

**Supporting Statement
for OMB Clearance
Request**

**Appendix B: ISIS
Program Summaries**

**Innovative Strategies for
Increasing Self-Sufficiency
(ISIS) – Follow-up Data
Collection**

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Submitted by:
Brendan Kelly
Office of Planning, Research
and Evaluation
Administration for Children
and Families
**U.S. Department of Health and
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Appendix B: ISIS Program Summaries

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC)

DMACC's Community and Workforce Partnership (CWP) division was established in 2000 to expand access to DMACC for underserved populations in the community. One of CWP's major programs is the Workforce Training Academy (WTA), which offers low-income students the opportunity to enroll in short-term occupational training certificate courses in occupations determined by the state workforce department to be in high demand, and allows students to move directly into one-year diploma and two-year associate's degree programs. In addition to occupational training, WTA offers pre-employment classes including life skills, financial literacy, and supported access to GED and ESL instruction. With a combination of funding sources, including WIA and state economic development funds, tuition is free for qualifying students.

For ISIS, DMACC is offering a new program in WTA—the Prepared Learner Program—for those who do not score high enough on the CASAS test to enter the standard WTA training. Students in the Prepared Learner Program receive contextualized basic skills instruction, instruction in employment and life skills, and vocational training through a short-term certificate course. Each short-term certificate offered in the Prepared Learner Program ladders into one or more specific certificate, degree, or diploma programs at WTA, and upon completion of the Prepared Learner Program, treatment group members are able to qualify directly into these programs. Participants receive wrap-around services in the form of intrusive advising from an Achievement Coach, transportation support, and financial literacy training. DMACC currently offers and delivers all the services they are including in the Prepared Learner Program, but for ISIS they are implementing a structured program of components specifically for the target population they have identified—low-income, hard-to-serve individuals who are unable to begin on a career pathway because of low test scores.

Instituto del Progreso Latino

The *Carreras en Salud* program offers individuals contextualized training for careers in health. Established in 2005 by Instituto del Progreso Latino, a community-based non-profit organization in Chicago, *Carreras en Salud (CES)* is a bridge program that provides a predominantly low-wealth Latino population with a clearly articulated pathway to progressively higher skilled and higher paying jobs in the health sector. The pathway begins at the 6th grade level with English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework, then progresses to 8th grade level Vocational ESL (VESL) with language preparation specific to the health care field. Upon completing the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) bridge, individuals are qualified for jobs that pay at least \$9 per hour. The pre-Licensed Practical Nurse (pre-LPN) bridge is associated with earnings in the \$10 to \$16 per hour range, and LPN jobs pay approximately \$24 to \$27 per hour. Throughout the program, Case Managers work to address participants' support service needs, and Academic Advisors help participants set academic goals and access academic supports such as tutoring when needed. Towards the end of the program, individuals are encouraged to take a job readiness course and then meet with an Employment Specialist who helps them identify and apply for appropriate positions in the health care field.

The ISIS evaluation will randomly assign individuals who enter at the ESL, VESL, CNA, LPN prerequisite, and pre-LPN levels.

The ESL, VESL, and pre-LPN courses are offered by Instituto while the CNA and the LPN prerequisite courses are offered by local community colleges. *Carreras en Salud* is also one of several programs that will serve individuals under the Will County Workforce Investment Board's Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG).

Madison Area Technical College

Madison Area Technical College's (MATC) Patient Care Pathway Program provides short-term condensed training that allows lower-skilled students to take courses for college credit and prepare them for health care degree and diploma programs. The program operates out of the School of Online and Accelerated Learning. There are two tracks offered in the program depending on the student's skill level – Patient Care 1 (PCA 1) and Patient Care 2 (PCA 2) – both of which ladder into several established academic programs in the health field. PCA 1 is for students interested in a one-year health Diploma Program or a two-year health Degree Program with placement test scores too low for PCA 2. PCA 2 is designed for students interested in pursuing a two-year health Associates Degree.

Through the program, students who come to the College with academic skills that are too low to begin their health program right away are able to accelerate their remediation process and persist toward their degree more quickly. Both Patient Care Academies integrate developmental coursework with health program prerequisites and contextualize the developmental courses for the health field. Students in the Patient Care Academies take classes in a cohort so that they form bonds and study groups with one another. The Patient Care Pathway Program also provides advising. The goal of the program is to engage and retain students who otherwise may have been discouraged from pursuing a postsecondary degree or diploma.

Pima Community College

In 2010, Pima Community College was awarded a Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) to provide program funding for the Pathways to Healthcare. The Pathways to Healthcare program employs a career pathways framework to leverage partnerships with community agencies and health care employers to assist low-income individuals attain high-paying health care jobs. Components of the program model include: a contextualized bridge course and open lab (called College Readiness); accelerated occupational training; articulated training pathways in 16 targeted healthcare fields leading to credentialing; modularized curriculum; comprehensive supports throughout enrollment and follow up periods; and linkages to employers for internships, and post-program employment opportunities. This comprehensive service 'package' has not previously been available to students through Pima Community College or any of the partner organizations, including OneStops.

The primary partner in the Pima Community College Pathways to Healthcare program is the Pima County OneStop. For the past decade, Pima Community College and the Pima County OneStop have been strong partners. The partnership has facilitated co-locating college staff at Pima County OneStop and developing joint interest programs. The HPOG grant expands this partnership by co-locating dedicated Pima Community College staff at the Pima County OneStop Rio Nuevo Center. Co-located staff work exclusively with individuals interested in the Pathways to Healthcare program and coordinate closely with the OneStop workforce development staff dedicated to the Pathways to Healthcare program. Under the HPOG grant, OneStop staff assist with recruitment, assessment, case management, and support services.

San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP)

Bridge to Employment in the Health Care Industry is funded through an HPOG. The goal of the program is to advance the economic well-being of low-income individuals by developing a regional strategy that addresses the workforce development needs of the health care industry. It does so through a combination of providing individual training accounts (ITAs) aimed at health care occupations, extensive case management, support services, and employment services. The program aims to help individuals complete training, gain certification, and find employment.

Four community-based organizations, referred to as “navigators,” provide services, three of which are in ISIS. These navigators conduct recruitment, determine eligibility, enroll eligible individuals, develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), guide individuals to training providers offering training in their chosen health care occupation, provide work readiness training, and assist participants with their job search. While navigators guide participants in selecting a training program, the program emphasizes “consumer choice” and leaves to the participant the selection of a program and training provider.

SDWP subcontracts with four community-based organizations, referred to as “navigators,” to provide services, three of which are in ISIS. These navigators conduct recruitment, determine eligibility, enroll eligible individuals, develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), guide individuals to training providers offering training in their chosen health care occupation, provide work readiness training, and help place participants in jobs. While navigators guide participants in selecting a training program, the program emphasizes “consumer choice” and leaves to the participant the selection of a program and training provider.

Participants enroll in health care training at any one of the accredited providers in the area, primarily for-profit proprietary schools or community colleges that offer classes leading to a certificate in a health care field. The ITA, funded through the HPOG grant, helps cover the expense of the training program. Navigators can allocate up to \$7,000 to individuals receiving the ITA, and up to \$10,000 for some types of training that will lead to a mid- to upper-level degree or certification in certain occupational categories.

Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA)

Located in the lower Rio Grande Valley region of Texas, VIDA (Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement) is a community-based organization focused on helping adult students in a five-county area complete an associate’s degree, and—to a lesser extent—shorter certificate programs. VIDA targets low-income students with at least 10th grade-level academic skills who are new or ongoing college students. Working closely with business partners and local economic development authorities, VIDA places students in programs providing training in projected high-growth fields such as allied health, technology, business, education, social services, manufacturing, and specialized trades such as automotive technology. Although the primary focus is students enrolling or enrolled in college programs, VIDA also operates an intensive 16-week College Preparatory Academy for students who are otherwise eligible (e.g., at least 10th grade-level academic skills) but test below skill levels required for college admission. The Academy operates on two community college campuses and provides an accelerated package of remedial instruction.

VIDA requires full-time school enrollment, so substantial emphasis is placed on determining financial need and identifying sources of financial support. The program also directly provides financial support to help cover needs such as: tuition gaps, child care, transportation, testing and certification expenses, and financial emergencies. VIDA's principal service is a strong, pro-active counseling and guidance program. Counselors hold mandatory monthly meetings with each participant at his/her college to review progress and address academic and non-academic issues (e.g., finances, family problems, time management). They also conduct several on-campus group sessions each month with a cohort of participants. These sessions aim to build social support among students, as well as provide training in areas such as study skills, time management, communication, and work culture and readiness. Most students receive VIDA's core services for two years (with an additional month for those entering through the Academy).

Counselors maintain strong relationships with local social service providers for any specialized referrals that participants may need to help them stay in school. Similarly, VIDA has built strong relationships with local businesses on which counselors and students draw in finding jobs. Counselors seek to maintain contact for two years after students complete their programs. A measure of program sustainability is ensured by VIDA's assurance of base funding from local county governments. This funding covers the core administrative team, and this team has designed the model so that services readily can expand or contract with flux in other funding sources.

Washington Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)

I-BEST is a multi-occupation career pathways program operating in all 34 community colleges in Washington State that targets individuals with limited English skills or low basic skills. I-BEST provides instruction in a wide range of high-demand occupational fields. The target population generally falls in the 6th-11th grade range on standard math, reading, and English tests, with many programs targeting adults at the higher end of this range. I-BEST's signature innovation is a dual-instructor approach pairing basic skills and content instructors together in class for at least 50 percent of the time. Courses are embedded in occupational training programs that typically involve completion of at least 45 credits of community college coursework. Students receive college credit for the skills training portion of the program (though not for the basic skills instruction). Most I-BEST programs provide 12 to 15 credits in a specific occupational field.

I-BEST programs typically provide a range of other supports, including pro-active advising, supplementary (academic and non-academic) skills instruction, and help accessing financial aid—including state Opportunity Grants covering tuition and fees as well as books and supplies up to \$1,000 per year. Although financial aid is available to students who are not in I-BEST in some situations, I-BEST students receive more advising and assistance with the financial aid process and/or are given higher priority for receiving an Opportunity Grant. In addition, Open Society Foundation or other foundation funds will be used to provide “fill-the-gap” financial assistance for those cases when Opportunity Grants or other financial assistance (e.g., Pell Grants) are not available. ISIS is evaluating the I-BEST model at Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College and Everett Community College.

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County is operating Health Careers for All (HCA). HCA is funded through an HPOG grant and is designed to meet the region’s expanding healthcare labor needs while simultaneously addressing the training, employment, and advancement needs of its low-income residents. HCA participants receive career exploration and planning, integrated case management, wrap-around support services and systems-navigation assistance through grant-funded navigators. Training is offered within three tiers – foundational, entry level, and more advanced – providing multiple entry and exit points for participants to access employment in the healthcare field and advance in their careers over time. Instruction at the foundational level integrates introductory healthcare content with basic academic skills. Entry-level training incorporates nationally recognized instructional best practices proven to make a difference with the target population (including “I-BEST”), preparing participants for jobs such as Nursing Assistant, Medical Office, and Phlebotomist. More advanced training is customized to help participants reach and complete “next-step” programs including Medical Assisting and Nursing. Navigators funded under the grant are a vehicle for integrating resources across education, workforce, and social service systems for each participant.

Year Up

Year Up is a national program operating its core model in eight cities. It provides urban, low- to moderate- income young adults aged 18-24 who have a high school diploma or GED with training and job experience for entry-level jobs in high-growth sectors such as information technology and financial services. Local programs partner with one or more community colleges, major employers, and a network of specialized service providers. Through an intensive up-front screening process, the program seeks to identify young adults possessing motivation and other personal assets but facing other challenges the program can help address.

Year Up consists of a customized six-month training program at local program offices followed by a six-month internship with a local employer—both requiring full-time participation. Classroom training includes highly contextualized classes in writing and critical thinking, professional skills (e.g., working in teams, business communication and workplace norms), and technical skills (e.g., information technology or financial services operations). Under agreements with local community colleges, participants are co-enrolled as students, can use campus facilities, and earn up to 23 regular college credits for training provided by Year Up. Cohorts are organized into “learning communities” of about 40 students, who attend classes and participate in weekly “feedback sessions.”

During the internship phase, Year Up staff members carefully match participants to local employers where they work in entry level career track positions such as: help desk and desktop support (in information technology positions) and fund administration, portfolio accountant, and trade reconciliation (in financial operations positions). Weekly half-day classes at Year Up and close monitoring and supervision by program advisors keep students connected to the program during their internships.

In addition to regular meetings with staff advisors and outside mentors, students have access to clinically-trained social workers and a wide range of external services.

Year Up simultaneously provides financial support and signals high expectations through weekly, performance-based stipends of up to \$260 throughout the year. In addition to participants receiving feedback from peers and staff, Year Up’s “high feedback culture” actively promotes feedback from participants on the program. Program administrators and staff actively recruit and foster relationships with major employers, who advise and help design and provide training, as well as internships, and—often—post-program employment.

Employers contribute about half of total program costs for each participant—a key element of Year Up’s sustainability strategy. The program encourages longer-term career mobility through extended involvement with alumni and by providing a base of college credits on which to build. A small-scale random assignment evaluation found substantial positive impacts on participants’ average total earnings (\$3,461, or 30 percent) in the second year of follow-up, and the program has garnered wide attention. ISIS will test Year Up on a national level.