

# CO-ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES

## Introduction

California's Assembly Bill (AB) 104 and Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG) urge regional consortia to adopt policies and practices that promote program integration, "seamless transitions", and other "joint programming between adult education and career technical education."<sup>1</sup> However, neither AB 104 nor AEBG provide explicit guidance on how to accomplish these goals. To that end, this research brief presents information about how co-enrollment can serve as a tool to better facilitate seamless transitions to postsecondary education or the workforce for adult learners. In particular, this research brief offers recommendations to help adult education program administrators determine relevant co-enrollment strategies based on best practices research, case profiles, and other evidence.



## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Adult education programs can leverage the process of co-enrollment as a tool to better serve adult learners by creating seamless entry, transitions, and completion.
- ✓ Key co-enrollment strategies may include:
  - Common student intake
  - Braided funding
  - Coordinated data tracking and sharing
  - Program and service alignment
  - Strategic partnerships
  - Supported transitions

## Co-Enrollment and Adult Education

### Overview

In the October 2017 "Preliminary Report on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Adult Education Block Grant Program," the California Department of Education (CDE) and California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) highlight the "emerging practice" of co-enrollment models whereby adult school students receive community **college credit** concurrently or on transition to college programs.<sup>2</sup> The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), a national nonprofit organization, also highlights co-enrollment as a way to bolster Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs when combined with **support services**. To this end, CLASP recommends establishing co-enrollment policies between Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs), Title II (Adult Literacy and Education), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation Services).<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Washington State Employment Security Department defines co-enrollment as a **process** "that helps staff to better braid resources, organize into functional teams and jointly serve job seekers by using the most inclusive interpretations of eligibility criteria to enroll as many job seekers as possible into as many programs as possible."<sup>4</sup> In other words, sources describe co-enrollment as any combination of one or more noncredit-bearing adult education programs, credit-bearing postsecondary education, or workforce training and related support services.<sup>5</sup>

### Guiding Principles

Generally, existing state policies on and strategies for co-enrollment for adult learners are in the early stages of development and implementation. Nevertheless, common goals of such student-centered systems include:<sup>6</sup>

- Accelerating progress toward completion
- Creating seamless service delivery
- Enhancing access to programs and services
- Improving the student experience
- Increasing the chance of success
- Promoting service and program integration
- Redefining customer (i.e., student) flows
- Reducing administrative duplication
- Removing barriers to access (no "wrong door")



## California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan

### Overview

In 2016, California developed a four-year plan to meet objectives as directed by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The plan centers around three main policies:<sup>7</sup>

- Encourage skill development in high-demand areas as indicated by local industry and labor trends
- Reduce barriers to access of "good jobs" through the provision of remedial education services
- Strategize support services (e.g., employment services or additional training) to ensure clients receive good jobs

Implementation of these policies occurs at the regional level, allowing United Strategy programs to help students find work within local labor market and industries.<sup>8</sup>

### Co-Enrollment

While the above plan creates a basic framework to address WIOA's major workforce concerns, the plan did not include policy to facilitate co-enrollment strategies. Recently, California convened a cohort that recognized the importance of co-enrollment as a tool to "increase program and participant success; maximize resources; enable greater efficiencies in service delivery, and; better align services with regional sector pathways."<sup>9</sup> The cohort developed an action plan to deliver strategic co-enrollment policy by September 2018.

## Co-Enrollment Models

### Types of Concurrent Enrollment Programs

Overall, early evidence suggests that co-enrollment may serve as a tool to support the goals of IET and other adult education programs, such as:<sup>10</sup>

- Bridge programs
- Career Technical Education
- Corrections education
- Integrated English literacy and civics education programs
- Postsecondary education
- Pre-apprenticeship programs
- Workplace learning programs

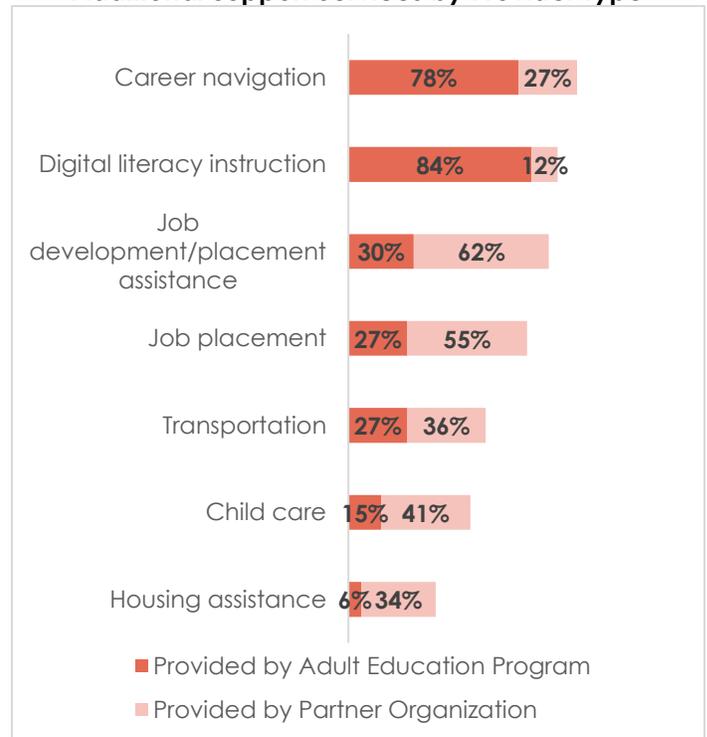
## Comprehensive Support Services

Another benefit of a co-enrollment strategy is that comprehensive support services are embedded within the system. Common categories of support services include academic advising, nonacademic advising, career services, financial services, and social services, among others.<sup>11</sup>



To ascertain how organizations are integrating services and programs within career pathway programs, CLASP and the Texas Workforce Commission gathered data from adult education providers via a national survey.<sup>12</sup> The following chart displays the prevalence of support services available to students enrolled in career pathways programs.

### Additional Support Services by Provider Type



Source: CLASP<sup>13</sup>

Other support services may include case management, tutoring, college navigation support, financial aid advising, veterans services, and disability services, among others.<sup>14</sup>

## Strategies to Facilitate Co-Enrollment



### Washington State's Co-Enrolled Integrated Service Delivery

#### Overview

Washington State has developed a state policy for a system of co-enrolled Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) focused on job seekers served through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The co-enrollment aspect of ISD is a **voluntary approach** with each local workforce area deciding whether to implement it. Currently, co-enrolled ISD in Washington involves WIOA Title I and Title III, but the state is exploring the possibility of other co-enrollment opportunities.

#### Components

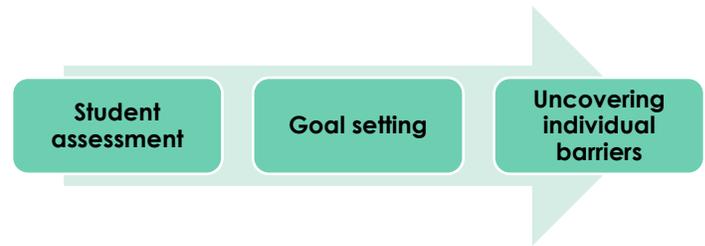
The state defines the co-enrolled system's core components as follows:<sup>15</sup>

- ✓ Co-enrolling as many job seekers accessing services as possible and **braiding/directing resources** to provide appropriate services, regardless of categorical eligibility
- ✓ Organizing staff and **services around functions (e.g., intake, assessment, career advising)** rather than programs or agencies
- ✓ Meeting a common set of outcome measures for all customers
- ✓ Providing a **robust menu of services** that result in positive labor market outcomes (e.g., finding a job, keeping a job, and continuing on the career ladder)
- ✓ Increase the focus on skill development, certification and work-based experiences based on what the job market requires
- ✓ Gathering and using customer input (job seeker and business) to continuously improve services

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

### Student Intake

Several policy and advocacy organizations have emphasized the importance of a common or universal intake process that ultimately ensures students enter the appropriate programs and services regardless of where they enter the system. An effective intake system addresses three primary aspects of student enrollment:<sup>16</sup>



A common intake process ensures students enrolled in different parts of the system have access to the same information, gain placement within the most appropriate programs and services, and receive referrals and other supports when necessary.<sup>17</sup> Further, when staff spend less time on administrative tasks, they can devote more attention to value-added services for program students. In planning for a common intake process, administrators can consider some of the questions highlighted below:



### Intake Process Planning

- What are the different ways that students currently enter each adult education program? What is the intake process for these students?
- Are there processes in place to refer students to ABE programs from other college departments such as noncredit workforce training programs and vice versa?
- What assessments (academic, career, etc.) will students complete?
- Do students receive advising when they first enroll?
- Is there a standard intake form used to capture participant information? If so, what information is included?
- Is there any kind of barrier assessment for entering students?
- Are there referral arrangements in place?
- Is there any follow-up with newly enrolled students?
- Do students receive student IDs?

Source: Jobs for the Future<sup>18</sup>

## Alignment of Programs and Services

As part of its strategies to enhance the effectiveness of career pathways, acceleration, and articulation, adult education programs can ensure curricular alignment from school to school as well as in transitions to postsecondary education.

### Curriculum Alignment Project

**Overview**

The *Education to Career Network of North San Diego County*—an adult education consortium consisting of five adult schools and one community college<sup>19</sup>—devised and implemented a Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP). The goal of the project was “to help ensure pathways and seamless transitions” between adult education service providers.<sup>20</sup>

**Action Steps**

- Conduct four weekly meetings with discipline-based workgroups
- Create uniform templates for individual courses and course alignment agreements
- Compare content, competencies, projects, and assessments for courses across providers using alignment matrix
- Identify gaps in service delivery and student drop-off points to develop bridges and targeted supports

**Outcomes**

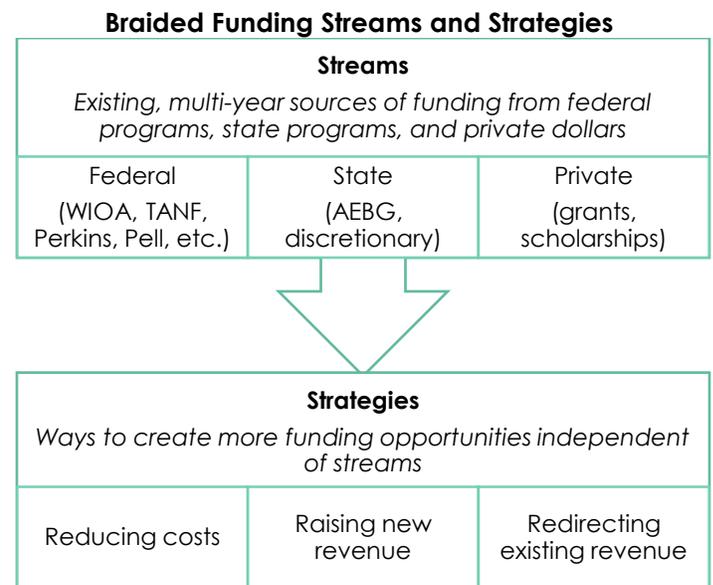
- ✓ Increased articulation
- ✓ Increased transitions
- ✓ Increased collaboration

Source: AEBG Summit

## Braided Funding

While California awards AEBG funding to regional adult education consortia, other organizations also receive federal and state financial support to serve adult learners. For example, federal sources include Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Title II funds while state sources include California State Library literacy funds.<sup>21</sup> CLASP underscores the need for adult education providers not only to align programs and services but also to align funding sources to avoid “offering courses that are not aligned to regional workforce needs, are duplicative, or are of lower priority.”<sup>22</sup>

Braided funding involves “the weaving together of federal, state and private funding streams” and “the development of funding strategies”<sup>23</sup> and can be a necessary component of a co-enrollment strategy depending on the programs and services in which students are co-enrolled.



Source: Accelerating Opportunity

To ensure the success of any such braided funding stream as part of a co-enrollment program, adult education programs should be approved on the Eligible Training Provider (ETPL), which is maintained by CalJobs.<sup>24</sup>

As an additional resource, the figure on the following page provides an overview of potential sources of federal funding for support services in career pathways.

### Federal Funding Sources for Support Services

PROGRAM	WIOA TITLE I ADULT & DISLOCATED WORKER	WIOA TITLE I YOUTH	WIOA TITLE II	PELL GRANTS	PERKINS CTE	TRIO SSS	TANF	CSBG	SNAP E&T	CDBG
<b>Career Transition</b>										
Assistance gaining work experience, internship search, and placement	●	●			●		○		○	○
Job search and placement	●	●			●		●	●	●	○
Career navigation	●	●	○		●	●	○	●		○
<b>Academic Support</b>										
Academic preparation and course support (e.g., study skills)	○	●	○		●	●	○	●		○
Academic advising (e.g., course planning)					●	●	○	●		
Integrated Education and Training	○	●	○		●	●	○	●	○	○
<b>Personal Support</b>										
Financial coaching/financial literacy workshops	○	○	○			●	○	●		○
Group support (e.g., group counseling, learning communities)	●	●	○		●	○	○	●	○	○
Mental health, substance abuse or other counseling		●				○	●	●		○
Case management	●	●				●	●	●	●	○
Mentoring	●	●	○		●	●	○	●	○	○
<b>Financial Stability Support</b>										
Funding for living expenses	○	○		●		○	●	●		
Funding for child care and transportation	●	●	○	●	○		●	●	●	○
Assistance using nontraditional sources of aid to pay for education and training	●	●			○	●	○	●	●	○
Assistance accessing traditional financial	●	●	○		●	●	○	●		

Source: CLASP<sup>25</sup>

● Funding source is commonly used for the specified support service

○ Funding source can be used for the specified support service, but is not widely used due to limited funding, program restrictions, etc.

## Strategic Partnerships

Strong partnerships among education providers, support services, the local workforce system, community-based organizations, and employers are essential for effective co-enrollment strategies. In particular, strong employer relationships “can improve recruitment, job placement, program quality, and funding.”<sup>26</sup> Adult education providers should seek to establish partnerships with relevant community organizations such as:<sup>27</sup>

- Community colleges
- School of Continuing Education
- Non-profit organizations
- State government agencies
- Local government agencies (e.g., library)
- Workforce development boards
- Employers
- Unions
- Other educational institutions



### GlendaleLearns

#### Overview

GlendaleLearns manages a customer-centered approach that leverages community organizations and programs including ECF, DOR, VWDB, GCC, and Lanterman Regional Center and co-enrolls adults in WIOA Title I and IV, AEBG, CTE/SWP, and Regional Center.

#### Action Steps

- Co-enroll all AEBG students in CalJOBS
- Co-enroll with WIOA Title I (career assessments, career training, work-based training, supportive services, job placement assistance and retention)
- Coordinate co-enrollments with partners

Source: AEBG Summit

## Coordinated Data Tracking and Sharing

All students, regardless of point of entry, should have a unique student identification number; otherwise, “it is difficult to track students within and across segments and into the workforce.”<sup>28</sup> Adult schools or other adult education service providers must also be able to share these unique identifiers with partner organizations. For instance, Jobs for the Future’s Accelerating

Opportunity Field Guide notes that data systems need to “be integrated with other critical state databases” and relevant staff should “receive appropriate training related to data.”<sup>29</sup>

## Supported Transitions

Best practices in adult education that have been shown to increase student transitions to postsecondary education and which can be incorporated within the context of strategic co-enrollment strategies include:

### Administrative

- Improving adult education transitions as an institutional priority
- Partnerships among colleges, adult programs, businesses, and other community organizations
- Innovative and flexible enrollment and admissions policies
- Robust student data systems

### Program Components

- Support services before, during, and after transitions

### Staff

- Staff development opportunities

### Instruction

- Aligned, sequential, and progressive curriculum
- Contextualized instruction
- Embedded career planning
- Multiple entry and exit points
- Accelerated courses or programs available

Source: Ray Marshall Center<sup>30</sup>



## References and Additional Resources

### Research

- [Career Pathways Implementation Synthesis](#)
- [Integrated Education and Training: A Career Pathways Policy and Practice](#)
- [Integrated Education and Training: Model Programs for Building Career Pathways for Participants at Every Skill Level](#)
- [Operations Manual for Integrated Service Delivery with Co-Enrollment in Washington](#)

### Checklists, Forms, and Worksheets

- [Braided Funding Assessment](#)
- [Sample Forms from Curriculum Alignment Project](#)

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> "[Assembly Bill No. 104](#)." California Legislative Information.

<sup>2</sup> "[Preliminary Report on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Adult Education Block Grant Program](#)." California Department of Education and California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, October 2017, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> "[Integrated Education and Training: Model Programs for Building Career Pathways for Participants at Every Skill Level](#)." CLASP, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "[Welcome to Washington's Integrated Service Delivery with Co-enrollment Site](#)." Washington State Employment Security Department.

<sup>5</sup> Rutschow, E.Z. and S. Cary-Ross. "[Beyond the GED: Promising Models for Moving High School Dropouts to College](#)." MDRC, January 2014, pp. 31-32.

<sup>6</sup> [1] "[Accelerating Opportunity Field Guide](#)." Jobs for the Future. [2] "[Operations Manual for Integrated Service Delivery with Co-Enrollment in Washington](#)." WorkSource, July 2016, p. 3. [3] "[Introduction to ISD with Co-Enrollment](#)." Washington State Employment Security Department.

<sup>7</sup> "[California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan 2016-2020](#)." California Workforce Development Board, p. 10-11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-121.

<sup>9</sup> "[California Co-enrollment Cohort](#)." California Workforce Development Board, May 21, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> "[Integrated Education and Training: Model Programs for Building Career Pathways for Participants at Every Skill Level](#)." CLASP, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> "[Comprehensive Support Services](#)." Jobs for the Future.

<sup>12</sup> "[Integrated Education and Training: A Career Pathways Policy and Practice](#)." CLASP, April 2017.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> "[Sample Career Pathways Description](#)." Accelerating Opportunity.

<sup>15</sup> Text adapted nearly verbatim from source: "[Co-enrolled Integrated Service Delivery Policy and Operations Manual](#)." Washington State Employment Security Department, September 6, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> "[Providing Comprehensive Support Services](#)." The Breaking Through Practice Guide, p. 3.9.

<sup>17</sup> "Comprehensive Support Services," *Op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> "[Supporting Students Intake Through Completion](#)." Jobs for the Future.

<sup>19</sup> "[About the Network](#)." Education to Career Network of North San Diego County.

<sup>20</sup> [1] Thacher, M., K. Porter, and S. Sebring. "[Curriculum Alignment for Accelerated Learning](#)." AEBG TAP Webinar. [2] Porter, K. and S. Sebring. "[Curriculum Alignment for Accelerated Learning](#)." AEBG Summit, January 22, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> "[Adult Education Analysis](#)." Legislative Analyst's Office, February 2018.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>23</sup> "[Financial Planning and Sustainability](#)." Accelerating Opportunity.

<sup>24</sup> [1] "Financial Planning and Sustainability," *Op. cit.* [2] "[ETPL Programs](#)." CalJOBS.

<sup>25</sup> Figure reproduced from source: "[Funding Career Pathways: A Federal Toolkit for State and Local/Regional Career Pathway Partnerships](#)." CLASP, February 2016, p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> "[What Makes a Strong Pathway?](#)" Accelerating Opportunity.

<sup>27</sup> [1] Sarna, M. and J. Strawn. "[Career Pathways Implementation Synthesis](#)." Abt Associates, February 2018, p. 17. [2] Green, A. "[Texas Transformation: Full Career and College Integration in 2 Years](#)." Texas Workforce Commission.

<sup>28</sup> "[Adult Education Analysis](#)." Legislative Analyst's Office, February 2018.

<sup>29</sup> "[A Policy Framework for Integrated Pathways](#)." Accelerating Opportunity.

<sup>30</sup> "[Challenges, Promising Programs, and Effective Practices in Adult and Developmental Education](#)." Ray Marshall Center, February 2011, p. 22.