



MN Reconnect *From Pilot to Program*

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Institutional Engagement

Innovative Ideas in Supporting Adult Learners using a Pilot Approach

Agenda

- Why did we do a pilot?
- What happened?
- How is it working?
- What have we learned?

Minnesota Program Overview



Encouraging students who have some college credits but no certificate or degree to return to college

Four components:

1. Targeted outreach and re-enrollment of former Minnesota State students
2. Navigation and support in the re-enrollment process
3. Targeted financial assistance for students, including emergency grants, and
4. Program evaluation

Pilot institutions selected using a competitive grant application process

Why a pilot?

1. Needed time to build support

- Legislative engagement
- System/Institutional engagement

2. Needed money to scale up

- 143,000 potential students statewide
- 30 community and technical colleges
- Minnesota = high tuition state
 - 2019-2020 average public 2-year tuition \$5,601 (30 credits)

3. Alignment of vision, goals, and strategies

- Build the alignment (and culture change) between OHE & MinnState and from the institutions/local level up instead of from the state down
- Let the experiences of our pilot institutions inform the scale-up statewide
- Give ourselves room to “test” new strategies (and sometimes fail)

Institutional Application Components

1. Describe your institution and its adult learners
2. Who would benefit from this program?
3. What support do you currently provide returning adult learners?
4. Describe options for awarding credit for prior learning on your institution that are appropriate for adult learners.
5. Describe your institution's approach to predictable or structured scheduling.
6. Describe how you manage your student advising currently. What tools do you utilize?
7. Describe current supports for students' non-academic needs
8. Does your institution offer emergency assistance grants to students?
9. What measures of success would you use to evaluate this program?

Expectations of Participating Pilot Institutions

- Coordinate with system office to identify eligible former students
- Conduct targeted outreach and re-enrollment of identified former students,
- Provide intensive navigation for re-enrollment, degree selection and program planning, credit for prior learning (CPL), and support for completion,
- Offer targeted financial assistance from the grant program
- Offer/facilitate access to any needed community resources,
- Assist in evaluation of the program, and
- Develop recommendations to support Minnesota's colleges and universities in serving adult students long term.

Institutions Eligible to Apply

Minnesota State Colleges (two-year public institutions)

Four institutions, representing both Greater MN and Twin Cities

Additional institutions to be added for 2020-2021

Participating institutions receive:

- Funding for Navigators & Communications,
- Technical assistance (CAEL assessment, OHE support), and
- Grants to improve campus services

Students receive:

- \$1,000 per term grants
- Up to \$500 to pay off financial holds,
- Campus-level support (Navigators), and
- Other assistance in overcoming barriers to completion

Participating Institutions Year 1

Minnesota



- **Riverland Community College** (SE Minnesota)
 - Enrolls 4,400 students at three campuses in Albert Lea, Austin, and Owatonna plus a robust online campus.
- **Inver Hills Community College** (Metropolitan Twin Cities)
 - Serves approximately 5,000 students per year, 33% of whom are adult learners, and offer over 35 degree program options, including online and evening course offerings.
- **Lake Superior College** (NE Minnesota)
 - Serves 8,118 students in the Duluth, MN/Superior WI area. About 36% of learners at Lake Superior College are aged 25 and older.
- **South Central College** (Southern MN)
 - A comprehensive community and technical college, offering courses at campuses in Faribault and North Mankato, as well as online. Currently serving 2,774 students, of whom 29% are aged 25 or older.

The Students

Target audience

- Age 25-44
- No college credits for at least 2 academic years
- No prior award conferred
 - Year 1 change - certificates of 15 credits or less allowed
- At least 15 credits completed
- Ability to finish within 2 years

College	Fall 2017 System Office Data	Spring 2018 College "Scrubbed" Data	Enrolled Fall 2018	Enrolled Spring 2018	Enrolled Fall 2019
Inver Hills	4,785	1,185	44	105	98
Lake Superior	3,235	651	2	1	20
Riverland	3,315	2,748	15	20	46
South Central	2,754	809	19	22	32
TOTAL	14,089	5,393	80	148	196

Scholarships to students begin July 1, 2019
200 available
160 applications
123 awarded in Fall 2019

What's working?



The Student Experience is working

- Re-enrollment personal assistance: Navigators
- Use of State and Pell Grants; Limited private scholarships at some colleges
- State MN Reconnect Grant up to \$1000/semester for up to 6 terms
- Payment plans / Repayment of financial debt for returning students (varies)
- Special programs for returning students: accelerated degrees; credits for work experience and/or military experience.
- Assistance to access other available services: child care, tutoring, emergency funding, book/fee assistance, transportation, nutritional assistance, housing assistance, etc./Holistic advising
- Reverse transfer/degrees awarded

What else is working?

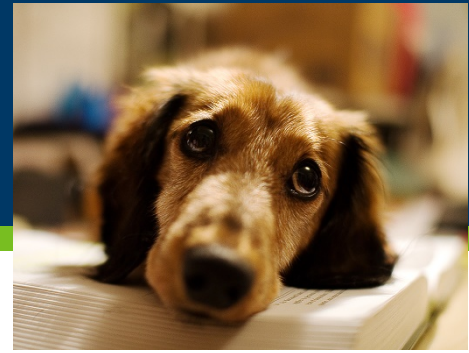


- Partnership between OHE/Minnesota State
 - Roadshows/Community Engagement/Forging relationships with leaders
 - MN Reconnect is aligned with Reimaging Minnesota State which aligns with the state Attainment Goal/Closing Equity Gaps; plays a part in Guided Learning Pathways and Student Experience
- On-line interest forms and scholarship tracking developed
- Partnering on other collaborations and programs designed around adult reengagement
- Partnering with local Chambers (new partnership with Graduate Network)
- Program specific outreach: Firefighter/Medical
- 1 Cohort code for the system/Allows ease for OHE to gather aid information
- System Office manager

Having a Central System Program Manager

- Supports and promotes partnership between OHE/Minnesota State
- Working to make more system processes and works with system data
- Involved in equity outreach: Equity Works Leadership Institute, Mankato Area Diversity Council, Adult Learner Institute
- Aligns and manages partnerships with other system wide opportunities: C-Plan, Degrees When Due, All learning Counts, Workforce Development Grant, etc...
- Manages monthly meetings-Navigators, large group, Advisory Committee
- Created a training manual for navigators
- Outreach to states, gather and analyze promising practices and share with navigators
- Train navigators on U of M adult advising practices-Making the Connection

What is not working?



- Numbers are TOO LOW!!
- Missing our communities of color → we know there is need, but how to reach the students
- Targeted outreach is not producing the level of interest we would like
 - Data pulls did not result in enrollments → moved to increased social media
- Some colleges have changed their Navigators
- Some tracking is very manual process / Difficult to design automated processes
- System office does not have access to data at finger tips - College can be silos – pending IT upgrade

Takeaways



- Catalyzing action on the ground from the state office ivory tower
 - Integrating with state Educational Attainment & Reimagining Minnesota State initiatives
 - Road shows – workforce boards/centers, county human services, anybody who will listen
 - Promote it as an Human Resources initiative within state & local gov't, employer groups
 - Get help! New partnership with Graduate Network
- Plan the processes
 - Plan EARLY / Plan thoroughly / Ask questions about procedures at each campus
 - Think about what you DON'T KNOW / Ask "What If?"
- Money doesn't solve every problem, but it DOES help!

Contact Us

YOU LEFT
COLLEGE EARLY
FOR A REASON.
NOW YOU CAN
GO BACK WITH
A PURPOSE.



MINNESOTA STATE

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