of house has become her forte because she enjoys talking to guests about SOWI wines and giving tours of the facility.
“I’ve never had so much fun in a work environment,” Michelle says. “It really helps when you are passionate about wine.”

Lawrence, Kirkwood Community College (Iowa)
When Lawrence enrolled in Kirkwood’s Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE) welding program he was employed part-time through a temporary agency, working at a packaging company making $9.50 an hour. Lawrence was also working on his high school diploma when he first came to talk with KPACE staff. He recognized that he needed more training to get his life back on track.
During training, Lawrence was referred to career services for resume development and to work on his communication skills for interviews. Lawrence completed training in July 2015 with a production MIG welding certification, as well as GISWA and forklift certifications. He started working part-time through another temporary agency at Frontier Co-op on the production line and was later hired as a full-time, permanent employee with benefits making $13.80 an hour.
Lawrence is still working on his diploma. With his increased salary, he is working with his bank to improve his credit to buy a home.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE
Questions to consider to build sustainability and diversification from the outset
1. How do you tie college program sustainability into local and regional economic growth planning and strategies?
2. What is the role of local and state government in sustainability planning (e.g. Workforce Development Boards, U.S. Department of Agriculture SNAP E&T, and tracking for accountability and ongoing investment?)
3. How can program success data be used in value propositions and funding proposals? (e.g. training completion and placement data in middle-skill jobs?)

SUCCESS STORIES
Michelle, Umpqua Community College (Oregon)
Michelle is studying viticulture and enology at Umpqua Community College’s Southern Oregon Wine Institute (SOWI). She moved to the Roseburg area from Portland, looking for a career change. She worked in the SOWI cellar and vineyard, gaining hands-on winemaking experience. She also worked in the SOWI tasting room, and, in 2015, became beverage captain, which has given her leadership experience. Working in the front of house has become her forte because she enjoys talking to guests about SOWI wines and giving tours of the facility.
“I’ve never had so much fun in a work environment,” Michelle says. “It really helps when you are passionate about wine.”

Lawrence, Kirkwood Community College (Iowa)
When Lawrence enrolled in Kirkwood’s Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE) welding program he was employed part-time through a temporary agency, working at a packaging company making $9.50 an hour. Lawrence was also working on his high school diploma when he first came to talk with KPACE staff. He recognized that he needed more training to get his life back on track.
During training, Lawrence was referred to career services for resume development and to work on his communication skills for interviews. Lawrence completed training in July 2015 with a production MIG welding certification, as well as GISWA and forklift certifications. He started working part-time through another temporary agency at Frontier Co-op on the production line and was later hired as a full-time, permanent employee with benefits making $13.80 an hour.
Lawrence is still working on his diploma. With his increased salary, he is working with his bank to improve his credit to buy a home.

SUCCESS STORIES
Michelle, Umpqua Community College (Oregon)
Michelle is studying viticulture and enology at Umpqua Community College’s Southern Oregon Wine Institute (SOWI). She moved to the Roseburg area from Portland, looking for a career change. She worked in the SOWI cellar and vineyard, gaining hands-on winemaking experience. She also worked in the SOWI tasting room, and, in 2015, became beverage captain, which has given her leadership experience. Working in the front of house has become her forte because she enjoys talking to guests about SOWI wines and giving tours of the facility.
“I’ve never had so much fun in a work environment,” Michelle says. “It really helps when you are passionate about wine.”

Lawrence, Kirkwood Community College (Iowa)
When Lawrence enrolled in Kirkwood’s Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE) welding program he was employed part-time through a temporary agency, working at a packaging company making $9.50 an hour. Lawrence was also working on his high school diploma when he first came to talk with KPACE staff. He recognized that he needed more training to get his life back on track.
During training, Lawrence was referred to career services for resume development and to work on his communication skills for interviews. Lawrence completed training in July 2015 with a production MIG welding certification, as well as GISWA and forklift certifications. He started working part-time through another temporary agency at Frontier Co-op on the production line and was later hired as a full-time, permanent employee with benefits making $13.80 an hour.
Lawrence is still working on his diploma. With his increased salary, he is working with his bank to improve his credit to buy a home.

SUCCESS STORIES
Michelle, Umpqua Community College (Oregon)
Michelle is studying viticulture and enology at Umpqua Community College’s Southern Oregon Wine Institute (SOWI). She moved to the Roseburg area from Portland, looking for a career change. She worked in the SOWI cellar and vineyard, gaining hands-on winemaking experience. She also worked in the SOWI tasting room, and, in 2015, became beverage captain, which has given her leadership experience. Working in the front of house has become her forte because she enjoys talking to guests about SOWI wines and giving tours of the facility.
“I’ve never had so much fun in a work environment,” Michelle says. “It really helps when you are passionate about wine.”

Lawrence, Kirkwood Community College (Iowa)
When Lawrence enrolled in Kirkwood’s Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE) welding program he was employed part-time through a temporary agency, working at a packaging company making $9.50 an hour. Lawrence was also working on his high school diploma when he first came to talk with KPACE staff. He recognized that he needed more training to get his life back on track.
During training, Lawrence was referred to career services for resume development and to work on his communication skills for interviews. Lawrence completed training in July 2015 with a production MIG welding certification, as well as GISWA and forklift certifications. He started working part-time through another temporary agency at Frontier Co-op on the production line and was later hired as a full-time, permanent employee with benefits making $13.80 an hour.
Lawrence is still working on his diploma. With his increased salary, he is working with his bank to improve his credit to buy a home.
The JRWA Initiative was designed to build the capacity of the community colleges and local college workforce and economic development partners to design ongoing middle-skill training pipelines and networks to support college completion, credential attainment, and job access.

To ensure successful outcomes, the colleges drew on the expertise of four mentor colleges selected for the initiative to share their experiences and offer guidance. The mentor colleges were Arkansas Northeastern College, Northeast Community College (Nebraska), Northern Virginia Community College, and Umpqua Community College (Oregon). Working with peer institutions greatly empowered the mentee sites to ask questions about implementation and reduced learning curve time.

As the participating colleges began their work, they assessed the organization and delivery of middle-skill employment training and access for adult learners to include the following elements:

- **Industry sector choices.** What industry sector best aligns with local labor market middle-skill job needs and projections?
- **Counting what matters.** What measures need to be tracked and for what purpose? Are the jobs attained by completers middle-skill jobs at middle-skill wages?
- **Internal collective impact strategies.** How can departments within the college collaborate to support the delivery of student-directed services that enable access, retention, completion, and job attainment?
- **External partnerships.** What external collaboration and collective impact strategies support the effective delivery of student-directed services that ensure access, retention, completion, and job attainment?

### INDUSTRY SECTOR CHOICES

The first step in aligning labor market demand and supply required examining local labor data to identify high-demand jobs on the horizon and the associated skill set and credentials required to fill those positions. This required updated labor market information from government data sources and discussions with local industry, business organizations, and Workforce Investment Boards.

AACC reviewed industry data through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Virtual Career Network (VCN) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) confirming that each college chose industry sectors and employment opportunities aligned with the current, as well as the projected, needs of the local economy.

As colleges aimed to strengthen their workforce and economic development efforts, they recognized that adaptation and agility were essential for success. Over the 3-year period, industry sectors evolved, leadership and champions changed, and the colleges were diligent in their reassessments to reaffirm their course and momentum. Arkansas Northeastern College was challenged as their business partner, a new major steel company, pushed back its start time. West Virginia University at Parkersburg also experienced delays as local industry partner mergers and a reorganization influenced timing and the scope of their Earn and Learn program. Several of the JRWA colleges revised their target occupation training and placement emphasis to reflect changes in their local economies during the project. Other colleges expanded certification areas within the industry area to meet industry demands or strengthen career pathway options.

**COUNTING WHAT MATTERS:**

**JRWA INITIATIVE DESIGN AND OUTCOMES**

The JRWA Initiative began with ambitious goals to develop innovative training strategies that assist job seekers in preparing for middle-skill occupations. The colleges used both qualitative and quantitative measurement tools. A comparison of the colleges’ reported job placements with their corresponding Occupational Network (O*Net) codes to establish the level of skills proficiency. O*Net (www.onetonline.org) ranks occupations from 1 to 5 based on the relative complexity and the level of training and experience required to enter these fields. Middle-skill jobs rank 2 or 3 in this system. Of the 1,366 placements with reported wages, 93% were identified as middle-skill.

The reported placement data also indicated that the majority ofjob placements were associated with in-demand and high-growth occupations with promising career pathways as projected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh/). This was examined using national labor market demand projections, and where available, against regional projections.

The Virtual Career Network (www.vcn.org) also was used throughout the project as a career exploration resource by the colleges and as a performance measurement tool used to analyze results. Among the many features of the VCN are links to Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data, O*Net occupational data, and current labor market demand information.

**TOOLs YOU CAN USE**

- A comparison of the colleges’ reported job placements with their corresponding Occupational Network (O*Net) codes to establish the level of skills proficiency. O*Net (www.onetonline.org) ranks occupations from 1 to 5 based on the relative complexity and the level of training and experience required to enter these fields. Middle-skill jobs rank 2 or 3 in this system. Of the 1,366 placements with reported wages, 93% were identified as middle-skill.

**Tool: Counting what matters.**

What measures need to be tracked and for what purpose? Are the jobs attained by completers middle-skill jobs at middle-skill wages?

**Funding.** A critical factor in a dynamic and responsive system is having the financing to effectively develop skills and credential attainment. The exploration of financing needs to include a broad analysis of available funding from federal, state, and local government resources, as well as from individual and collective industry sector business organizations, and an individual’s own contribution through tuition. Joint funding through apprenticeships and other work and learn programs are becoming more prevalent in the quest for sustainability of programs and career pathways.

**Advocacy.** Any in-depth analysis of the ability to meet a region’s workforce needs should include an advocacy component. This can be a challenging conversation for workforce boards because of the prohibition of lobbying with federal funds. However, beyond lobbying, advocacy means showing local, state, and federal elected officials how their investments in economic development, housing, transportation, childcare, and tuition assistance result in regional growth and healthy economies. Joint discussions also can identify supporting or disruptive policies, as well as clarify misinterpretations or misunderstandings about legislative intent or regulatory language. Ultimately, where financial resources restrict labor force preparedness community colleges and workforce boards need to work collaboratively to find a way to address them without running afoul of anti-lobbying laws. Advocacy must be directed at supporting a community’s efforts to move forward.

**Community.** Sustaining responsive workforce development systems is not some esoteric exercise. Workforce development is about community—our families, neighbors, government leaders, businesses and organizations. Conversations around sustainability can be complicated and may seem to reflect competing interests. Therefore, sustaining viable solutions to workforce and economic development needs is everybody’s concern. Community colleges and local business-led workforce development boards are the drivers of these solutions which must focus on both the transactional and the broader vision of a regional workforce development system.

**Agility.** Agility is particularly critical for colleges and workforce boards in order for them to respond quickly to current and future customer demands. This requires both partners having the capacity to identify market and employer needs and then to respond to the economic needs of families in the community at large. This holistic approach to a needs assessment is one that colleges and workforce boards must adopt as they look beyond the transactional to a strategic workforce development system, and the dynamic needs and assets of the region.
APPENDIX 1: COLLEGES AND SECTORS INVOLVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WV</td>
<td>West Virginia University Parkersburg</td>
<td>Polymer, Petro-Chemical, and Metals Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Northern Virginia Community College</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Snow College</td>
<td>Industrial Technology including Industrial Manufacturing, Industrial Mechanics, Machine Tool, and Welding Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>Tarrant County College District</td>
<td>Office Careers Pathway: Administrative, Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Jamestown Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Healthcare, Business Services, Educational Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Northeast Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Umpqua Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Finance, Insurance and Customer Service, Health Care, and Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Montgomery County Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing Office Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Northeast State Community College</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Machining, Welding, Chemical processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>Hazard Community and Technical College</td>
<td>Utilities, Utility Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>St. Johns River State College</td>
<td>Business Administration, Public Service, Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Cuyahoga Community College</td>
<td>Trucking, Automotive tech, Healthcare, Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Grossmont College</td>
<td>Accounting, Banking, Insurance, Office Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Community College of Aurora</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>St. Johns River State College</td>
<td>Business Administration, Public Service, Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Kirkwood Community College</td>
<td>Advanced Manufacturing, Finance, Insurance and Customer Service, Health Care, and Information Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For 3 years, 17 community colleges across the United States engaged in the Job Ready, Willing and Able (JRWA) Initiative. This was made possible thanks to a 3-year, $4.1 million grant from Walmart Foundation that provided more than $2.5 million to local communities. The goal was to support unemployed and underemployed adults in credential attainment, college training completion, and job placement in middle-skill jobs (jobs that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a 4-year college degree). The colleges originally aimed to recruit and enroll 3,798 participants in middle-skill training.

Each college identified the relevant industry skills and credentials focus area, target demographics, and industry partnership(s) that would best benefit their community. Examples ranged from unemployed miners in rural Kentucky becoming electrical linemen, to sector-strategies including industrial mechanics and manufacturing in Utah, viticulture skills and entrepreneurship in Oregon, office assistants in Pennsylvania, and certified nurse aides in Colorado. The sites were charged to align, redesign or repurpose college outreach, support and retention strategies, and performance tracking for the non-traditional target populations.

In addition to education and job training, the colleges aligned college-readiness services (basic skills classes, English as a second language, and work-readiness training) and wraparound services (career counseling, child care referrals, transportation vouchers, and general access to public services). Moreover, the colleges were charged with increasing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications for eligible students as a means to support persistence and completion.

The lessons learned by AACC with the JRWA colleges about intentional delivery of student-directed services from entry through the attainment of credentials and employment are showcased in this report. These lessons will serve other communities in advancing economic resiliency through a fully optimized workforce.

This report is divided into three primary sections as follows:

Section 1. Middle-skill Training Design and Delivery, which incorporates industry sector training choices and outcomes including scope and results of the JRWA Initiative.

Section 2. Scalable Practices, including internal and external collaboration for collective impact, and effective student recruitment, engagement, and post-program tracking.

Section 3. Leveraging Resources for Sustainability, addressing internal and external strategic alignment of resources and services to best serve student and industry customers.

SECTION 1: MIDDLE-SKILL TRAINING DESIGN AND DELIVERY

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) offers valuable perspectives on workforce and economic development in a changing economy. This is particularly relevant to the importance of middle-skill job training and the role of the community college and business collaboration.

Economic developers increasingly must expand their focus in order to create jobs with specific wages and benefits. They must nurture the conditions, relationships, and resources to enable and encourage the private sector to do so on a steady and consistent basis. To accomplish this, economic development has had to move from a focus on specific transactions that measure the number of jobs per project to a focus on system-building, nurturing an economic engine to support and sustain industries that generate a spectrum of jobs with opportunities for advancement. It also means prioritizing the alignment of economic development with workforce development and education to ensure that people are being trained to meet industry needs. (Creating Quality Jobs: Transforming the Economic Development Landscape, IEDC, 2010)
LETTER FROM WALTER G. BUMPHUS, PRESIDENT AND CEO

In 2012, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and its 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges initiated a plan for community colleges to better meet the needs of the nation’s students and the modern global economy. Closing the skills gap and preparing America’s workforce continues to be a major focus of AACC and its member colleges.

Vital to this effort is the unique relationship between community colleges and business. Community colleges are positioned to respond quickly to the needs in their area by developing and implementing training programs specific to the local job market. Our recent efforts have focused on ways to provide such programs while increasing their efficacy. The Job Ready, Willing and Able (JRWA) Initiative is an example of that effort and directly supports the recommendation of the AACC 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges to close the skills gap.

The JRWA Initiative is an example of the relationship required between education and business. With the support of the Walmart Foundation, AACC was able to work with member colleges to extend access to vulnerable populations and provide support services and benefits in an effort to increase completion rates. This work was a true collaboration between colleges, industry, and the public sector. We are grateful to Walmart Foundation for providing the resources needed to forward the work of the 21st-Century Commission. It is our hope that by sharing our findings will provide the tools you need to increase student success in your community.

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
President and CEO
American Association of Community Colleges

APPENDIX 2: AACC PARTNER RESOURCES

Each of the following national networks focused on workforce and economic development provided these resources to the network for JRWA Initiative colleges during the effort. AACC encourages member colleges to consider these partners and their respective resources to better inform local talent development efforts.

AACC Affiliate Councils

AACC’s Affiliate Councils offer a variety of demographic, geographic and industry-sector specific resources to the wider membership. Considering all the talent pipeline discussions on engagement, persistence and success, AACC encourages readers to leverage and engage with the expertise of the following:

- American Association for Women in Community Colleges
- American Student Association of Community Colleges
- COMBASE
- Community College Baccalaureate Association
- Community College Business Officers
- Community College Humanities Association
- Community Colleges of Appalachia
- Community Colleges for International Development, Inc.
- Continuous Quality Improvement Network
- Council for the Study of Community Colleges
- Instructional Technology Council
- National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators
- National Asian/Pacific Islander Council
- National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs
- National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers
- National Community College Council for Research and Planning
- National Community College Hispanic Council
- National Council on Black American Affairs
- National Council for Continuing Education and Training
- National Council for Learning Resources
- National Council for Marketing and Public Relations
- National Council for Workforce Education
- National Council of Instructional Administrators
- National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges
- National Council on Student Development
- National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-Year Colleges
- National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education
- North American Council for Staff, Program & Organizational Development
- Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
- Phi Theta Kappa
- Rural Community College Alliance

International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
www.iedcouncil.org

The IEDC provides leadership in economic development. The council’s programs and services provide educational opportunities, analyze and disseminate information, and improve decision-makers’ responsiveness to economic development needs. It also provides information on trends and best practices, networking opportunities, professional development courses, and numerous other services.

National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)
www.nawb.org

Community colleges and adult education providers play a crucial role in training and upskilling the nation’s workers. Closing the skills gap and creating opportunities for learners will not be solved without the combined engagement of community college programs, career technical education, certifications and apprenticeships, and the workforce system. By creating
hand-in-hand partnerships to meet the needs of businesses and to engage career-seekers in training that connects them to the world of work, community colleges, education practitioners, and workforce development can approach these challenges with a shared understanding and aligned goals. The NWBI Forum is an annual event that offers education practitioners and community college leaders an unparalleled opportunity to converse as leaders, learners, peers, and friends to participate in key conversations, generate ideas, and determine how we will respond to our collective and individual challenges in a spirit of growth and collaboration.

**National Governors Association (NGA)**

www.nga.org

The National Governors Association is the bipartisan organization of the nation’s governors. Through NGA, governors share best practices, speak with a collective voice on national policy and develop innovative solutions that improve state government and support the principles of federalism. Specific NGA publications to consider include:

- **State Strategies to Scale Quality Work-Based Learning**, by Kimberly Haugh and Brent Parrot
- **Tracking Graduates in the Workforce: Connecting Education and Labor Market Data**, by Garrett Groves and Iris Palmer.

**Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce**

https://cew.georgetown.edu/

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce is an independent, nonprofit research and policy institute affiliated with the Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy that studies the link between education, career qualifications, and workforce demands. AACC frequently promoted the resources which are readily accessible on the website to the JRWA Initiative Colleges given the depth and breadth of content ranging from detailed reports on majors, unemployment and earnings to thematic issues of recovery or economic resiliency. Communities are encouraged to visit the center’s website for publications (https://cew.georgetown.edu/publications/)

**APPENDIX 3: OTHER RESOURCES**


The research included in this report was made possible through funding by the Walmart Foundation. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report are those of the American Association of Community Colleges alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Walmart Foundation.

---

**CONTENTS**

Letter from Dr. Walter G. Bumphus ................................................................. 4
Executive Summary .......................................................................................... 5

**Section 1:**

- Middle-Skill Training Design and Delivery .................................................... 5
- Industry Sector Choices .................................................................................. 6
- Counting What Matters: JRWA Initiative Design and Outcomes ................. 6

**Section 2:**

- Scalable Practices ......................................................................................... 8
- Collective Impact Strategies through Collaboration ....................................... 8
- Student Recruitment, Engagement, and Post-Program Tracking ................. 11

**Section 3:**

- Leveraging Resources for Sustainability ..................................................... 16
- Proposed Strategies for Sustaining JRWA Local Initiative Activities .......... 16
- Workforce Investment Boards: Building and Sustaining Economic Development Strategies .......................................................... 18

**Appendix 1:**

- Colleges and Sectors Involved ..................................................................... 20

**Appendix 2:**

- AACC Partner Resources .......................................................................... 21

**Appendix 3:**

- Other Resources ......................................................................................... 22
JOB READY, WILLING, & ABLE:
Leveraging Resources and Talent for Changing Economies

Presented By:

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES