Implementing Promise Programs to Serve Adult Students and Meet State Attainment Goals

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About the project

• Phase I – January through October 2016
  – Design Convening
  – Produced *design template* document for states looking to implement Adult Promise programs
  – Site visits to selected states
  – Produced a customized *program implementation plan* for each state

• Phase II - 2017 through 2019
  – Implementing programs in four states
    • Maine, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Washington

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The disconnect

Need to serve adult students to reach attainment goals

Current and proposed promise-type programs
Reasons for the focus on traditional students with current promise programs

- Exhausted aid eligibility / financial holds are a non-issue for students who have never attempted postsecondary education
  - Pell and state aid will cover the cost for many students, making promise programs for traditional students relatively inexpensive
- High school students are a captive audience during outreach and enrollment processes
- Misunderstanding about today’s typical college student
  - 40% are actually 25 and older
Disconnect is going away

- Momentum building: This project, Arkansas, Indiana, and local efforts
- Tennessee Reconnect
- LUMINA BIG GOAL DATA (60% by 2025)
  - 16.4 million credentials to traditional-aged students
  - 6.1 million to returning adult students
  - 5.5 million to adults with no recognized postsecondary education experience
Washington
70% attainment goal
52% current attainment

Minnesota
70% attainment goal
54% current attainment

Maine
60% attainment goal
43% current attainment

Oklahoma
70% attainment goal
40% current attainment
Outlining the challenges of creating an adult promise program

- Exhausted aid eligibility may drive up cost to provide last dollar scholarship
- State and institutional buy-in
- State financial aid policies and eligibility requirements
- Satisfactory Academic Progress cannot be reset
- Outreach challenges
- Cost to tailor services to adult students or expand hours to meet adult student schedules

Is the “some college, no degree” student really a low hanging fruit?
Preliminary state ideas to address these challenges

• Last dollar scholarship
• Working with institutions to waive small financial holds and debts to institutions
• Financial literacy training
• Coaches/navigators/mentorship
• Emergency aid programs
• Statewide marketing campaigns with targeted outreach and web portal
  – Similar to Indiana’s You Can. Go Back program
Preliminary ideas continued

• Messaging matters
  – The main takeaway from Tennessee Promise to date
• Statewide marketing campaigns
• Targeted outreach
• Web portals
Preliminary parameters

- Income caps (e.g., up to $75,000)
- Prior credit requirements (e.g., 50% of degree requirements)
- Age limits
- Stop outs

Current thinking in the pilot states is not to limit to certificates and/or community college credentials
State specific details

• Oklahoma
  – Degree programs on the 100 Critical Degree List
  – Expanding existing *Reach Higher* program for marketing and outreach

• Minnesota
  – Automated outreach for stop-outs
  – Intensive coaching
State details

- Washington
  - Emergency aid program
  - Web portal to guide students to an institution that fits their needs, connects them to an advisor at that institution
- Maine
  - Institutional debt forgiveness and financial counseling
  - Wrap-around student support services
Final thought

• Many of the best ideas around serving adult students are best guesses at this point. States need to be flexible and adjust programs as they discover which interventions are or are not effective

• E.G., Tennessee
Tennessee Reconnect: (Re)engaging adults with higher education

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Drive to 55

• Governor Bill Haslam’s attainment goal
  – By 2025, **55 percent** of working age adults in Tennessee with have a postsecondary credential.
  – Goal set based on findings of *A Decade Behind* report from CEW (Carnevale and Smith, 2012)

• Currently: **~39 percent** attainment
  – 33.8 percent have AA or higher (ACS)
  – ~4-5 percent (conservatively) have postsecondary certificates
Cannot reach 55% without adults.

• Over next decade, Tennessee needs **871,000 degrees** to reach Drive to 55.
• Only **645,000** new high school graduates projected during this time period.
• Difference of ~**220,000** degrees:
  – Migration?
  – ADULTS
Adults in Tennessee

- **3.4 million** working age adults in Tennessee (per US Census)
  - **2.1 million** adults in Tennessee **do not have a postsecondary credential**.
- **900,000** adults in Tennessee have **some college, no degree**.
  - “low hanging fruit?”
Suite of Reconnect initiatives

• Reconnect and Complete
  – “Go back and finish”
• Reconnect Communities
  – Advising services
• TCAT Reconnect
  – Tuition and fee free at technical colleges
• Veteran Reconnect
• Community College Reconnect PILOT
Lessons learned from pilot

• More broad access, not limited
  – Those with 30+ or 60+ credits toward AA/BA

• Half time requirement
  – Not full time, not “almost full time”

• Service or mentorship?
  – Maybe not.
Tennessee Reconnect eligibility

• Adults who do not hold an AA/BA
  – Can have a Certificate
• Tennessee resident for one year
  – Consistent with other state aid programs
• Enroll half time (6+ credits); continuous enrollment
  – Cannot stop out or drop out
• CCs and eligible private institutions
Tennessee Reconnect design

• Last dollar (just like Tennessee Promise)
  – Adults must file FAFSA
  – Issues re: default and aid eligibility

• Must meet with Reconnect Community Advisor
  – Make semester-by-semester plan
  – Mentoring aspect
Tennessee Reconnect finances

• Last dollar
  – Average award $400-700, depending on enrollment status
  – Higher for those adults not eligible for aid

• Approximately $11 million per year
  – Funded with Lottery funds (as is Promise and merit aid program)
Ineligible for (federal) aid?

• Loan default
  – TSAC provides counseling services to get out of default
  – TSAC + TRC can work with students

• Institutional aid/holds on accounts
  – Working with institutions to waive library fines, parking tickets, etc.

• Microgrants and emergency aid
Tennessee Reconnect

- Passed in TN General Assembly in May
- Effective Fall 2018
  - Some institutions using institutional funds in Fall 2017 to start program early
- Next steps:
  - Trainings, community engagement
  - Plan for data collection and evaluation
Questions?
Thank you!

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