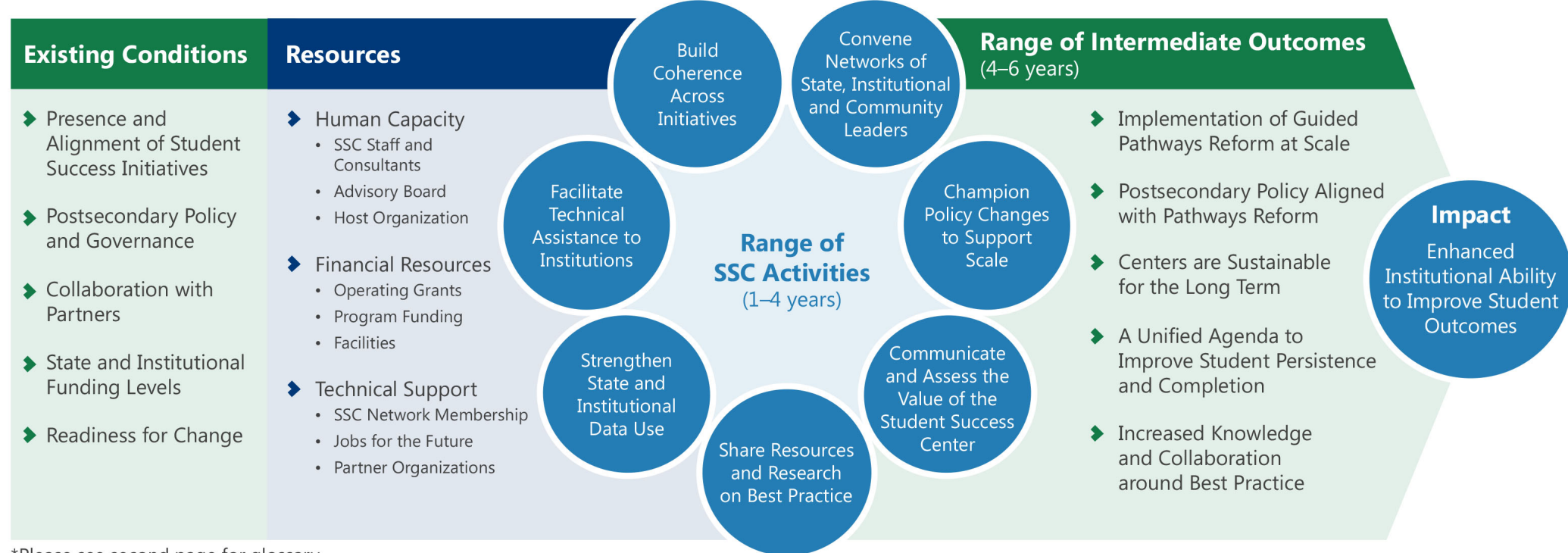




Student Success Center NETWORK

The Role of Student Success Centers in enhancing the ability of Institutions to Improve Student Outcomes: A Theory of Change



*Please see second page for glossary

Theory of Change Glossary

Existing Conditions: Unique contextual factors that influence how SSCs operate in their state.

- **Presence and Alignment of Student Success Initiatives:** The degree to which the state, system and/or institutions have developed and/or implemented initiatives to improve student outcomes, and whether those initiatives are aligned with each other.
- **Postsecondary Policy and Governance:** The degree to which the existing political structures and policy environment support or hinder postsecondary reform.
- **Collaboration with Partners:** The degree to which the state, system or individual institutions have a history of working with national, state or local organizations that support student success reform.
- **State and Institutional Funding Levels:** The amount and stability of funding the state allocates to higher education overall and the financial wellbeing of individual institutions.
- **Readiness for Change:** The capacity and commitment of state, system, and institutional leaders to adopt and implement student success initiatives.

Inputs: Resources that SSCs need to operate effectively.

- **Human Capacity:** The personnel that work for or in partnership with the Student Success Center (SSC), including the SSC Executive Director and staff, SSC Advisory Board, interns, consultants, and association or agency staff who are not employed by the SSC but provide additional human capacity.
- **Financial Resources:** The operating and program funding available to the SSC, including original start-up grant funding and additional grants or contracts the SSC has developed to support their work, as well as the office space provided by an association or agency.
- **Technical Support:** The ongoing assistance provided to the SSCs through membership in the SSC Network, and by Jobs for the Future and their partner organizations, such as the Community College Research Center (CCRC).

Range of SSC Activities: Actions that SSCs take to produce the desired outcomes and impact.

- **Build Coherence across Initiatives:** Create a statewide coordinated strategy, including K-12 and workforce development, to effectively advocate for student success and the scale up of evidence-based practices, primarily guided pathways.
- **Convene Networks of State, Institutional, and Community Leaders:** Bring together networks of state and institutional postsecondary administrators, faculty and staff, as well as community stakeholders to discuss best practice and collaborate on policy improvement around student success.
- **Champion Policy Changes to Support Scale:** Effectively advocate for state and/or system policy that supports the implementation and scale-up of initiatives that support improved rates of postsecondary student success.
- **Communicate and Assess the Value of the Student Success Center:** Effectively communicate to stakeholders the value of the SSC while regularly evaluating its work and adjusting strategies to improve impact.
- **Share Resources and Research on Best Practice:** Monitor and disseminate findings to state policy makers and practitioners on existing research and best practice related to student success strategies.
- **Strengthen State and Institutional Data Use:** Encourage data analysis in state, system and institutional decision-making, establish common data metrics across institutions and support research to evaluate the impact of institutional interventions.
- **Facilitate Technical Assistance to Institutions:** Coordinate specific support to postsecondary institutions based on their individual needs around implementing student success initiatives.

Range of Intermediate Outcomes: Changes that are observed or expected as a result of SSC efforts.

- **Implementation of Guided Pathways Reform at Scale:** Community colleges across the state are effectively implementing pathways reform for all eligible students.
- **Postsecondary Policy Aligned with Pathways Reform:** State and system policy and funding support pathways.
- **Centers are Sustainable for the Long Term:** SSCs are viewed as an important resource in the state and have secured funding for the long term.
- **A Unified Agenda to Improve Student Persistence and Completion:** Postsecondary stakeholders commit to a coherent statewide strategy for student success.
- **Increased Knowledge and Collaboration around Best Practice:** Policymakers and practitioners have the information and connections needed to work together to enact best practices.

Impact: The long-term goal of the SSCs.

- **Enhanced Institutional Ability to Improve Student Outcomes:** Community colleges in the state have the resources, information, support, tools and expertise needed to successfully implement cohesive strategies that lead to increased rates of student persistence and completion.