

AEBG: YR3 2017-2018: Request for Proposal

SBCC: Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate for Adults with Disabilities

Are you an existing 2015/16 or 2016/17 AEBG funding participant?

Yes

Program Name

SBCC Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate for Adults with Disabilities

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Applicable Program Area

Adults with Disabilities

1. Executive Summary

Despite statistics from our state indicating that many unemployed individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) wish to enter the workforce, the California employment rate for this group is a mere 13.1% (California Department of Developmental Services, 2016; Employment Development Department, 2018). One of the barriers this population faces in acquiring paid employment is access to high-quality vocational training that meets their unique learning needs. These individuals often require systematic instruction to develop the skills needed to obtain and sustain employment and struggle to navigate traditional educational and vocational programming without modified curriculum or intensive supports.

Data from a 2016 study performed by BW Research indicate that South Santa Barbara lacks sufficient post-secondary vocational training opportunities for adults with disabilities. BW found that current offerings for this population are heavily structured around services related to residential, employment, health, and community access supports. They also noted that “though some institutions provide employment services such as job placement and training, they...provide few opportunities to really hone technical skills” (p.2).

Last year, thanks to the vision of our AEBG consortium and the input of many community partners, Santa Barbara City College designed a Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate Program for Adults with Disabilities. The program consists of two courses designed to provide the soft skills training necessary to prepare this population to pursue further career technical and/or job placement opportunities with an ultimate goal of helping them achieve competitive integrated employment (CIE). The curriculum for the two courses, Vocational Exploration and Planning and Self-Advocacy Skills for Educational and Vocational Settings, are rooted in evidence-based instructional practices and draw from the work of leading researchers and practitioners in the field of special education. At present, the course and program proposals have been designed and submitted to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office for approval and the program is anticipated to launch under the Santa Barbara City College School for Extended Learning in Spring 2019.

Moving forward, the next phase of the project involves building the community partnerships and infrastructure necessary to ensure that the program becomes a sustainable success in terms of enrollment, excellent programming, and student outcomes and running the pilot semester.

Measureable Goals (Process of Implementation):

- 1) Completion of course curricular materials in collaboration with community partners to ensure alignment and efficient service delivery (using funding from the previous grant cycle).
- 2) Partner with school districts to ensure that transition-age students, their families, and their teachers are aware of the program and have the necessary information and supports they need to enroll and attend. This will involve creating and disseminating marketing materials, planning school site visits, holding informational sessions, and implementing planning meetings to ensure accessibility for this population.
- 3) Partner with the local Santa Barbara Transition Collaborative to market the program to adult service agencies and their clients. This includes participating in related events, creating and disseminating materials, and taking part in informational sessions and planning meetings to draw interest and ensure accessibility for this population.
- 4) Partner with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to apply for and develop a WorkAbility II Cooperative Program that allows us to leverage matching dollars to partially fund direct service positions as well as provide paid work experience (internships) and employment services for program certificate recipients supported by DOR.
- 5) Partner with the Tri-Counties Regional Center (TCRC) to provide internship and employment supports for TCRC-eligible students.
- 6) Develop plan for and hire adjunct faculty (for four sections) and teaching assistants (3 per section), adjunct onsite DSPS Counselor to meet student needs, and a Program Coordinator responsible for overseeing the certificate program and the articulation of community partnerships and related funding sources.
- 7) Develop and implement professional development for faculty and staff

Outcomes Expected (Method of Assessing Impact):

- 1) Successful development of WorkAbility II Cooperative Agreement
- 2) Program will commence Spring 2019
- 3) Number of students who complete the courses
- 4) Number of students who complete the certificate program
- 5) Number of DOR-eligible students who, upon program completion, participate in paid work experience and receive employment services
- 6) Number of TCRC-eligible students, who upon program completion, participate in paid work experience
- 7) Number of students who finish the certificate program and go on to pursue other CTE courses
- 8) Number of certificate recipients who obtain (and eventually sustain) employment

2. Integration

The Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate Program for Adults with Disabilities is specifically designed to create a systematic transition from the program to the regional workforce through partnerships with community agencies. The program coursework will guide students through the process of: 1) learning about regional vocational options and related vocational programming and services, 2) assessing their own vocational interests, skills, and training needs, 3) developing a person-centered vocational/educational plan with short and long-term goals, 4) creating and beginning implementation of an action plan for meeting these goals, and 5) developing the self-advocacy, communication, technology, time management, and

functional skills necessary for goal attainment. This can include supporting students in accessing additional Career Technical Education courses at SBCC to facilitate this process and help them meet their identified vocational goals.

Upon completion of the certificate program, students will work with our community partners, the Department of Rehabilitation and the Tri-Counties Regional Center, to access work experience and employment service opportunities. These can include paid internships, employment preparation, and job development, placement and retention services. Job coaching and other supports will assist students in generalizing and applying the skills they gain from their coursework directly in employment settings. This is a critical component of the program, as research indicates that many individuals with IDD have difficulty generalizing a skill learned in one setting into new contexts (Wenar & Kerig, 2006). This is an important consideration when developing a programmatic approach to supporting this population as they enter the workforce and represents another way we are using research to inform our work.

3. Justification

In recent years, state and federal policy have emphasized the importance of supporting individuals with disabilities in achieving employment in integrated settings at competitive wages (competitive integrated employment; CIE). Historically, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have experienced high rates of unemployment or were frequently employed in subminimum wage jobs and in segregated workshop settings. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) seeks to empower individuals with disabilities in order to maximize employment, self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society. In 2017, the California Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of Rehabilitation entered into a new agreement to further articulate related federal and state laws. This agreement is represented by the California Competitive Integrated Employment: Blueprint for Change (see Appendix A). The Blueprint represents a proactive interagency plan to increase opportunities for individuals with IDD to prepare for and engage in CIE and reduce reliance upon subminimum wage jobs and segregated work settings. The goals of the Blueprint are as follows:

1. Improve collaboration and coordination between the three departments to prepare and support all individuals with IDD who choose CIE.
2. Increase opportunities for individuals with IDD who choose CIE to prepare for and participate in the California workforce development system and achieve CIE within existing resources.
3. Support the ability of individuals with IDD to make informed choices, adequately prepare for, transition to, and engage in CIE.

As articulated in these goals, there is a clear need to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to adequately prepare for employment and learn to make informed choices as they navigate the various agencies and supports available to them. Data from the BW Research Project of South Santa Barbara demonstrate that our region lacks adequate educational programming for adults with disabilities that will support them in this type of vocational preparation (2016). Data from the research study and conversations with our local adult service agencies and partner school districts indicate that there is a large population of individuals who stand to benefit from this programming (see Appendix B for data demonstrating local need). The Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate for Adults with Disabilities curriculum is specifically designed to address the needs articulated by our data and was designed with the CIE Blueprint and its goals in mind. Due to the current focus on this initiative, the partnerships between SBCC, the SB Department of Rehabilitation, Tri-Counties Regional Center, and our local school districts are ripe for growth as these agencies figure out how to best achieve these goals collaboratively within our community.

Due to time constraints associated with the SBCC curriculum development and approval process, the program courses were not approved in line with the submitted 2016-2017 activity chart. Additionally, while the initial RFP proposed the creation of one ten-week course, we learned through the program development process and conversations with partners that we really needed multiple sections of two sixteen-week courses to achieve the desired results, meet local demand, and to qualify for enhanced funding. This has impacted our project in two significant ways: 1) the funding from year 1 that was earmarked for the implementation phase of the program was saved and will be factored into the budgetary requests for the upcoming cycle, and 2) the course material demands were significantly increased by the need for two semester-length courses and the development process is still in progress using funds allocated during the first year. The new funding we are requesting for this upcoming cycle will serve to develop partnerships and create the infrastructure necessary to ensure the sustainability of the program.

4. Outreach & Marketing

Outreach and marketing will center largely on our partnerships with local education agencies (Santa Barbara Unified School District, Carpinteria Unified School District, and the Santa Barbara SELPA), our community partners (Department of Rehabilitation and Tri-Counties Regional Center), and adult service agencies and related groups. The process will involve creating and disseminating marketing materials, planning site visits, holding informational sessions, and implementing planning meetings to ensure accessibility for each of the targeted audiences listed below.

- 1) Partner with local education agencies to ensure that transition-age students, their families, and their teachers are aware of the program and have the necessary information and supports they need to enroll and attend
- 2) Partner with the local Transition and Employment Collaborative groups to market the program to adult service agencies and their clients
- 3) Partner with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and the Tri-Counties Regional Center (TCRC) to disseminate program information to their clients
- 4) Participate in the annual Santa Barbara County Transition Fair

5. Alignment

The Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate Program for Adults with Disabilities is specifically designed to provide excellent adult education programming in order to accelerate career success for a historically underserved population. The creation and development of this program was driven by data gleaned from the AEBG-funded 2016 BW Research study (Appendix B) of our region and the identified needs of our target population, as well as data from our community partners. This program fosters an inclusive, collaborative, and coordinated approach to meeting student needs, whereby partnerships across multiple organizations (SBCC, SBUSD, CUSD, DOR, TCRC) will allow for pooled resources and efficient service delivery to maximize program outcomes and student success. Our ultimate goal is to provide adults with disabilities the vocational training and supports they need to obtain and sustain competitive integrated employment. The 2017-2018 AEBG Annual Plan identifies the importance of meeting the post-secondary educational needs of adults with disabilities with their goal 5: "Establish an Adults with Disability Career Planning and Training certificate serving as preparation for further career technical and/or job placement assistance." Funding for the pilot year of this certificate program will allow us to establish the infrastructure that will facilitate the development of partnerships across agencies who share a common vision and goal for the upward mobility of adults with disabilities.

Total Budget Requested

\$117,500

1000/2000/3000

\$42,500

1000/2000/3000 Detail

\$29,500 Adjunct Faculty + \$30,000 DSPS Counselor - \$17,000 from last grant cycle = \$42,500

Funding for Instructional Assistants and the Program Coordinator will be paid through DOR funds per Valerie Larson, DOR Contracts Representative.

4000

\$20,000

4000 Detail

\$20,000 for supplies related to classroom instructional needs, program marketing, program orientation and informational meetings, etc.

5000

\$45,000

5000 Detail

\$10,000 Professional Development

\$35,000 Consultant to complete items listed on activity chart (remaining funds from last cycle factored into current request)

6000

\$10,000

6000 Detail

\$10,000 computer hardware

Total Number of Adults Students Served

-

Target Number of New Adult Students Served for 2017-18

-

Do you currently receive other NON-AEBG funding that supports the proposed activity? If yes, please describe how additional funding expands or supports that activity.

no

What is your sustainability plan for this activity when funding is no longer available?

Once the certificate program is approved by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), the courses will be funded through apportionment and will be eligible for enhanced funding.

This year, the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) will collaborate with the SBCC School for Extended Learning to apply for and develop a WorkAbility II Cooperative Program. Using an in-kind match for SBCC staff time spent providing direct services to adults with disabilities who are supported by DOR, DOR will be able to draw down federal dollars to fund partial staff salaries and paid internships and employment services for DOR-eligible students who have completed the Work Readiness and Career Planning Certificate Program. Though this step was referenced in the previous year's plan, we were unable to begin this process until the courses were created and submitted to the CCCCCO. As noted in the 2017-2018 AEBG 1-Year Plan, leveraging matching dollars in 2018 will be more appropriate now that the curriculum has been submitted for approval.