

A woman with dark hair, wearing a grey scarf and a light green shirt, is sitting at a desk in a library or study hall. She is looking down at a laptop. The desk is lit by a large, adjustable desk lamp with two white shades. In the background, other people are blurred, and more desk lamps are visible, creating a warm, studious atmosphere.

BRIDGING TO A BETTER FUTURE

FINDINGS FROM AN EVALUATION OF BRIDGE-TO-COLLEGE
PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

OCTOBER 2017

RICHARD AND SUSAN
SMITH FAMILY
FOUNDATION



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

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About The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation

The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation is committed to effecting permanent positive change in the lives of the residents of Greater Boston, particularly individuals and families in economically disadvantaged communities. Today, three generations of the Smith family oversee the Foundation, stewarding approximately \$13 million annually in grants aimed at promoting greater health, educational attainment, and economic mobility. For more information, visit www.smithfamilyfoundation.net.

Jobs for the Future works with our partners to design and drive the adoption of education and career pathways leading from college readiness to career advancement for those struggling to succeed in today's economy.

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Executive Summary

Immigrants have long contributed to the cultural and economic life of communities across the United States. Today, they represent an often-untapped pool of workers that hold the potential to fill significant labor market needs. Finding ways to support the development of immigrants' English language skills and their acquisition of U.S.-recognized credentials is important for individuals, families, and the economy.

Since 2011, the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation (SFF) has invested \$3.5 million in bridge-to-college programs aimed at helping immigrant English language learners make successful transitions to postsecondary education and training and employment. The Foundation engaged Jobs for the Future (JFF) to conduct an evaluation to explore the operation and outcomes of the programs, provide a deeper understanding of the results of the Foundation's investment, and inform future bridge program design. The evaluation included a review of the SFF-funded program structures and offerings, an analysis of available data on student characteristics and outcomes, and a survey of past bridge program participants, which included 69 one-hour phone interviews. The results of the evaluation offer insights into the multiple ways that bridge-to-college services can help immigrants make progress in their education and work lives, and findings suggest ways that philanthropy can play a valuable role in supporting these efforts.

Programs and Participants

SFF funds four bridge-to-college ("bridge") programs in and around Boston:

- *Next STEP Transitional English Program* at the Asian American Civic Association (AACA)
- *Bridges to College and Careers* at Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)
- *ESOL Career Pathways Bridge* at Northern Essex Community College (NECC)
- *Transitions to College and Careers* at the YMCA of Greater Boston International Learning Center

The programs serve immigrant adults who range in age from 18 to 75 and hail from many countries. A substantial portion of participants had obtained college-level education and degrees prior to immigrating to the United States. The evaluation revealed that demand for bridge services is high, but many potential students lack the requisite skills and/or life situations to support bridge program success.

Although the four programs differ somewhat in length and intensity of instruction, all offer comprehensive services to support the linguistic, academic, and cultural preparation of adult immigrants to foster their success in college and work settings. All programs include academic skill development, the development of “college knowledge,” career preparation, and advising to support college transitions. All of the programs take steps to address the linguistic and cultural needs of English language learners, and all have developed relationships with colleges to support students’ transitions.

Outcomes

The SFF-funded programs have led to multiple positive outcomes related to education, economic advancement, and cultural integration into the United States. National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data and student data provided by programs showed that 63% (527) of bridge participants enrolled in college, a rate that is comparable to that found among other studies of adult transitions to college.¹ For those who enrolled, the majority are still working toward a degree, and many are continuing on to pursue additional degrees.

Participant survey responses shed light on the benefits of acquiring college credentials. The overwhelming majority (84%) of the 105 respondents who graduated obtained a job related to their degree. Among respondents who did not enroll in college, 50% (31) went on to attend a training program. Of these, 64% found work directly related to their training. Respondents who completed a college credential or training program—and were working pre- and post-bridge—reported an increase in median hourly wages of 82% (\$8.75 to \$16.00). In describing their financial situation, 79% of respondents who graduated from a certificate or degree program, and 55% of those who participated in training, indicated that they were “better off” today compared to when they started the bridge. The survey findings thus show the multiple ways that bridge programs facilitate the economic advancement of adult immigrant learners.

¹ An evaluation of the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project found that among program graduates, 69% were enrolled or expected to enroll in college. Gittleman, Julia. 2005. *The New England ABE-to-College Transition Project Evaluation Report*. Quincy, MA: The Nellie Mae Foundation.

The Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study (ATLAS), which built on the Gittleman evaluation, followed 227 adult students who entered ABE-to-College programs in fall 2007 or spring 2008. Out of 220 adult students for whom the study had data, 37% never enrolled, 32% enrolled but dropped out, and 31% enrolled and were still enrolled or finished at the end of the study. Smith, Cristine and Laura Gluck. 2016. *Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study. Final Report to the Nellie Mae Foundation*. Amherst, MA: The Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Although these studies included both ESOL and non-ESOL learners, they provide useful benchmarks for the performance of the SFF-funded bridge programs.

Participant Perspectives

In their survey responses, participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with their programs. Respondents described how bridge programs assisted them with language and academic skill development, preparation for college, insights into American culture and life in the United States, developing their confidence in pursuing college and employment, and providing a supportive community in and out of the classroom. Student stories reflect how programs allowed skilled, experienced immigrants to establish career directions, return to work in their fields, or advance from low-wage work into middle-skill jobs.

Survey responses reveal the challenges to pursuing postsecondary education faced by bridge participants. Respondents noted factors commonly experienced by adults going to college, including most prominently the financial burden of college and the difficulty of managing work and study simultaneously. Participant responses made clear how bridge programs can play an important role in mitigating the challenges of applying to college by helping students become aware of steps in the process and preparing them for elements like form completion, testing, and essay writing.

Respondents also pointed out the importance of support at college from instructors and supportive services, as well as their own individual motivation, in helping them persist in college. Students recommended that colleges make a greater effort to accommodate their status as nontraditional students balancing multiple adult roles and as immigrants making their way through new environments and systems.

The Smith Investment

The SFF-funded bridge programs are filling a significant gap in services specifically targeted at higher-level, adult English language learners. Few other highly structured bridge programs operate in the Boston area, and those that exist do not adequately address the specific needs of adult English language learners. The four programs we studied have used Smith Foundation resources to expand and enhance program capacity, strengthen follow-up services, and develop innovative partnerships with colleges and other levels of ESOL services.

Amid the other public and private sources available to support English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) bridge services, the contribution of the Smith Foundation has been critical in allowing programs to offer high-quality services. SFF's investment demonstrates the potential contribution of philanthropy to meet the needs of an important population within our labor market and communities. Below are ways that funders can get involved in supporting programs like the SFF-funded programs in Boston.

SIX RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTMENT

There is considerable need for bridge programming for immigrant adults and significant scope for philanthropy to make investments in this area. As SFF and other funders look toward possible directions for future funding, we recommend the following options that have the potential to significantly expand access to bridge programs for immigrants.

1. **Invest in on-ramps to bridge programs.** Demand for bridge programs outpaces supply, and many people are being turned away from the few that exist because they are not academically prepared. Pre-bridge programs serve as on-ramps by raising candidates' skill levels to those needed for entry and success in bridge programs.
2. **Build public-private partnerships to support bridge programming.** Demand for bridge programs that specifically target English language learners exceeds supply. Private investments and partnerships complement public investments in this area and create opportunities to serve many more skilled and motivated immigrants.
3. **Support innovative educational models, particularly for highly skilled immigrants.** New educational models can accelerate the progress of highly educated immigrants in reaching their career goals. These models might include dedicated centers that support entry into specific industries, competency-based approaches that accelerate credential attainment, models that combine online and face-to-face learning, and models that integrate English instruction with occupational training.
4. **Fund research that focuses specifically on the experiences and needs of adult immigrant learners.** Research literature to date typically combines US-born and foreign-born students, but the needs of these groups are quite different. More research is needed to better understand how best to contribute to the success of English language learners in and beyond bridge-to-college programs.
5. **Establish scholarship funds to support immigrant students.** The challenge of financing higher education was a persistent theme in participant survey responses. Funders might consider establishing and managing a fund to provide scholarships and/or matched savings of even relatively small amounts (\$2,000–\$4,000) to enable highly motivated students to pursue their studies, graduate more quickly, and advance economically.
6. **Invest in expanded support services in college.** Once in college, immigrant students still benefit from supportive services that help them navigate the demands of college and manage their multiple roles, but resources to support intensive models of student support are often limited. Philanthropic investments could help to fill that gap through partnerships with community colleges.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation (SFF) has invested \$3.5 million in bridge-to-college programs aimed at helping immigrant English language learners make successful transitions to postsecondary education and training and employment. The Foundation engaged Jobs for the Future (JFF) to conduct an evaluation to explore the operation and outcomes of the programs, provide a deeper understanding of the results of the Foundation's investment, and inform future bridge program design.

The JFF evaluation team conducted an analysis of the four programs funded through this effort:

- *Next STEP Transitional English Program* at the Asian American Civic Association (AACA)
- *Bridges to College and Careers* at Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)
- *ESOL Career Pathways Bridge* at Northern Essex Community College (NECC)
- *Transitions to College and Careers* at the YMCA of Greater Boston International Learning Center

The nine-month evaluation examined the operation of these programs to understand the nature of the students served and the educational models offered to them. In addition, the team examined the outcomes of 1,007 students who participated from 2009 through 2016. To provide deeper insight about bridge program students' experiences in and after the programs, the team also conducted a phone and online survey of 161 participants. Finally, the team gathered information on the availability of transition to college services in and beyond the Boston area to explore the larger context of the SFF investment. This study was descriptive in nature and did not attempt to measure the impact of bridge participation compared with other forms of adult education, an analysis that would warrant time and resources beyond the scope of this effort. For a complete description of the methodology of this assessment, see the Appendix.

This report summarizes key findings of the evaluation and offers recommendations to the Smith Foundation and other private funders who want to make a contribution to supporting the advancement of adult immigrants in Boston and elsewhere.

BACKGROUND: THE IMPORTANCE OF BRIDGE PROGRAMS

“Words cannot describe how the [program] changed my life. Not financially, but motivationally. I enrolled in the program six months after I arrived in the US and it changed the perspective I had about the US. They gave me confidence that I could do better here!”

As cities around the United States look to strengthen local economies and improve the lives of residents, they are recognizing the value of immigrants as community members, workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs. Boston is among the cities where immigrants contribute in multiple ways to the city’s economy and vitality.

Addressing the learning needs of Greater Boston’s immigrants is important for several reasons. In addition to their ethnic diversity and cultural contributions to the city, immigrants have been responsible for the city’s population growth in recent years,¹ and they play a vital role in the local economy. A recent study by researchers at MIT showed that immigrants make up 29% of the adult working civilian population in the Boston area, and in 18 industries in the region immigrants constitute 20% or more of the workforce.² Thus, immigrants are an important element of the human resource capacity of the economy, yet their full potential is not always realized. While 41% of immigrants possess a college or advanced degree,³ many highly educated immigrants are underemployed.⁴ Another 40% of immigrants have only a high school degree or less, and 38% of immigrants report having poor English skills.⁵ Nationally, proficiency in English is considered the single most important skill immigrants need to succeed in the labor market.⁶ Providing opportunities for immigrants to improve their language skills is therefore a critical investment for individuals, families, and the region.

Immigrants with prior college experience in their home countries are a particularly untapped resource in Boston and elsewhere. Many are underutilizing their skills and experience because of language limitations and lack of recognition for foreign credentials. Nationally, one in four college-educated immigrants is underemployed, a “brain waste” that results in billions of dollars in lost wages and state and federal taxes that would have been paid if immigrants fulfilled their earning potential.⁷

In Massachusetts, high-skilled workers who are reported to have limited English proficiency (LEP) and foreign degrees have the highest unemployment rate among degreed workers (8.8% in 2014).⁸ Foreign-born workers in the Commonwealth are concentrated in low-paying jobs and earn less than native-born workers with similar education levels.⁹ Those with a foreign degree who are LEP predominantly work in food preparation and serving, building grounds cleaning and maintenance, production, and transportation and material moving.¹⁰

Supporting adult immigrants’ transition to, and success in, postsecondary education is important to maximizing the contribution that they can make to society and the economy. We know that increasingly, family-sustaining jobs require education beyond a high school level. Nationally by 2020, two-thirds of jobs will require some kind of postsecondary credential,¹¹ and researchers

estimate that by 2018 over half (53%) of job openings in the Boston area will require an associate's degree or higher.¹²

Higher education supports economic mobility among those who lack a college credential.¹³ And among highly educated immigrants, those who invest in additional U.S. education are more likely to be employed and successful than those who only received education abroad;¹⁴ immigrants with U.S. college degrees are three times more likely to work in high-skilled jobs than those with an international degree.¹⁵ Supporting immigrants' college enrollment enables them to reach their potential, better support themselves and their families, contribute to economic growth, and more fully engage in American society.

Thus, the Smith Family Foundation's investment in bridge-to-college programs specifically for immigrant English language learners reflects an understanding of the potential of this population to make valuable contributions to the cultural, social, and economic life of the Boston area.

THE CONTEXT OF SFF-FUNDED PROGRAMS

As part of the analysis of SFF-funded bridge programs, the evaluation team sought to understand the supply and demand context of these programs. The team conducted 14 interviews with staff of organizations that serve and support immigrant and other adult learners, as well as a survey of 10 bridge-to-college or transition programs in and beyond Boston.¹⁶ Key findings are outlined here.

The Demand for ESOL Bridge Services: The analysis of programs revealed that the four SFF-funded programs see a high level of interest in their programs and that their recruitment activities typically attract roughly three times the number of students they can accept. While many students are interested, many also lack the English skills and/or life situations to support success in bridge programming. Programs reported seeing an average in most cases of nearly two times as many interested ESOL students as those who qualified. Staff interviewed noted that there are many more students who would like to attend bridge programs but are reluctant to pursue services as they anticipate significant time and financial resources will be required to prepare for and attend college. Although it is not possible to quantify the demand for services, it is clear that there is both active and latent unmet demand for bridge services for English language learners.

The Supply of ESOL Bridge Services: Beyond the SFF-funded programs, the evaluation team found that bridge or transition services are being provided by a combination of state-funded community college-based programs and a few community-based programs that rely on other public and private funding sources. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) invests \$1,000,000 to support transition programs in up to 11 community colleges around the state, yet nearly all of these programs are designed to serve students with native or near-native English proficiency, thereby leaving many English language learners without bridge services. State-funded adult education programs try to meet some of the

additional need, but limited resources prevent programs from offering comprehensive services. The state's Department of Higher Education has also made additional investments of roughly \$250,000 annually to support services, but more resources are needed.

The SFF Investment: The Smith Family Foundation's investment has helped to fill a gap in funding and support high-quality services. Smith Foundation resources have been used to allow programs to expand the number they serve, hire qualified staff, fund full-time advisors, and assign designated staff to follow-up services beyond program participation. Resources have also allowed programs like JVS and AACA to extend the bridge-to-college to engage and prepare students at slightly lower pre-bridge levels, including an innovative dual enrollment approach with JVS's adult diploma program. Funds have helped to develop dual enrollment strategies that reduce the cost and time spent by adults in gaining skills and college credit. The proportion of program costs covered by the Smith investment varies, but in each case, it is deemed critical in allowing programs to offer the comprehensive services learners require to meet their goals.

Given that the level of DESE resources available for adult education, including bridge programming, is insufficient to support the needs and demands for these services, philanthropic dollars are needed to ensure program innovation and effectiveness. As State ABE Director Jolanta Conway points out:

"There is a desire for programs to serve students who have a high school diploma or higher English levels but are still not college ready; however, state and federal adult education funding does not fully address the need for these types of programs and has certain restrictions. Private foundation money, like the SFF investment, that can go to community and adult learning centers, is very valuable as it can provide programs with greater flexibility to add additional classes to better meet the demand and/or enhance their transition services and thereby more effectively serve students."

The SFF investment has been significant in helping address the needs of adult immigrants in Boston, but more resources are needed to strengthen the supply of services that will help more of these adults progress to postsecondary education and training and allow them to more fully contribute to the city's economy and civic life.

THE BRIDGE PROGRAMS

"The Bridge is for you to follow your dreams. . . . Without them I wouldn't be doing what I am doing now. They inspired me."

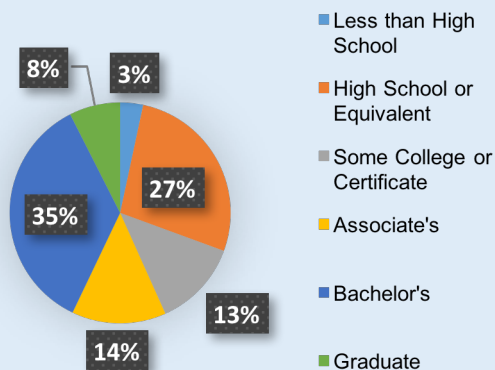
This section offers brief descriptions of the four SFF-funded bridge-to-college programs, including the services offered and information on the students they serve.

Data Highlights

AACA – Next STEP

- Serves 125 students per year
- Served 268 students 2011–2016
- Students from 34 countries
- 70% women
- Ages 19 to 65, median age 30
- 52% unemployed at intake
- 70% of students had prior higher education, from some college to a doctorate

AACA: Pre-Bridge Education Level



Asian American Civic Association – Next STEP

Located in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood, the AACA is a multiservice agency that has provided education, occupational training, and social services to immigrants since 1967. The agency first began offering bridge services in the early 1990s as a demonstration site for a federally funded effort to bridge the gap between adult basic education/ESOL services and college, job training programs, and higher levels of employment. AACA has continued offering bridge services, serving adults from communities in and around Boston.

In 2011, the SFF began providing support for the Next Steps Transitional English Program (Next STEP) to supplement the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education funding (DESE) for transitions services. The program has been recognized by DESE for four straight years as having sent more students to college than any other community-based adult education program funded by the state.

Next STEP's name and structure reinforce the "step-by-step" process that adults must go through to achieve their personal and professional goals. Within AACA's 10 levels of ESOL instruction, Next STEP includes

levels 6–10. The highest two levels, 9 and 10 constitute the “bridge-to-college,” with the most explicit preparation for college work at Level 10.

College and Career Readiness

Next STEP focuses on college readiness and is founded on a culture of clear and high expectations of commitment and performance to simulate the college, training, or workplace environments that students will encounter in the future. To advance through Next STEP levels, students must achieve explicit benchmarks of skill and performance, which are outlined in a syllabus for each level.

AACA offers a strong emphasis on writing from beginning ESOL through bridge-level classes, since writing is a critical foundational skill for college and the workplace. The program addresses career development through an individual education and career plan, and at level 10, research on career interests is a requirement for program graduation.

Advising and Support

Advising is one of the strengths of the Next STEP program, as the program has evolved to its current three full-time advisors (largely funded by the SFF) that provide case management, college and career planning, and post-program coaching and support services. Next STEP staff support students for at least two years after completing the program, an effort they feel is critical to fostering students’ persistence in college. The program also offers a small but growing mentoring program, which currently serves 10 program graduates.

Program Strengths

The qualities that contribute to Next STEP’s work include the many years of experience of its staff in offering bridge programming and the deep understanding of student needs and college expectations that staff have developed.¹⁷ Being housed in the larger organization of AACA offers the program a multilevel ESOL pipeline to support recruitment, ready access to additional services to support students, and gain an understanding of workforce and career opportunities in the Boston area. The program reflects staff’s understanding of promising practice in the field of adult transitions to college, with its emphasis on academic and personal skills needed for college success, efforts to simulate a college classroom, and comprehensive advising.

Jewish Vocational Service – Bridges to College and Careers

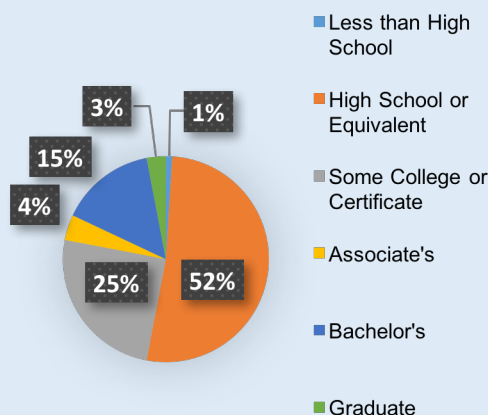
Jewish Vocational Service is a multiservice agency located in downtown Boston, providing a range of opportunities for adults, including ESOL classes at multiple levels, an adult diploma program, occupational training, and employment services.

Data Highlights

JVS – Bridges-to-College and Careers

- Serves 120 students annually
- Served over 600 students 2009–2016
- Students from 55 countries
- 61% women
- Ages 16 to 65, median age 30
- 60% employed at entry
- 47% of students had prior higher education, from some college to bachelor's degree

JVS: Pre-Bridge Education Level



The JVS Bridges to College and Careers (Bridges) was launched as part of a local adult education consortium in 2009 with seed funding from the SFF. The program is designed to “equip adult learners with the English, math, science, and computer skills needed to enter college and complete a postsecondary certificate or degree.”¹⁸ The program seeks to prepare students for college-level coursework, as well as the “life readiness” required of college students, with essential soft skills that include accountability, responsibility, and self-advocacy. The Bridges program aligns with the overall mission of JVS to “empower individuals from diverse communities to find employment and build careers while partnering with employers to hire, develop, and retain productive workforces.”¹⁹

Bridges students are recruited from JVS’s own ESOL and adult basic education programs and referred from the career center based at JVS, community colleges, and Bridges participants themselves.

If they qualify, students in the JVS Adult (high school) Diploma Program have the option of co-enrolling in Bridges to accelerate their progress toward postsecondary education. To help students prepare for the program, JVS has recently added a 23-week English for Academic Success program as an on-ramp to Bridges funded in part by the SFF.

To further accelerate student progress toward college-level work, students in the general studies and health care IT pathways are dually enrolled in Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) college-level classes, co-taught by JVS and BHCC staff, at no cost to students.

College and Career Readiness

Of the four SFF-funded programs, JVS Bridges currently offers the most explicit career contextualization through its three career pathways: biotechnology and two IT pathways that lead to certificate programs at Quincy College and BHCC. In these pathway programs, course content and activities are chosen to relate specifically to future employment, and classes and instructors make frequent reference to the way in which students will eventually use their knowledge on the job.

Advising and Supports

Students are required to participate in academic, job readiness, and coaching classes. Coaching services include career exploration and planning, and staff have recently designed a comprehensive job readiness series integrated into the coaching across all Bridges pathways. Bridges' approach to coaching participants integrates the nationally recognized *Family Opportunity Center* service model, which provides families and individuals with an integrated set of three core services: employment and career planning assistance, financial education and coaching, and access to income supports. Services include helping students access the Individual Development Account program, which allows them to accrue matching funds for college of up to \$4,500, to help cover tuition, fees, books, and other college expenses.²⁰

To strengthen its ability to follow students, JVS established a full-time position of career navigator who engages alumni, tracks their educational status, and coordinates with the college partners to stay in touch with matriculated Bridges graduates. When necessary, staff provide support to address persistence in college, helping with academic and personal concerns and transfers to four-year institutions, and providing recommendation letters and job readiness/placement activities.

Program Strengths

The JVS Bridges to College and Careers program has a number of qualities that support its success. The program benefits from its location at JVS and the strong career orientation of the organization, which has led to the development of Bridges' contextualized career pathways that lead directly to college certificate and degree programs. The program also benefits from access to JVS's infrastructure, which supports administrative operations, data collection, and professional development.²¹

Northern Essex Community College – ESOL Career Pathways Bridge

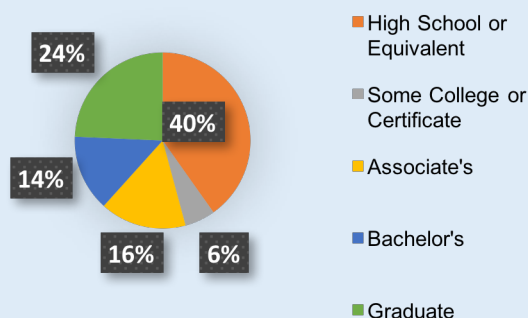
The ESOL Career Pathways Bridge (CP Bridge) program resides within the Center for Adult Education Programs and Preparation at Northern Essex Community College (NECC). The center offers a range of adult education services, including ESOL and HiSet preparation classes. The CP Bridge program serves to connect the levels of ESOL offered by the center and the certificate programs that reside in the college.

Data Highlights

Northern Essex Community College – ESOL Career Pathways Bridge

- Serves 40 students a year
- Served 120 students 2013–2016
- Students from 27 countries
- Ages 18 to 75, median age 35
- 72% women
- 60% of students had some prior higher education, from some college to a graduate degree

NECC: Pre-Bridge Education Level



Since launching CP Bridge in 2013, staff determined that many interested students could benefit from additional preparation to enter the bridge level, so the program now includes a three-semester pre-bridge level and a two-semester bridge level.

Benefitting from its location at a community college, the program allows students to get a jump on earning credits. Bridge students complete a beginning computer skills class that provides three college credits within CP and thus at no cost. Students also participate in a three-credit First Year Seminar that introduces strategies for personal, academic, and professional success.

College and Career Readiness

Given its location on the NECC campus, the program gives students access to the many resources that can help acquaint CP Bridge students with the NECC environment and services. For example, staff from the admissions office visit classes for presentations on the admissions process, and students visit the college library to learn to use the resources available for study and research. Students also begin using Blackboard, an online information system used by NECC and other colleges.

The CP Bridge program addresses career preparation in several ways. For eight weeks at a time, students work in modules to expose

them to careers in health care, business, and IT. Through field trips, presentations, and other activities, students receive information that helps them choose a sector in which to pursue further studies. In addition, students engage in an assessment of individual strengths and develop a career education plan, and in 2015, the program integrated a career readiness program, Career Ready 101, into its services.

Advising and Support

Advising in CP Bridge is designed to help students plan and problem-solve around challenges that could derail their progress toward meeting goals. The advisor works with students to create academic, career, and transition plans that consider student occupational objectives, assessment scores, and financial aid needs. The advisor supports students while they are in the program and also helps with transitioning into employment, further training, or credit-level coursework.

Program Strengths

CP Bridge offers a college prep model program with multiple components to address a range of student personal and academic skills. Because it is located on the NECC campus, CP Bridge is particularly strong among the SFF-funded programs in offering students multiple opportunities to take developmental and credit-bearing classes for free, thereby accelerating students' progress toward a certificate or degree.

YMCA of Greater Boston International Learning Center – Transitions to College and Careers

The Transitions to College and Careers (Transitions) program is offered through the YMCA's International Learning Center (ILC) in downtown Boston. It serves students with strong English skills by helping them to improve their English and college readiness skills to gain entry into and complete a college degree, a certificate program, or a skills training program.

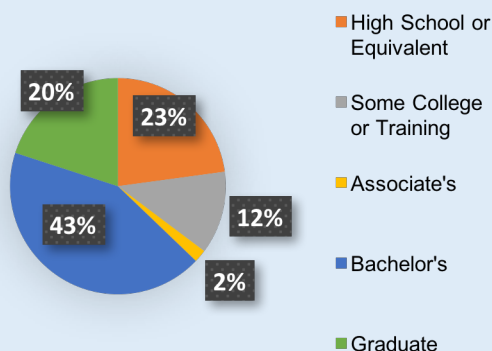
The ILC offers seven levels of ESOL instruction after which students can apply for entry into the Transitions program. One-third or more of the students accepted into each Transitions cohort come from its other successful programs. (The YMCA ILC's DESE-funded program has been consistently ranked in the top 10% of Massachusetts programs for over 30 years.)

Data Highlights

YMCA – Transitions to College and Careers

- Serves 30 students per year
- Served 106 students 2013–2016
- Ages 18 to mid-50s, most 20s and 30s
- Students from 35 countries
- 77% of students had prior higher education, from some college to a graduate degree

YMCA: Pre-Bridge Education Level



College and Career Readiness

Transitions offers multiple classes to provide the English language and other skills required for students' next steps. The program includes a five-hour weekly Personal Readiness class which promotes development of practical skills for managing life as a student. It provides an orientation to college, including understanding the college environment, managing college admissions, navigating college systems, researching and obtaining financial aid, making credit/non-credit choices, using class syllabi, and preparing for placement exams.

In the College and Career Readiness class, students explore jobs, complete self-assessments to explore interests, develop cover letters and resumes, and establish education and career goals. Students engage in mock job interviews and conduct informational interviews. For the few students in the cohort who go directly into the job market rather than to education, Transitions encourages them to obtain some kind of training or certificate after they begin working so they can continue to develop professionally.

Transitions staff maintain relationships with several two-year and four-year colleges in the Boston area. Students are able to tour campuses, visit classes, attend special presentations, and conduct informational interviews. Additionally, students have many opportunities to exit the program with college credits.

Further, the program has a strong relationship with a local insurance company, and in each cycle, students have an opportunity to meet with staff, hear about career pathways, and obtain job search and networking tips.

Advising and Support

Advising in the Transitions program helps students determine their next steps and develop independence around how and where to search for the information they need. Advising includes assistance with translating and evaluating foreign credentials, applying to and then getting accepted into college or a training program, finding and applying for scholarships, assistance with filling out financial aid forms, deciding on a career path, and applying for jobs.

To support students and encourage their persistence, the program employs a cohort approach, which fosters “lifelong” relationships and peer support among students through a shared experience. Staff feel that in this model students have better attendance, understanding of the value of teamwork, and problem-solving abilities, and are more likely to meet their goals.

The Transitions program seeks to maintain contact with students after they leave the program by following up with past participants every quarter and conducting a survey to get updates on graduates’ activities. The program has an alumni network to help connect students across all program cohorts.

Program Strengths

Transitions provides a strong example of a comprehensive “college prep” model, including attention to academic skills, college knowledge, personal readiness, and career preparation. Although it serves a relatively small number of students (30 per year), the program is strong in its organization and close ties to students, as evidenced by the willingness of alumni to stay in touch with the program and to volunteer as math tutors after graduation.

Program Analysis—Key Findings

The evaluation team’s analysis of the SFF-funded bridge programs offered useful insights into elements that contribute to strong bridge programs and some of the challenges that programs face. Here, we summarize key findings from this analysis.

Programs are offering a comprehensive range of services. These include academic skill development, the development of “college knowledge,” career preparation, and advising to support college transitions. All of the programs take steps to address the linguistic and cultural needs of English language learners.

Programs have multiple assets that contribute to their work, including skilled and experienced staff. Programs further benefit from the relationships staff have cultivated with local colleges to both inform bridge curriculum and facilitate student transitions.

Follow-up beyond programs is important but requires resources. Working within their respective resource constraints, the programs make varying degrees of effort to maintain contact with students beyond bridge program participation. Follow-up requires an investment of staff time, and it can be difficult to maintain contact with students over time. However, programs recognize the value of knowing how students fared beyond their preparation in bridge programs, and they see the opportunity to maintain student relationships as an element to support persistence in college as well as transitions to employment.

There is significant interest among potential bridge students, but many require additional preparation. Three of the programs noted that there has been significant interest in bridge programming, demonstrated by the large numbers of people who come to programs seeking to enroll—roughly three times the number of slots that programs can fill. Programs require students to have both academic skill levels as well as life circumstances that support the commitment required to attend bridge programming and enter college. The recent addition of pre-bridge levels at NECC and JVS, as well as the multilevel structure of AACA’s Next STEP, suggest that a “bridge to college” may need to span a wider range of levels to enable more individuals to become prepared to enter the final stage of preparation for college entry.

STUDENT STORIES: BRIDGING TO ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

“Rashid”^{*} is a 26-year-old man from Morocco who attended the Next STEP program in 2012, shortly after he arrived in the United States. When he came to the program, he had already completed a three-year bachelor’s degree in finance in his home country. However, his diploma was not recognized in the United States, so he came to the Next STEP program to improve his English to a level where he could pursue a four-year U.S. college degree and eventually get a job in finance.

Rashid has worked throughout his time in the United States. When he came to Next STEP he was working two jobs at the airport: full-time as a cashier and part-time assisting passengers in wheelchairs, making \$9 an hour. Following participation in Next STEP, Rashid started taking classes at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) and soon thereafter also attended the Year Up program in Boston, where he earned a certificate of completion and 18 college credits. He was able to transfer all credits to UMass Boston where he began in the fall of 2013. When interviewed, he expected to graduate in the spring of 2017.

Through an internship he accessed through Year Up, Rashid eventually found a part-time position as a financial reporting manager at State Street Bank, where he earns \$32 an hour. In reflecting on how his financial situation had improved since he started the bridge, Rashid noted:

“I am way better off! Even with two jobs I was struggling to make ends meet. Now, even working part-time, I am better off than those two jobs. It's more than a job; it's about doing something that you've always wanted to do. Before, I didn't have time to enjoy weekends. For the first time, I know the value of not working on Saturday and Sunday, without even mentioning the financial situation. If it wasn't for these programs, I might still be at the airport.”

Rashid is driven by his own drive, determination, and the responsibility he feels toward his family back home, and he credits Next STEP with greatly improving his English skills and helping him apply to BHCC.

^{*}All students featured in this report have been given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

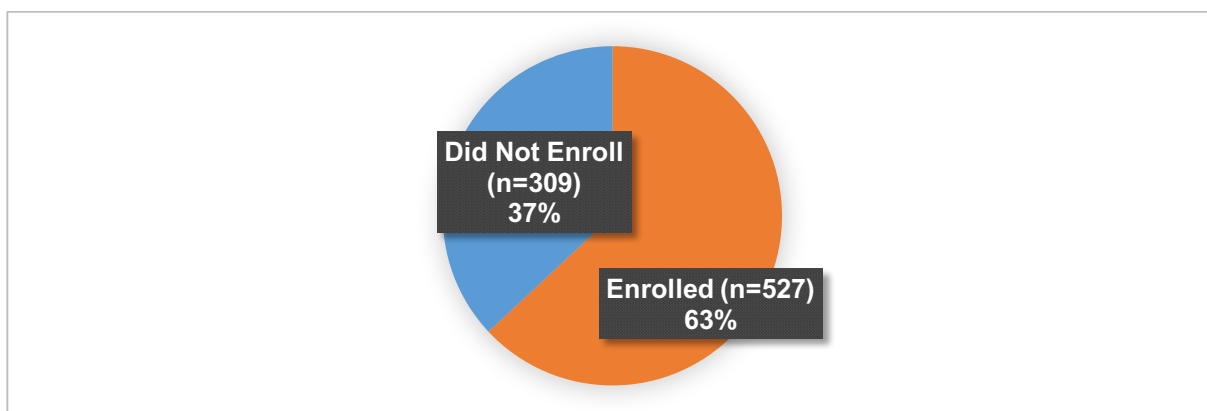
“[The bridge program] was designed so well with content. I felt completely comfortable when I got to college. I felt like I had a real head start on what they were doing.”

This section offers highlights of the educational and other outcomes experienced by participants in the SFF-funded bridge programs. The evaluation team used two approaches to analyze participants’ college enrollment and other outcomes. The first was to draw on the National Student Clearinghouse, a national database of student college attendance, persistence, and completion, to explore the extent to which SFF-funded bridge program participants made successful transitions and enrolled in college. The second was the participant survey, which provided a more nuanced look at college enrollments and other pathways pursued by bridge participants. This section provides highlights of these findings.

College Enrollment – All Program Participants

Overall, 63% of bridge participants enrolled in college (527 of 836).²² This enrollment rate is comparable to that observed in previous studies of adults in transition programs.²³ These figures likely undercount the total college enrollments and completions among bridge participants for a number of reasons. First, identifying students in the NSC requires personal information—at minimum, name and date of birth, and ideally Social Security number as well. Programs do not consistently obtain this information, and due to information security concerns, participants are sometimes reluctant to grant programs permission to use such information for follow-up purposes. Programs also report finding that colleges do not always report to the NSC complete enrollment data, particularly on college certificate completion. Therefore, participants may have acquired additional postsecondary credentials not captured in the NSC records evaluators were able to obtain.

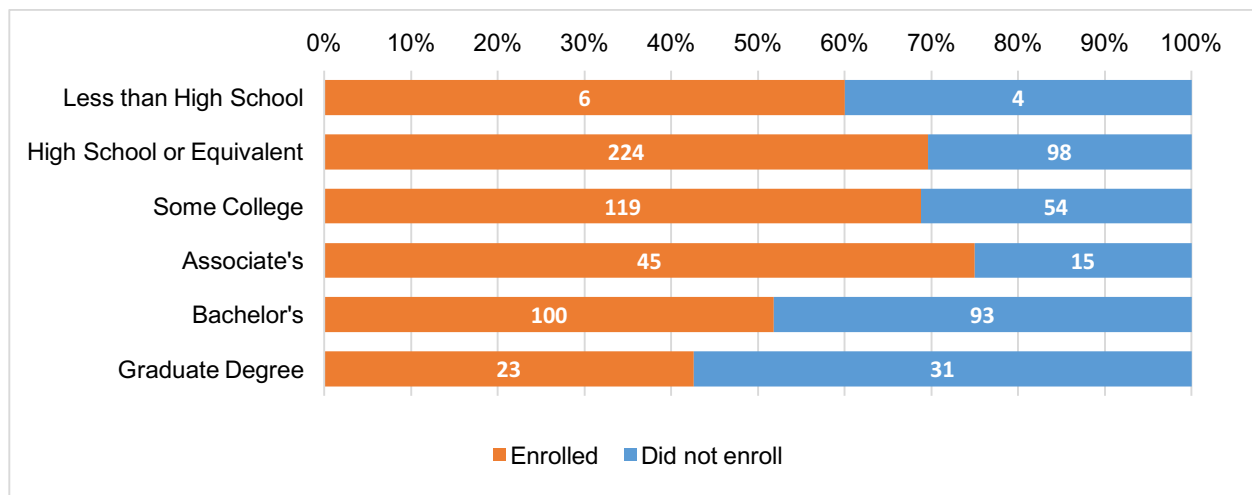
Figure 1. Overall Enrollment Rate (NSC and Program Data, n=836)



College enrollment rates were affected by a number of factors, including prior education level, family status, age, and skill gain.

Prior Education Level. Bridge participants who came into the program with an associate's degree from their home country were the most likely to enroll in college (75%), followed by students with a high school diploma or some college (70% and 69% respectively).

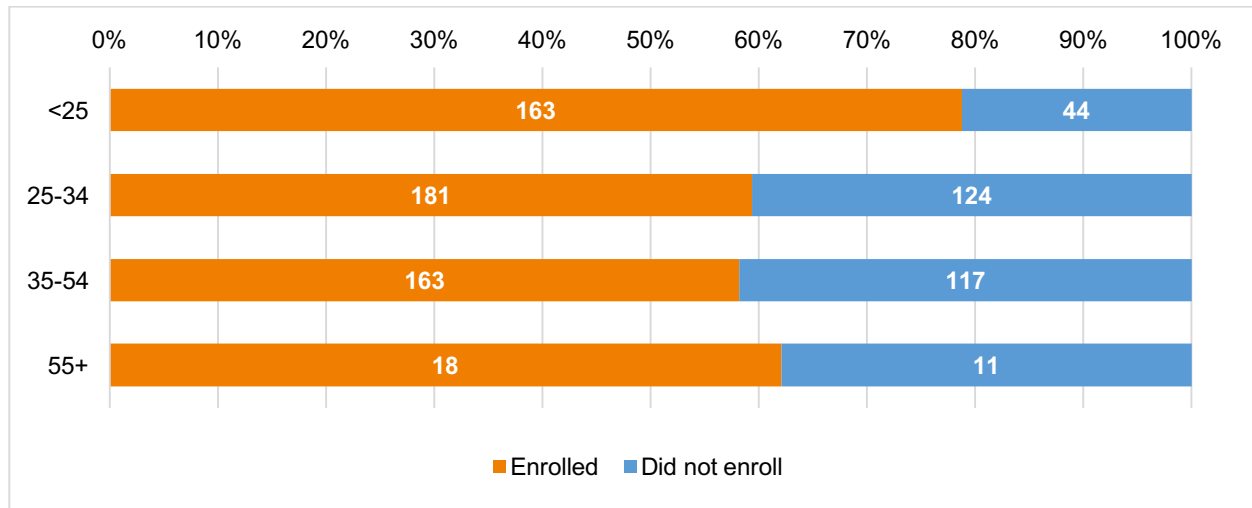
Figure 2. Enrollment by Prior Education Level (n=812)



Family Status. Single participants with no children (71%), and divorced participants with no children (70%), were the most likely to enroll in college. Married participants with no children were the least likely to enroll (50%).

Age. The youngest bridge participants (younger than 25) were most likely to enroll in college (77% of that age group), followed by the oldest participants (55 or older), equaling 62% of the 55+ group.

Figure 3. Enrollment by Age at Start of the Bridge Program (NSC and Program Data, n=821)



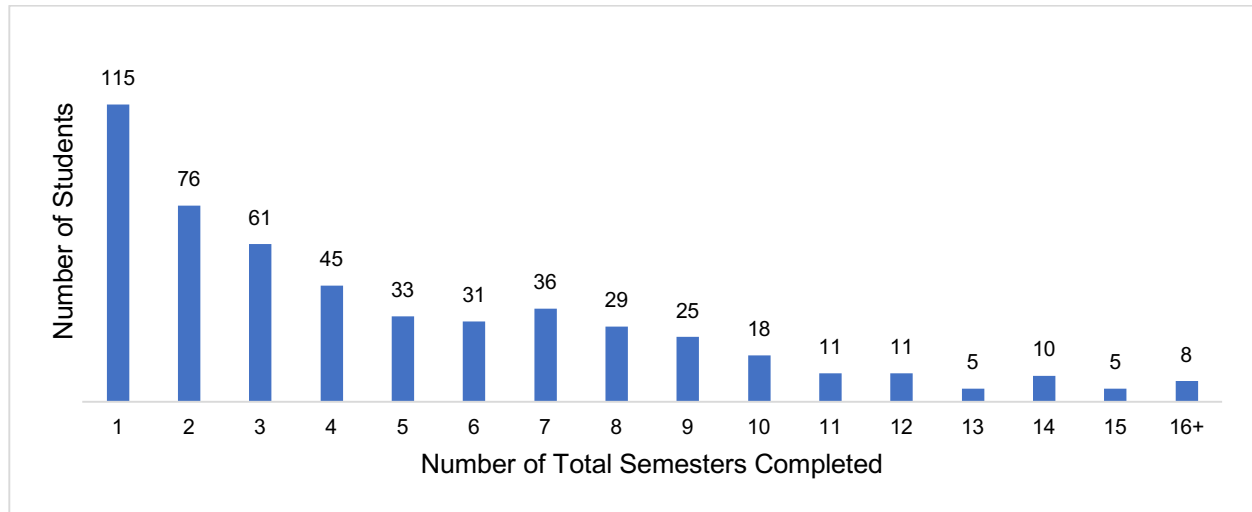
Skill Gain. Building on prior research,²⁴ the evaluation team sought to explore the relationship between changes over the course of the bridge program in math and/or English reading test scores and college enrollment.²⁵ Bridge participants who enrolled in college had statistically significant higher changes in their reading comprehension test scores (an average increase of 11.08 points between their pre- and post-test skill assessments) than those who did not enroll in college (average increase of 6.15 points).²⁶ Similarly, changes in arithmetic scores for those who enrolled (average increase of 14.29 points) were higher than those for participants who did not enroll in college (average increase of 9.96 points), but the difference between the test score increases in math were not statistically significant between enrollees and non-enrollees.²⁷

College Persistence – All Program Participants

Out of the 527 participants for whom we have NSC or program data who enrolled in college, 94 (18%) completed a total of 126 degrees. Participants earned 39 certificates, 51 associate's degrees, 11 bachelor's degrees, and 4 graduate degrees.²⁸ The average time to completion of a credential or degree was 2.4 years.

According to NSC data, overall, participants were enrolled in college an average of 4.9 semesters. Of the 527 participants enrolled, 78% (411) completed two or more semesters. Among participants enrolled in college, only 11% (60) withdrew from one or more semesters.

Figure 4. Number of Total Semesters* Completed (NSC and Program Data, n = 519)



*Note: Many students took classes year-round and thus attended college more than two semesters per year.

The 78% persistence rate of participants of the SFF-funded bridge programs is slightly higher than persistence rates observed in community college research, which finds that 75% of students persisted from fall to spring semester and only 60% persist to the next fall.²⁹ In contrast, 63% of SFF-funded bridge participants persisted to three or more semesters of college. Thus, overall, data show that the SFF-funded bridge-to-college programs have been successful in supporting participants in entering and staying in college.

STUDENT STORIES: BRIDGING TO A CERTIFICATE AND HIGHER EARNINGS

“Robert”* is a 32 year-old man from Cameroon who attended the JVS Bridges program. He came to the program with a master’s degree in business management and marketing that he completed in his home country, which was equivalent to an undergraduate degree in the United States. He also had work experience in the government and international organizations back home. Despite his educational background and work experience, he had a difficult time finding a satisfactory job in the United States. Thus, he came to the program hoping to obtain a diploma or a certificate that would lead him to a better job.

When Robert came to JVS he was working 40 hours per week as a baker, making \$10–12 an hour. He was not sure about what kind of certificate or degree he would study toward. After some time in the program, an instructor recognized his strength in science and suggested he pursue a certificate in biotechnology. After completing JVS Bridges, Robert enrolled at Quincy College. Robert studied full-time and worked full-time, as he had a wife and three children to support.

After graduating from Quincy College with a certificate in biotechnology, he was able to find a job as a lab technician in a medical device company, making \$22 an hour. His financial situation today is, in his words, “way better” due to a higher salary. He is also happy about getting a job in the lab environment, which is what he had wanted since his participation in the bridge program. Robert is grateful to JVS for the support that he received, and noted he would like to see more students benefit from their services.

.....

“Xiao Ming”* is 42 years old and attended the JVS Bridges program in 2014. She emigrated from China about 6 years ago with a college degree in engineering, and when she entered the JVS program, she wanted to get a certificate in order to secure a better job, although she was not sure exactly what area of study to pursue. She ended up applying to Quincy College for the nine-month certificate program in biotechnology and compliance. Xiao Ming has no plans to go back to school for an associate’s or a bachelor’s degree in the United States because she has to support her son and it’s just too much to juggle both financially and socially. Xiao Ming spoke of how hard it was on her teenage son when she was in the certificate program and how much he had to do to keep their lives going—including the cooking and cleaning.

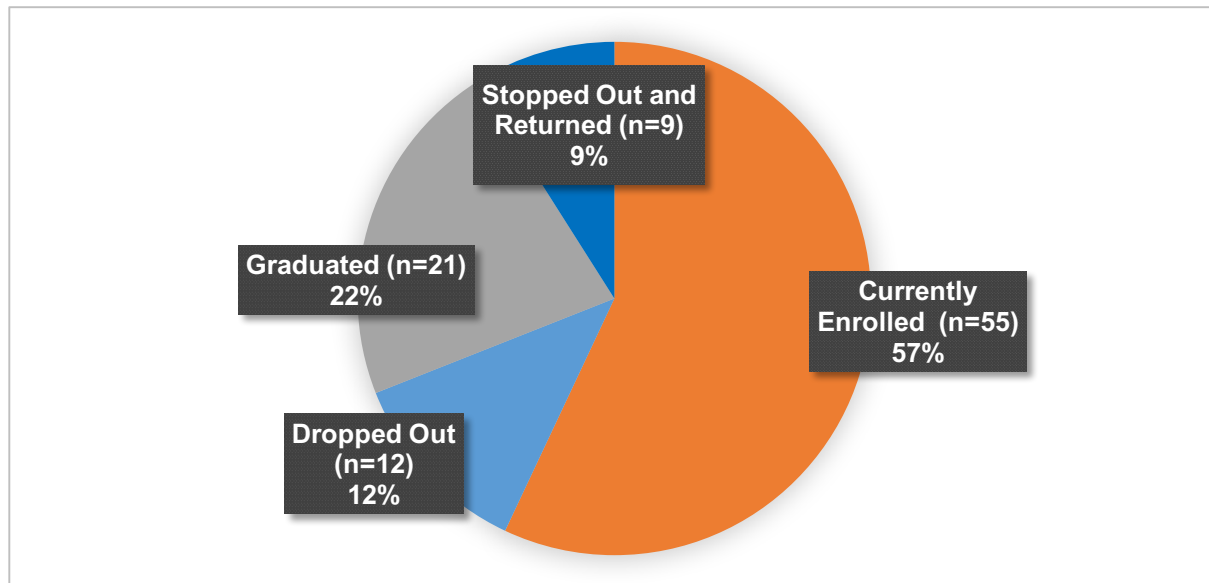
When Xiao Ming began the JVS Bridges program she worked as a shift leader at Dunkin’ Donuts with no paid benefits. Since completing her certificate, Xiao Ming has been able to find employment, first as a biomedical research technician contractor in a pharmaceutical company, and now in a full-time salaried position as a manufacturing technician with full benefits. Xiao Ming credits the JVS programs with giving her the skills foundation she needed to make her way to this job. She added that, even after she had left and completed her certificate, JVS program staff provided valuable assistance in all aspects of her job search including resume writing, drafting cover letters, and preparing her for interviews.

*All students featured in this report have been given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

College Enrollment – Survey Respondents³⁰

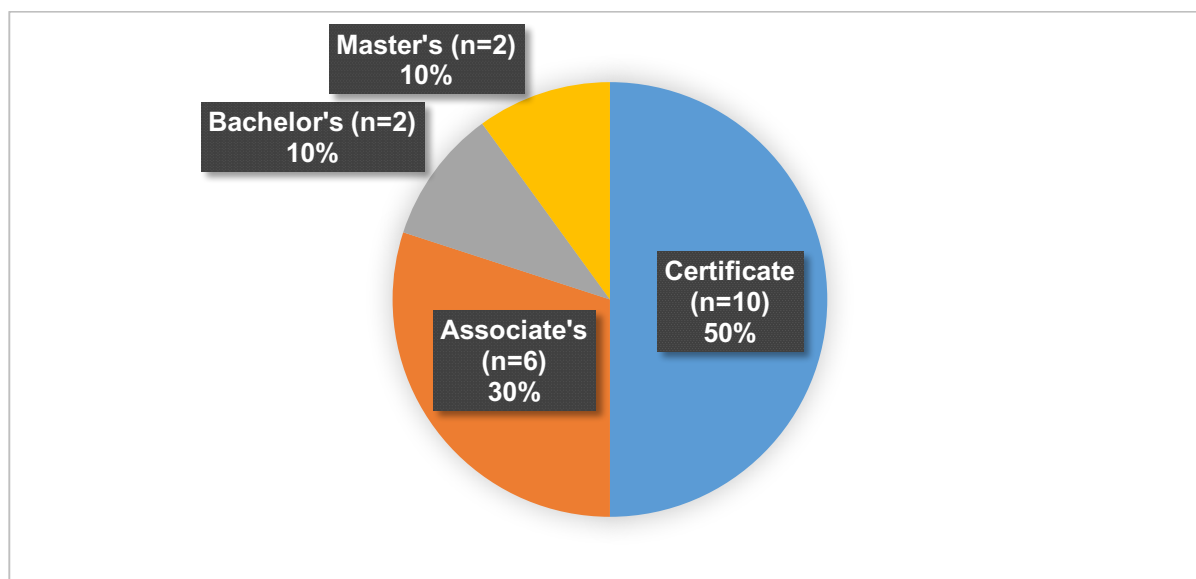
Overall, college enrollment rates for survey respondents were similar to those for the full group of bridge participants for whom data was available: 62% (97 of 156) of survey respondents enrolled in college. Of those who enrolled, 57% were currently enrolled, 22% graduated, 12% dropped out, and 9% stopped out and returned to college. In total, 35% of those who enrolled completed a certificate or degree,³¹ and 20% of the students who were currently enrolled had completed one credential or degree and were continuing with another.

Figure 5. Survey Respondents: Current Enrollment Status



Of the respondents who graduated from a college program (and did not re-enroll), 50% earned certificates (in areas such as biotechnology), 30% earned associate's degrees, 10% earned bachelor's degrees, and 10% earned master's degrees.

Figure 6. Survey Respondents: Certificates and Degrees Earned



Among respondents, 94 were still enrolled in college at the time of the survey. Of this group, 50% were working toward an associate's degree, 23% were working toward a professional certificate, and 18% were working toward a bachelor's degree.

The small number of survey respondents who dropped out of college (12) cited reasons including having a baby or managing child care, not being able to afford tuition, juggling work and school, having poor health, and moving. Those few (9) who stopped out and returned noted a desire to continue studying and pursue their degree goals as the reason that drove them back to college.

Participation in Developmental Education

Research has found that many students assigned to developmental or remedial courses drop out of college before completing their developmental course sequence and enrolling in college-level courses, and college completions rates are low for those who participate in developmental courses.³² One goal of bridge programs is thus to prepare participants so they can bypass developmental courses. The evaluation explored bridge student participation in developmental education through the survey. Collecting complete data on developmental education participation is not easy; it requires analysis of student transcripts, as such information is not currently available in NSC data, and transcript analysis requires permissions at the student and college level that are beyond the scope of this evaluation.³³

Among survey respondents, a total of 43 (50% of responses) participants indicated that they had taken at least one developmental education (remedial) course.³⁴ Those who enrolled in a bachelor's program were most likely to take developmental education courses (9 of 16 or 56%)

compared with 52% (23) of those who enrolled in an associate's degree, and 38% (3) of those who enrolled in a master's program.

The survey provides some evidence that those who took developmental classes still managed to stay in college and even graduate. Among online respondents, 24 noted taking a developmental education course. Of this group, only 2 left college, while 5 graduated and the remaining 17 are still enrolled in college. More time would be needed to fully assess the completion rates of bridge participants, but evidence thus far suggests that participation in developmental education is less of a barrier to persistence than has been observed in other studies.

Alternatives to College

Survey respondents offered insights into the reasons they did not pursue college after participation in a bridge program. Top reasons include not being able to afford college, deciding to work instead, deciding to go to job training, managing personal situations, and lacking confidence in English skills.

For some bridge participants, entry into job training programs offered a valuable alternative to college studies. Survey results showed that half (31) of the 62 students who didn't enroll in college went to a training program. Of those who entered a training program, 90% completed their program. Types of training pursued included accounting, banking and finance, certified nursing assistant, medical assistant, and biomedical technician. The majority of students who completed a training program found work directly related to their training (64%).

In a few instances, survey respondents reported going straight to work following participation in a bridge program. Student stories reflect how programs allowed skilled, experienced immigrants to establish career directions, return to work in their fields, or advance from low-wage work into middle-skill jobs. The role that programs can play in helping participants find and pursue their direction is important. As the survey showed, the vast majority of respondents (90%, 141 of 157) had a clear goal of attending college upon entering programs; but only 65% (103 of 159) had clear career goals upon entering programs. The career exploration and guidance offered by the programs is a valuable complement to the college preparation they provide.

STUDENT STORIES: BRIDGING TO WORK

“Yueming”* emigrated to the United States when he was 30 years old and almost immediately enrolled in the YMCA Transitions program. Prior to moving to the United States, Yueming received his bachelor’s degree in China and was working as a director in an advertising agency in China. He had hoped to move easily into a similar position in the United States, but this proved to be very difficult.

Yueming credits the YMCA for helping him to find a good job in the field that he wanted within weeks of completing the program. He noted that the staff went out of their way to “match tutors with the personalities of the program participants.” The YMCA also helped him with an application to the Massachusetts College of Art, but in the end, for financial reasons, he decided to work instead. Yueming was unemployed before he entered the YMCA transitions program and he spoke of the important assistance that the Y staff provided to him in the job search. Now, Yueming serves as a senior designer and he is proud of the progress he has made since attending the Y program.

*All students featured in this report have been given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Changes in Financial Situation

When asked, “How would you compare your financial situation today to your situation when you entered the bridge program?”, graduates from certificate or degree programs were most likely to answer “better” (79%).³⁵ In addition, 55% of those who participated in occupational training felt they were financially better off, compared with 44% of those still enrolled in college and 50% of those who didn’t enroll in college or training. Respondent comments shed light on how their circumstances improved.

“When I was at [my bridge program] my income was low so I had to work, hard work, many hours and I had to study. Now I am working full-time and getting better pay.”

“Before [the program] I didn’t even have a job. Now I have a full-time job—it’s much better!”

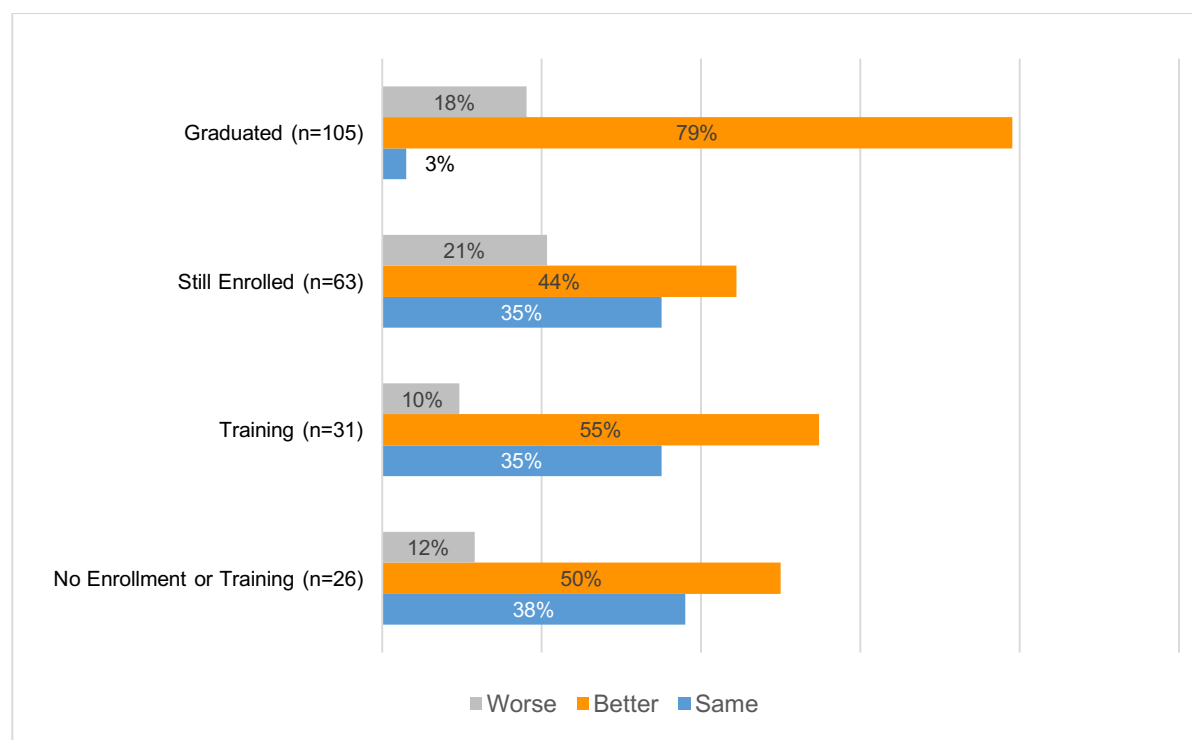
“[Before the program] my English was very low level. After that I reached a level where I can do many things like an application, resume, interview. I am able to negotiate salary and benefits.”

Since the majority of the graduates in the survey completed certificates, this result demonstrates the value of obtaining a certificate to improved financial outcomes. The results also demonstrate how job training helped students to improve their financial outcomes.

For those still enrolled in college, there are several reasons why they have not yet seen larger gains to their financial situation. First, they have not yet met their education and career goals and are still working toward a terminal degree that will ultimately lead to obtaining the skills and credentials that lead to higher earnings. Second, hours worked may also be constricted as they try to balance work and school. Third, the debt accrued in college may, in the short term, weaken their financial situation.

It is striking to note that half of those respondents who did not enroll in either college or training still agreed that their financial situation improved. This reflects what participants shared in interviews about how the bridge program helped them with language and learning about U.S. culture in ways that led to better employment even without additional postsecondary training.

Figure 7. Survey Respondents: Financial Situation Today



While our data on employment and earnings was limited, 23 survey responses showed that the overwhelming majority (84%) of those who graduated were working in a job related to their degree. The 23 participants who completed either a postsecondary credential or a job training program saw their median wages rise 82% (from \$8.75 to \$16.00).

Summary

The data collected through the NSC and participant survey demonstrate that SFF-funded bridge-to-college programs have been effective in supporting participant transitions to college. Close to two-thirds of participants have successfully enrolled in college, and many participants have made successful transitions to better employment opportunities and higher earnings. The majority of those who have completed college or training programs have found work related to their education and report being financially better off now than before entering their bridge program.

STUDENT STORIES: BRIDGING TO BETTER BUSINESS

“Pia”* came to the United States six years ago from Thailand, having earned a graduate degree in education in her home country. When she arrived, she had hopes of starting her own business in the field of technology. At age 56, she didn’t want to have to start her education over, and English was a big barrier. She still hopes to pursue a college credential in business at some point in the future. In the meantime, Pia has developed her own business as a massage therapist. Since participating in the NECC bridge program, Pia has more than doubled her earnings. As she points out, thanks to the language skills she acquired in the program, she is working more hours and earning more as she has built up her client base. The NECC program helped to increase her confidence and her communication tools. As she notes:

“I’m very happy to have done the program. It really improved my English. People understand me much better when I talk now. I can pick up the phone and clearly explain my services. That has helped my business grow.”

Pia knows she still needs to work on her writing skills to be able to pursue college-level studies, but she is grateful for the skills and confidence the program has given her in the meantime.

*All students featured in this report have been given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

To understand the experience of bridge program participants in and beyond their programs, the evaluation team conducted a survey of 161 former participants and asked about their program experience. The survey also asked students about their post-completion connection to the bridge program and challenges around applying to college, and it elicited suggestions for changes and improvements to the programs. Below is a summary of key findings for each of these topics.

The Program Experience

Results of the participant survey illustrate the deep appreciation that most respondents reported for their bridge program experience; they repeatedly expressed their gratitude and credited the programs with enabling them to go to college, obtain jobs, and better integrate into the way of life in the United States.

Favorable overall ratings. More than 96% of survey respondents rated the overall quality of their bridge program, on a five-point scale, as either “excellent” or “very good” and only one of the respondents rated the program quality as either “fair” or “poor.”

Comprehensive college prep. Programs helped students prepare for college in multiple ways. The survey asked respondents to rate how helpful their bridge program had been through 16 different elements, including development of language, academic, and study skills; preparation for college entry; and job/career exploration and readiness. Over 80% of participants rated the helpfulness of bridge components as either 4 “helped very much” or 5 “helped tremendously” in:

- improving their listening and speaking in English
- improving their writing
- making them feel more confident about applying to college or training
- preparing them to take a college entrance exam
- helping them to enroll in college or training
- giving them good information about the American college system and culture
- giving them good information on choosing a college program or career (offering good advising)

Cultural understanding and communication skills. Programs helped students develop cultural understanding, as well as communication and other skills that support success in varied contexts, as indicated by respondent comments:

“As immigrants, it helps you understand the country you are living in and the people you’re dealing with. Most importantly, [it helps you understand] how to be a valuable person for the community and the world.”

“[The program] taught us about the American workplace culture and small talk between colleagues. The culture is different between US and China. The program really helped me a lot with that.”

“They introduced me to the American culture and showed me how to be in U.S. society, including how to be punctual and how to be well organized (which are both important to the American culture).”

“The program helped me to meet people from different countries and get involved in the society—meeting people and speaking English. Knowing about American culture helped with the social aspect of being in the US.”

Personal support. In addition to skill development, programs provided personal support to students, as reflected in respondent comments:

“They helped you on a personal level. They were there for me—not just about college or careers. It was like a family.”

“They actually care. They call you, explain how things work, what you need, the requirements. Even the way they teach, they include American values/cultures so you don’t feel left out. They encourage diversity. When you first come to this country, you just need some help. . . . I just needed someone to guide me and they did that, in a really good way.”

Increased confidence. Survey responses reflect the programs’ success in developing participants’ confidence in themselves. Participants were asked to (retrospectively) rate their level of confidence in their ability to be successful in college at the start of the bridge program and at the end of the program on a scale of 1 to 5. While 36% (57 of 157) of participants rated their confidence at the start of their bridge program as “very confident” (4) or “extremely confident” (5), 80% (125) rated their confidence at the end of the program as 4 or 5. The ability of programs to increase student confidence is potentially significant, as prior research found that adults with more advanced psychosocial characteristics—including conscientiousness, determination, discipline, commitment, and confidence—were more likely to enroll in college and earn credentials within 18 months of enrollment.³⁶

Support from Bridge Programs After Participation

Participants' expectations and relationship to the bridge program after completion varied depending on individual needs (e.g., assistance with searching for a job, managing challenges within college, transferring to a four-year college, or no need for assistance). As respondent comments showed, some participants had more regular contact with the bridge program after graduation through email and phone calls about jobs and/or college, whereas others had minimal or no contact with their bridge program after completion and they did not expect any ongoing communications. In addition to reflecting variation in participant needs and expectations, the mixed comments about post-program experience likely reflect programs' differing approaches to maintaining contact with participants after completion. Not all programs have had the resources to do aggressive follow-up with graduates.

In their comments, many respondents noted that if they needed more college or employment assistance, they would feel comfortable reaching out to their bridge programs. Some respondents' comments reflect the support and community that continued contact with programs offered:

"Having an advisor that follows up for two years helps. Even after that, they are very helpful with any questions that you have. You can just email them. They help you figure out how to find out something you need to know, for example, how to transfer credits."

"I have been invited to events at the program and still feel like I am part of the group. . . . I am still in touch with people. . . . I see my classmates and have a chat group. It's really important and good to be around them."

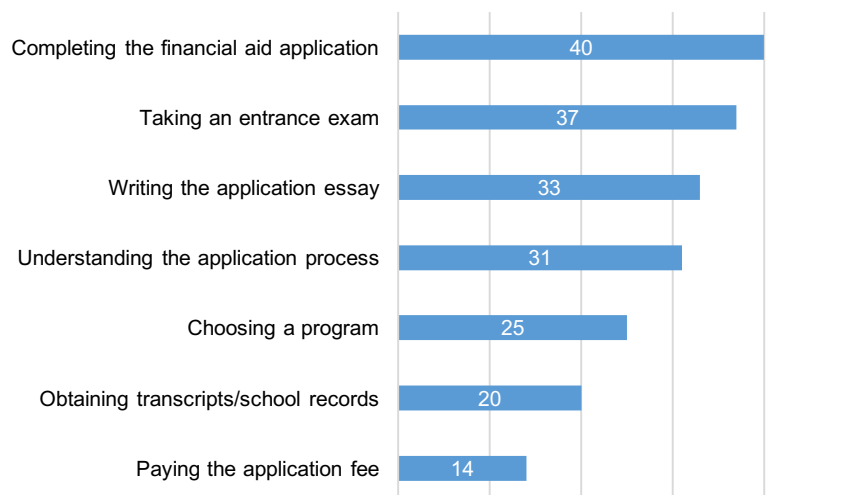
A few survey respondents recommended programs be more proactive in reaching out to offer additional assistance after graduation from the bridge programs because "not everyone will ask for help."

Challenges and Supports to Enrolling to College

For immigrant students, the process of applying to college can be very daunting, even among adults who previously attended college in their home country, since procedures and policies can vary widely from one system to another. Steps that seem obvious to an American familiar with the system can be entirely new to an immigrant.

Survey participants who had applied to college offered some insights into the challenges they encountered in the application process. Responses indicated that applying for financial aid, passing the entrance exam, completing the application essay, and understanding the application process were key challenges.

Figure 8. Most Frequently Identified Challenges to Applying to College (n=110)



Programs can play an important role in mitigating the challenges of applying to college by helping students become aware of steps in the process and preparing them for elements like form completion, testing, and essay writing. In the participant survey, 57% of individuals who applied to college did so while they were still enrolled in the program. Fourteen of the 110 who responded to the question about challenges of applying answered that applying was “not a challenge” because of the help they received through their program. One participant described how the program helped her through the process:

“I was afraid to apply on my own. . . . They gave me the confidence to apply. They helped me to fill out applications, made sure it was all right. They also told me steps to follow in school. I had a coach who helped with my resume, what classes to take, how to organize my time, and the order of classes I needed to finish the AA at Bunker Hill. . . . In two and half years, I finished my AA in accounting and almost had enough credits for a second degree in taxation.”

Supports to College Persistence

Once they made the transition to college, students experienced multiple challenges to their persistence. Survey findings suggest that bridge programs’ ability to build participants’ confidence and motivation is an important way that programs support college persistence. The survey asked respondents to indicate how helpful each person or factor was to helping students going to college. They rated employers as the least helpful, since employers often posed extra demands on students who were trying to balance work and school. Participants’ ratings show the importance of the support of family and instructors, but the most helpful factor, rated highest above all else, is participants’ own motivation or belief in themselves. Although analyzed in a different way (including program staff assessment of individual motivation), personal motivation

emerged as important in the ATLAS (Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study) study as researchers determined that “the construct of motivation is an important element of participants’ ultimate college outcomes.”³⁷ This finding suggests that the ability of programs to develop participants’ self-confidence and strengthen their sense of self-efficacy is an important role beyond the English and academic skill development they offer.

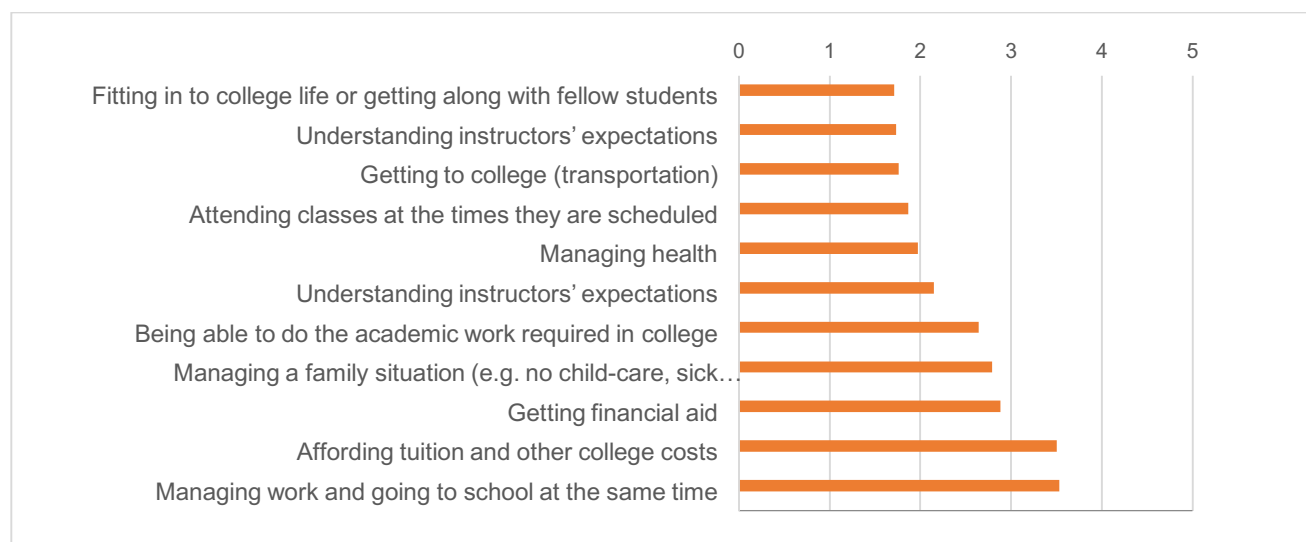
Figure 9: Most Helpful Supports to Persisting in College (rated on a scale 1–5, n=68)



Challenges to College Persistence

Survey respondents also shed light on factors that challenged their persistence in college. Participants noted challenges such as social integration, transportation, and personal health, but they found the academic and financial demands of attending college to be even more challenging. Although these are challenges that students face after they complete the bridge program, we include them here because addressing these challenges is critical to supporting immigrant students’ success in college. Indeed, all the great work of bridge programs threatens to become moot if students cannot persist in college because of factors like cost.

Figure 10. Challenges to Persisting in College (rated on a scale 1–5, n=47)



Balancing their multiple roles of student and worker emerged as the highest rated challenge. The importance of this factor is not surprising, given that so many participants in the survey indicated that they had worked while going to school. Of the 97 students who responded to questions about combining work and college, 59% (57) had always worked while going to college and another 25% (24) had worked sometimes, while only 16% (16) said that they had never worked while going to college. Most respondents (37%, 36) said they had always worked part-time while attending college, while 27% (26) said they always worked full-time and another 21% (20) mixed part- and full-time work while studying.

Prior research supports the finding that balancing work and studies is a significant challenge to adults who enroll in college. The ATLAS study found that “participants with higher levels of job-related obstacles were significantly less likely to have attained at least 30 transferrable college credits by the end of the study.”³⁸ A different study found that family income was weakly associated with college outcomes; however, expected work hours and expected part-time school attendance were negatively associated with college enrollment and degree receipt. Researchers determined that results reflected the importance of “time as a resource in college success.”³⁹

The second most highly rated challenge was cost, a challenge that affects U.S.-born students as well, but which is even more difficult for immigrant students, who may face additional barriers in qualifying for financial aid. When asked what the single most important thing that colleges could do to help adult students like them persist in college, respondents offered a number of ideas, including more financial aid and supports for families.

“The biggest problem with college is the financial part. The biggest problem students face is paying for education, without even worrying about the quality. When I was thinking about getting an entry-level job in finance, I saw that once you get to that level

then you get less financial aid. You get into having loans that you will have to deal with later. Depending on your degree, you can be in trouble.”

Student comments also pointed to the desire for the college to recognize their status as adult and immigrant “nontraditional” college students and offer additional supports, including more assistance with enrollment procedures and advising throughout the college process.

“For nontraditional students, it would be great to have a center with tutoring and supports. If you’re part of honor society, they have their own room like a lounge. There are computers and a quiet space for studying, extra textbooks. There’s always a person like a professor that you can access. For nontraditional students, maybe they need to be assigned a special advisor or mentor to help them navigate the college. We end up competing with students fresh out of school. We look at the world in a different way.”

Suggestions for Program Changes

In addition to offering reactions to bridge program services and insights into the challenges they faced in persisting in college, survey respondents shared ideas for improving bridge program services, summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Suggested Program Improvements from Bridge-to-College Participants

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	JOB/CAREER ASSISTANCE	ACADEMICS	POST-GRAD FOLLOW-UP	OTHER PROGRAM CONTENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better/More flexible class hours • Additional slots for greater participation • Longer (more weeks of) bridge program • More marketing to reach more students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More job training • Better preparation for internships and jobs • More networking opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More math and higher-level math • More computer skills • More English and higher levels of conversational English; greater opportunities for real-life practice in speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More help with college financial aid • Specific schedule for contacting participants after leaving program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More help with TOEFL, GRE and other entrance exams • More mentors and enhanced role of mentors in bridge program • More one-to-one time with advisors and counselors

It is notable that 35% (40) of the 115 participants who responded to the question, “If you could change anything about the program, what would that be?”, said that they wouldn’t change anything about their bridge program, reflecting their very high level of satisfaction with the services they’d received. This satisfaction is further reflected in comments such as these:

“There will always be points to improve but it's a great, great program! I can't emphasize how these programs have changed my life. It's mostly about guidance and support—which they gave me.”

“I absolutely love the program because it changed my life. Honestly, without Bridges, I don't think that I would be where I am today. God put me in the right place at the right time with the right people.”

Conclusion

Survey responses reflect the importance of program structures that recognize all that immigrant adults must balance in order to attend college, and the relationships that can support students—both in bridge programs and college settings—to provide information and encouragement along the path toward and through college.

The challenges identified by participants suggest that there are personal and situational factors that impede adults’ ability to undertake college-level studies. Some of these factors (like cost and availability of student supports in college) are beyond the control of programs but need to be taken into account in supporting transitions from the bridge program to college.

In spite of the challenges, it is apparent that the SFF-funded programs are succeeding overall in launching participants onto trajectories that support their future success in and beyond postsecondary education and training, as “bridge” or “transition” programs are intended to do.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation of the SFF-funded bridge-to-college programs demonstrates the success of these programs in launching adult immigrants on trajectories to college, job training, and improved financial situations. This work also points to a number of challenges and opportunities in supporting the advancement of English language learners into and beyond postsecondary learning.

With respect to challenges, there remains unmet, though unquantifiable demand for ESOL bridge-to-college services in and beyond Boston, especially at the pre-bridge level. Currently, gaps in public funding have resulted in limited capacity to provide ESOL-specific bridge programs beyond the SFF-funded programs. In addition, there is diversity within the population of adults seeking ESOL bridge services, which includes adults with prior college and work experience, as well as those with only a high school education. Such diversity might merit differentiated services to accelerate the process for more highly skilled immigrants.

Despite these challenges, there are a number of opportunities to build on. State investments, though modest, show an understanding of the importance of postsecondary transitions to help adults advance. Practitioners like those operating the SFF programs have developed a strong knowledge base around what makes for effective programming to meet the multiple needs of adult immigrants who seek to enter college. The field of adult learning is developing innovations through online learning that might allow services to reach more people. This is an opportune moment for philanthropy to invest resources to support expansion and innovation to allow bridge services to reach even more adult immigrants.

While opportunities for philanthropy to invest in bridge programs exist, some suggest that adult transitions are insufficiently funded because so much philanthropic energy focuses on youth. Three interviewees identified a trend in philanthropy and state investments toward supporting the transition of younger learners, particularly those transitioning from high school programs to college. As one adult educator in Boston noted:

“It’s great to fund the youth space, but youth have a lot of challenges and don’t always understand the value of education and work; they don’t yet realize the wall they’ll hit without education. At around 25–30 they have been out in the world; they see how they hit that wall and can’t make the money/enter career they want. The money you invest in them goes a lot further.”

Investing in immigrant adults offers philanthropy an opportunity to impact the lives of individuals who recognize the value of work and can use postsecondary learning opportunities to advance themselves and their families.

SIX RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTMENT

1. **Invest in on-ramps to bridge programs.** Many motivated immigrant adults who could benefit from bridge services are being turned away from the few that exist because they are not academically prepared. Pre-bridge programs serve as on-ramps by raising candidates' skill levels to those needed for entry and success in bridge programs. To be most effective, pre-bridge services should be closely aligned with bridge-to-college services to ensure that participants see clear pathways to their next steps toward transition to college or training.
2. **Build public-private partnerships to support bridge programming.** Demand for bridge programs exceeds supply. Private investments and partnerships complement public investments in this area and create opportunities to serve many more highly skilled immigrants.
3. **Support innovative educational models.** New educational models can accelerate the progress of immigrants, especially those with prior college education, in reaching their career goals. These models might include industry-specific training and support centers, integrated education models, and competency-based and online/face-to-face blended learning models. For example:
 - Welcome Back Centers provide orientation, counseling, and support to foreign-trained health workers to participate in developing a career pathway plan that builds on their education, experience, and skills.⁴⁰ Centers (like the one for foreign-trained nurses at BHCC) might be developed for other industries such as information technology or finance that offer opportunities for trained individuals to access middle- or high-skilled positions.
 - Integrated education models, such as I-BEST⁴¹ and Accelerating Opportunity,⁴² that combine basic skill development with technical training in career pathways, have been shown to accelerate the acquisition of postsecondary credentials with labor market value among adult education students. These models have primarily assisted students in acquiring college credits and career and technical education credentials below the associate's level. Supporting the development of contextualized English classes at higher levels for individuals with prior college education would expand this model to English language learners.
 - Other approaches designed to accelerate learning and credential acquisition might be applied to college-educated and other motivated immigrant learners. Blended learning models use technology to blend online and classroom learning. These programs provide personalized learning, which can help adults balance work and family with program participation.

- Competency-based programs allow students to demonstrate their skills as they acquire the language necessary to show what they know and can do without needing to repeat full college course sequences. Prior learning assessments, which are used to recognize and grant credit for the education and experience acquired by adults prior to college matriculation, could shorten the time needed for immigrants to acquire advanced U.S.-based credentials.
- An innovative example of a program supporting highly educated immigrants is a new pilot in Baltimore. Working in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs, the International Rescue Committee, and the Community College of Baltimore County, the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare has launched a registered apprenticeship for environmental care supervisors to train individuals for work at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The program includes contextualized English instruction and, as a competency-based model, allows skilled immigrants to demonstrate their job-related skills and advance through the program at their own pace, earning successively higher wages as they show evidence of more skills. Programs such as this could offer interesting models for replication in other settings and industries.⁴³

4. **Fund research that focuses specifically on the experiences and needs of adult immigrant learners.** Research literature to date typically combines U.S.-born and foreign-born students, but the needs of these groups are quite different. More research is needed to better understand long-term outcomes, as well as specific programmatic factors and effective models that contribute to the success of English language learners in and beyond bridge-to-college programs.
5. **Establish scholarship funds.** The challenge of financing higher education was a persistent theme in participant survey responses. Funders might consider establishing and managing a fund to provide scholarships of even relatively small amounts (\$2,000–\$4,000) to enable highly motivated students to pursue their studies, graduate more quickly, and advance economically. An alternative approach might be to establish a matched savings plan, such as the one available to students at JVS (described earlier in this report).
6. **Invest in expanded support services in college.** Once in college, immigrant students still benefit from supportive services that help them navigate the demands of college and manage their multiple roles, but resources to support intensive models of student support can be limited. Philanthropic investments could help to fill that gap through partnerships with community colleges.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

Research for this evaluation included a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, data analysis, and surveys. This approach allowed the evaluation team to explore the operation and context of the SFF-funded bridge programs, examine postsecondary and other outcomes experienced by participants, and gain insight into individual participant experiences in and beyond bridge programs.

Program Design

To understand the design and operation of the four funded programs, the evaluation team reviewed past reports submitted to the Smith Family Foundation, as well as additional documentation, such as program flyers and course syllabi, and the team conducted in-person interviews with lead staff from each site. Team members also collected available program data from each of the programs to provide some description of the students served. We conducted interviews with the directors and key staff of all programs, collecting information on program components, operation, staffing, strengths, and challenges. To provide additional insights into the programmatic and funding context of these programs, the team conducted 14 key informant interviews with staff of organizations that serve and support immigrant and other adult learners, as well as a survey of other bridge-to-college or transition programs in and beyond Boston.

College Enrollment: National Student Clearinghouse Data

The data for college enrollment came primarily from the NSC's StudentTracker®. The website describes the database as follows:

“StudentTracker® is the only nationwide source of college enrollment and degree data. More than 3,600 colleges and universities—enrolling over 98% of all students in public and private U.S. institutions—regularly provide enrollment and graduation data to the Clearinghouse.”⁴⁴

Two programs, AACA and JVS, contracted with NSC to extract enrollment data on their students with StudentTracker® and provided this enrollment data to JFF, based on NSC records and supplemented with additional information gathered directly from students. In the case of YMCA, JFF secured college enrollment data directly from StudentTracker® for the YMCA students who provided permission for data gathering. The bridge program at NECC provided their college's matriculation and transfer data to JFF for the evaluation.

JFF reviewed this body of data and determined that a bridge program participant was labeled as “enrolled” if any enrollment record was found for the student; regardless of whether they had completed the semester, they were counted as having enrolled.

Our variables for analysis for the college enrollment data include:

- Enrolled:
 - If we found any enrollment record for the student, regardless of whether they had completed the semester, they were counted as having enrolled (1).
 - If we found no enrollment record, then the student was labeled as not having enrolled (0).
- Total semesters: Derived from a count of enrollment end dates found for each student.
- Total degrees: The count of degree dates found for each student.
- Withdrawal/ Leave of Absence: The count of incidents where a student is reported as having withdrawn or taken a leave of absence from a semester.
- Time to complete = first degree date – first enrollment date.⁴⁵

Students for whom we lacked sufficient personal information to request enrollment records were not counted in the enrollment analysis.

College Enrollment: Bridge Participant Survey

For a deeper look at the college enrollment, training, and workforce choices bridge participants made after completing their programs, the evaluation team asked bridge participants to complete a questionnaire, either as a phone interview or self-administered online. Sixty nine participants completed one-hour phone interviews, and 92 completed an online survey, for a total of 161 respondents.⁴⁶ The team used data from the survey to explore participants' education and career pathways post-bridge program participation, including challenges and supports for enrolling in college or workforce training, and changes in employment. For those who enrolled in college, we explored degrees attempted and completed along with developmental courses taken. For those who did not attend, we explored trainings, if any, attended and completed. We also explored self-reported changes in participants' financial situation, pre- and post-bridge, and how these changes might be correlated with education pathways. Finally, we used the survey to gather information from participants about their views about the bridge program, including how the program supported their education and career goals and what additional supports would have helped them.

Limitations

As is typically the case in research, there are some limitations to the evaluation analysis. NSC data can only give us a snapshot in time of college enrollment. There may be students who are not enrolled currently but who will enroll in the future. We excluded from our analysis 2016 graduates because their presence in the data might have skewed results toward lower enrollments since many may have not yet matriculated. In addition, NSC data may undercount enrollments if colleges do not report all enrollment and credential acquisition.

With respect to the participant survey, 18% of bridge students for whom we received contact information participated in our survey.⁴⁷ This relatively small number of respondents made it more difficult to explore correlations between variables (i.e., program and personal factors' relationships to enrollment, and other outcomes). The limited sample may also have provided less opportunity to view the full range of outcomes and experiences of the total population of bridge participants. Participation in the survey was voluntary and not the result of random sampling, so those who participated voluntarily may, in some way, have different outcomes, for unobservable reasons, than those who opted not to participate.

The evaluation team had hoped to be able to explore the relationship between specific program components and enrollment outcomes; however, the varying operation of the programs over time made it difficult for the team to identify particular components and match them appropriately with students to support a rigorous analysis.

ENDNOTES

¹ Lima, Alvaro. 2017. *Our Shared Future: Charting a Path for Immigrant Advancement in a New Political Landscape. The Importance of Immigrants to Boston's Continued Prosperity*. Boston, MA: The Boston Foundation. Accessed April 28, 2017.

http://www.tbf.org/videos/2017/april/~media/TBFOrg/Files/Forum%20materials/Importance%20of%20Immigrants%204_19_17.pdf

² Osterman, Paul, William Kimball, and Christine Riordan. 2017. *Boston's Immigrants: An Essential Component of a Strong Economy*. Boston, MA: JVS.

³ Osterman, Kimball & Riordan. 2017.

⁴ World Education Services. 2015. *Steps to Success: Integrating Immigrant Professionals. Boston Report*. New York, NY: World Education Services.

⁵ Osterman, Kimball & Riordan. 2017.

⁶ Batalova, Jeanne, Michael Fix, and James D. Bachmeier. 2016. *Untapped Talent: The Costs of Brain Waste among Highly Skilled Immigrants in the United States*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, New American Economy, and World Education Services.

⁷ Batalova, Fix & Bachmeier. 2016.

⁸ Lima, Alvaro, Mark Melnik, Kelly Dowd, Kevin Kang, and Nicoya M. Borella. 2014. *High-skilled Immigrants in the Massachusetts Civilian Labor Force*. Boston, MA: Boston Redevelopment Authority.

⁹ Lima. 2017.

¹⁰ Lima, Alvaro. April 2014. *High-skilled Immigrants in the Massachusetts Civilian Labor Force: U.S./Foreign Degrees*. Boston, MA: Boston Redevelopment Authority. Available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/alvaroelima/high-skilledforeignbornusforeigndegreefinalmedium-kd42214>

¹¹ Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl. June 2013. *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Accessed April 25, 2017. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/>

¹² Lima, Alvaro, Mark Melnik, and Barry Bluestone. 2009. *Briefing Book–Labor Market Trends in Metro Boston*. Boston, MA: Boston Redevelopment Authority.

¹³ Chetty, Raj, John N. Friedman, Emmanuel Saez, Nicholas Turner, and Danny Yagan. 2017. *Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility*. Cambridge, MA: The National Bureau for Economic Research. Available at: http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll_mrc_paper.pdf

¹⁴ World Education Services. 2015.

¹⁵ Batalova, Jeanne, Michael Fix, and Peter A. Creticos. 2008. *Uneven Progress: The Employment Pathways of Skilled Immigrants in the United States*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

¹⁶ We reached out to 15 programs and 10 responded.

¹⁷ AACA's bridge-to-college work has been cited in research and has thus helped to inform the larger field of adult education. See, for example, *Transitioning Adults to College: Adult Basic Education Program Models*. NCSALL Occasional Paper, December 2006. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

¹⁸ JVS Grant Proposal submitted to the Smith Foundation 2016.

¹⁹ JVS website: <https://jvs-boston.org>

²⁰ The IDA is a federally-based matched savings program designed to help low income people acquire assets through saving. At JVS, *Bridges* students save \$1,500 and receive \$3,000 in matching funds, with \$1,500 matched by the federal government and \$1,500 by JVS. JVS works with the Midas Collaborative for banking administrative support. Participants must meet federal income eligibility requirements and participate in financial coaching and education. [Source: Barbara Fern Greenberg, JVS IDA Coordinator/Instructor. Personal communication August 14, 2017.]

²¹ According to a 2016 proposal to the Foundation, in FY2015, the organization served close to 20,000 individuals with a wide range of services.

²² Based on available personal information and permission to use it, we were able to request NSC data for 836 of the total 1007 bridge participants.

²³ An evaluation of the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project found that among program graduates, 69% were enrolled or expected to enroll in college. Gittleman, Julia. 2005.

The New England ABE-to-College Transition Project Evaluation Report. Quincy, MA: The Nellie Mae Foundation.

The Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study (ATLAS), which built on the Gittleman evaluation, followed 227 adult students who entered ABE-to-College programs in fall 2007 or spring 2008. Out of 220 adult students for whom the study had data, 37% never enrolled, 32% enrolled but dropped out, and 31% enrolled and were still enrolled or finished at the end of the study. Smith, Cristine and Laura Gluck. 2016. *Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study. Final Report to the Nellie Mae Foundation.* Amherst, MA: The Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Although these studies included both ESOL and non-ESOL learners, they provide useful benchmarks for the performance of the SFF-funded bridge programs.²³

²⁴ The ATLAS study found that “a 10-point increase in a participant’s arithmetic score between the person’s intake and exit on Accuplacer tests increased the relative odds of enrolling in college within 1 year by approximately 40 percent.” Smith and Gluck, 2017, p. 99. Based on evaluation team knowledge and observations, bridge programs in this study did not focus as much on math as on reading, while many of the ATLAS programs focused equally or more on math.

²⁵ We were able to obtain data for participants in two of the four programs, AACA and JVS. The mean change in Reading Comprehension and Arithmetic scores, graded on a scale from 20 to 120 points, were 9.52 points and 12.92 respectively. (We did not have sufficient data on writing scores to pursue analysis of that variable.)

²⁶ Reading Comprehension T-test results were as follows: For those enrolled $n=173$, $t=2.44$, $\text{mean}=11.08$, $p<0.05$; and for those who did not enroll in college $n=80$, $t=2.44$, $\text{mean} = 6.15$, $p<0.05$.

²⁷ Math Comprehension T-test results were as follows: For those enrolled $n=163$, $t=1.76$, $\text{mean}=14.29$, $p=0.08$; and for those who did not enroll in college $n=76$, $t=1.76$, $\text{mean} = 9.96$, $p=0.08$.

²⁸ The number of degree types identified here is less than the total number of degrees since NSC data does not list a degree type for every degree or credential obtained.

²⁹ Community College Research Center. “Community College FAQs.” Accessed June 25, 2017. <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Community-College-FAQs.html>. (Research cited from Jaggars, Shanna Smith and Di Xu. 2010. *Online Learning in the Virginia Community College System*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University; and Xu, Di and Shanna Smith Jaggars. 2011. *Online and Hybrid Course Enrollment and Performance in Washington State Community and Technical Colleges*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.)

³⁰ Data for this section is drawn from our student survey. 161 participated: 67 by phone and 93 online. Participation by program was as follows: AACA – 37% (59), JVS – 43% (69); NECC – 4% (7), YMCA – 16% (26).

³¹ This group includes 21 students who did not continue with further education and 12 students who did.

³² Community College Research Center. 2014. *What We Know About Developmental Education Outcomes*. Research Overview. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. Available at: <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/what-we-know-about-developmental-education-outcomes.pdf>

³³ The ATLAS study found that students' memories or knowledge of their developmental education participation was often incomplete and that transcript analysis provided the most accurate account of student course taking in college.

³⁴ Among participants interviewed, the majority (15 of 23) took developmental English classes but similar data was not available for online respondents.

³⁵ Responses to this question did not vary significantly by gender, age, or pre-bridge education program and are not reported here.

³⁶ Fein, David. 2016. *Risk Factors for College Success: Insights from Adults in Nine Career Pathways Programs*. OPRE Report #2016-36. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Due to data limitation (small cell sizes), we were not able to test a statistically significant relationship between confidence and college enrollment.

³⁷ Smith & Gluck. 2016, p. 77.

³⁸ Smith & Gluck. 2016, p. 243.

³⁹ Fein. 2016, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Welcome Back Initiative International Health Worker Assistance Center. Accessed June 26, 2017. <http://www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/participant/>

⁴¹ Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training. Accessed July 3, 2017. <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/i-best/>

⁴² Jobs for the Future. "Accelerating Opportunity: Redesigning Adult Basic Education for College Success." Accessed July 3, 2017. <http://www.jff.org/initiatives/accelerating-opportunity>

⁴³ The pilot is being funded by an ApprenticeshipUSA grant awarded to Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.

⁴⁴ National Student Clearinghouse. "StudentTracker." Available at:
<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/studenttracker/>

⁴⁵ Because NECC did not provide NSC enrollment data, we were not able to calculate these variables for that program.

⁴⁶ 105 people completed surveys; however, we limited our analysis to individuals who had completed their bridge program.

⁴⁷ This number represented 16% of the total number of students for whom programs shared data. Programs did not all have permission to provide all student names and phone numbers or email addresses.