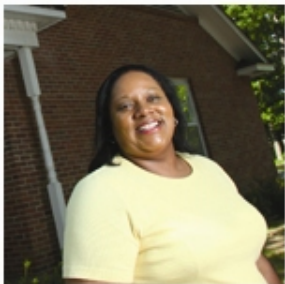


The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (ACPI)



Mississippi Economic
Policy Center
Annual Policy Conference
October 2009

Building Communities. Changing lives.



ACPI

- TANF-funded initiative managed by Arkansas Department of Higher Education.
- \$11.2 million per year for 25 participating colleges (mostly community colleges).
- Each college gets between \$235,151 & \$633,513 a year to develop campus-based career pathways programs. (www.workforcestrategy.org)



ACPI

- Targets exclusively lower-income adults (below 250% of poverty) with dependents under 21.
- Emphasizes postsecondary credentials: Certificates and Associate Degrees.
- Heavy emphasis on college institutional change to better serve low-income students (it's a retention and completion strategy).
- Although Community college-centered (Career Pathways Model), includes many partners (adult education, CBOs, employers, government agencies).



Key Partners

- Community College.
- Adult Education.
- Community-based organizations (CBOs) and other service providers.
- Government Agencies (Division of Child Care, Local TANF Office, One Stop).
- Employers.
- Powerful synergies that enable a better approach to workforce training than any single entity.



ACPI History

- Began in 2005 when Southern Good Faith Fund (SGFF) and Southeast Arkansas College (SEARK) piloted the first career pathways program.
- SGFF wanted to expand training opportunities beyond Certified Nursing Assistant. Career Pathways was an emerging model that enabled SGFF to emphasize its support service strengths while partnering with community colleges for variety of training.
- SGFF's policy work secured the funding to take the pilot statewide.



Key Features of Career Pathways Programs

Clear Pathways of Continuing Education:

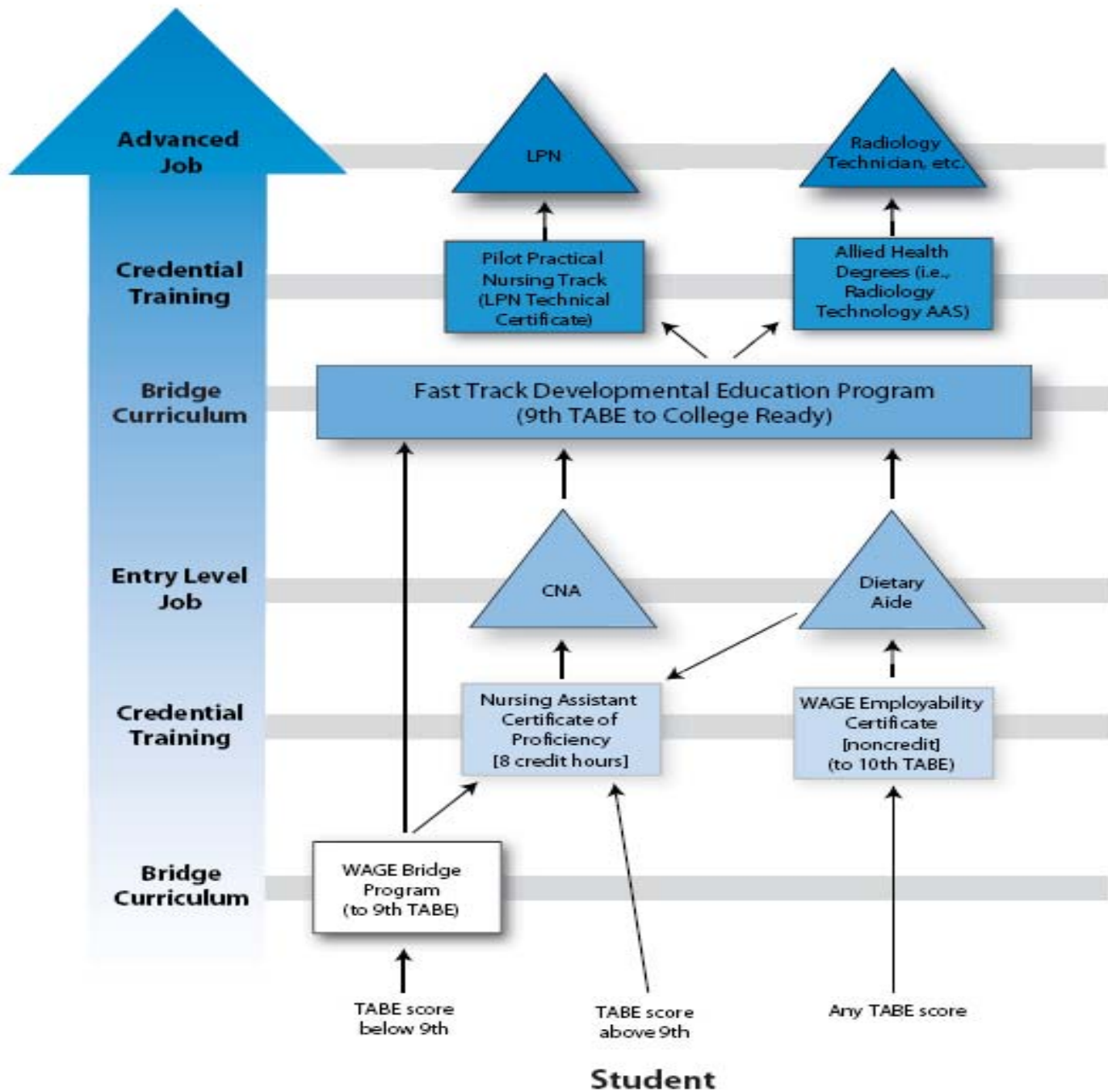
- That include a variety of credentials, non-credit and credit (GED, Certificates of Proficiency, Technical Certificates, Associate Degrees) tied to demand jobs and job ladders in a particular local industry sector.
- That are seamless: improved articulation between credit programs, and “bridge” programs to improve transitions and accommodate academic skills of students.



Key Features of Career Pathways Programs

Innovative Instructional Strategies aimed at improving retention and completion:

- Bridge programs: innovative remedial curricula, either Adult Education- or Developmental Education-based.
- Credit program modifications: Fast Track LPN, abbreviated certificate programs
- Flexible course scheduling, learning communities or cohorting students.





Key Features of Career Pathways Programs

Comprehensive Student Support Services:

- That provide individual assessments, support service needs assessments, career and academic counseling, personal counseling referrals, college survival skills seminars (how to study, take tests, etc.), academic monitoring and support (tutoring, labs), and job placement assistance.
- That includes dedicated counseling staff, and funds for financial aid (last resort) and various supplemental services: child care, transportation, student emergencies – which are designed to incentivize student retention and completion.



TANF funds are used to:

- Hire program staff: Program Director, Counselor, Job Placement Coordinator, instructors, curriculum developers, outreach coordinators (recruiters), etc.
- Curriculum development and instructional equipment.
- Direct student support services: gas and bus vouchers, child care vouchers, tuition and other college expenses.



Retention and Graduation Outcomes?

- August 2005- May 2009: 14,840 enrolled in ACPI; 9,366 (63%) earned a credential. Similar figures for most recent program year. By comparison, overall, 29% of community college students obtain a certificate/degree or transfer to a four-year college within 3 years.
- Approximately 89% of ACPI students are retained semester to semester. By comparison, 53% of first-year community college students in Arkansas return the second year.



Job placement and retention

- For the most ACPI recent program year (August 2008 to May 2009), job placement rate was 59%. Six-month job retention rate was 80%; 12-month job retention rate was 88%.



Follow-up questions?

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