



CTE Partnership Profile Template

Project Name:	Capital IDEA/ACC Partnership: Health Sciences
Location:	Central Texas – Austin and Round Rock
Partner College(s):	Austin Community College
Partner Non-Profit:	Capital IDEA
Target Industry:	Nursing and Allied Health Occupations
Target Population:	This partnership serves a very ethnically and racially diverse mix of low-income adults, including large numbers of long-term Austin residents as well as more recent immigrants. Most participants have a work history in very low-wage jobs. While majority have high school diplomas or GEDs, Capital IDEA also admits adults without GEDs and who need ESL training.

Project Innovations

- » Long-term, intensive engagement with students (2-5+ years) while they prepare for and complete degree programs.
- » Substantial funding derived from city and county general revenue funds as well as WIA co-enrollment.
- » Some employers pay retention fees to program for graduates who remain in their employ.
- » Accelerated intensive developmental academic preparation program.

Partner Organizations:

Capital IDEA (Investing in Development and Employment of Adults), was founded in 1998 as a joint project of Austin Interfaith, a broad-based organization of congregations, schools and other community institutions of the Industrial Areas Foundation, and members of the Central Texas business community. Capital IDEA describes its work as lifting Central Texan working families out of poverty by sponsoring educational services that lead to life-long financial independence. Capital IDEA serves the community by acting as a bridge, connecting committed, yet underemployed people to employers in need of highly skilled workers. In addition to the health sciences partnership that is the focus of the CTE learning group, Capital IDEA works with students and employers in a variety of other industries including accounting, high-technology occupations, and teaching.

The Austin Community College District is the eighth-largest single-college, multi-campus community college district in the nation, offering university transfer, workforce training, continuing education, and adult education programs. ACC's Health Sciences Division provides instruction in more than a dozen high-demand career programs that range from one semester certificates to two year AAS degrees.

Project Summary:

The Capital IDEA/ACC partnership provides low-income students with support to enter and complete degree programs at Austin Community College. These two partners successfully work together through the Capital IDEA College Prep Academy to help low-income participants to complete required developmental education courses and pass ACC admissions examinations. Once students are enrolled in full-time degree programs at ACC, Capital IDEA continues to provide financial support and intensive case management services for two- to five years until graduation.

Academic/Vocational Program:

When a new participant begins his or her relationship with Capital IDEA, he or she first works with a career counselor to create customized education strategies based on assessment of aptitude and interest, training availability and employment opportunity. An individual's education program begins wherever a participant enters the process: GED Preparation, English as a Second Language, college entrance exam preparation, or enrollment in college. Almost half of the Capital IDEA-supported students begin their studies in GED, ESL or College Prep Academy programs. Participants have a long-term engagement with Capital IDEA and ACC, with the majority of individuals expected to complete in three years, but with some taking as long as four or five years, depending on where they start on the educational pathway.

For the Capital IDEA/ACC partnership, Austin Community College delivers all related academic education and training, while Capital IDEA coordinates a comprehensive package of student support. Capital IDEA evaluates GED and ESL instructors and funnels the students they support to screened instructors. Students with a high school diploma or GED can enroll in college courses. However, a majority of the students supported by Capital IDEA need further work to improve their reading, writing and mathematic skills in order to pass the state-mandated college entrance exam. Together with ACC developmental education faculty, Capital IDEA created the College Prep Academy as an alternative to the traditional developmental educational courses offered by the college. The College Prep Academy is a full-time, five-day-a-week, 12-week classroom program, with an additional 12 weeks of half-time instruction for participants needing additional help in a particular subject matter. Capital IDEA reports that sixty-eight percent of College Prep Academy participants pass the Texas college entrance exam on their first try. Capital IDEA-supported students who choose to go on into ACC's Health Sciences division generally continue and graduate as Licensed Vocational Nurses, Registered Nurses, Radiological Technicians or Physical Therapy Assistants.

Supportive Services:

Capital IDEA organizes and provides financial resources and intensive case management for the students it supports. Capital IDEA's case management and counseling starts with in-depth assessment of each individual's personal situation to identify possible barriers to education and employment and to determine ways to overcome these barriers. Once enrolled, students meet weekly throughout the program with an assigned Career Counselor and with other Capital IDEA participants enrolled in the same developmental course or college occupational track for one-hour "Vision, Initiative, Perseverance" (VIP) peer support sessions, guided by Capital IDEA staff counselors. These meetings are held at locations and times that are convenient to students—usually where they attend classes. Counselors also work individually with students as needed to help them find interim employment and internships that will help them gain experience, earn income, and become better positioned to get a job upon graduation. Capital IDEA helps students navigate the college experience, shepherding them through college enrollment, course sequencing, and financial aid processes, preparing them for ACC advising and to be competitive for over-subscribed health care programs, and coordinating their access to college-provided (but CI-financed) tutors.

Austin Community College and Capital IDEA staff and faculty collaborate in a remarkable variety of ways in order to make this support system effective. The college developed a waiver system that allows faculty and staff to share information with Capital IDEA counselors about individual students' progress and challenges in real-time. Staff in numerous departments communicates with Capital IDEA counselors to keep them informed about advising, registration, course requirements, etc. The college regularly invites Capital IDEA counselors to attend student and staff information sessions where information that is relevant to students is shared. This allows Capital IDEA counselors to keep the students they support informed and on-track.

Capital IDEA arranges for the payment of all costs of their participants' education, including tuition, fees and books. The majority of participants also receive financial assistance to pay for other needs such as childcare and transportation. Many also receive interim employment assistance, emergency financial assistance, health care services, and a range of counseling services.

At ACC, the Health Sciences Dean's office is leading a complementary research and demonstration program to determine what types of academic and non-academic supportive services are effective at improving persistence and graduation rates among nursing and allied health occupations students. The Dean noted that the college looks to Capital IDEA for ideas about how it can provide services to improve student outcomes across-the-board. The Health Sciences division sees Capital IDEA as a partner in this work and notes that Capital IDEA students mirror ACC student demographics in general.

Industry/Employer Engagement:

The Capital IDEA/ACC partnership prepares participants for employment in several fields of allied health care, all identified by local workforce development agencies and employer partners as being in high demand in the region and offering self-sufficiency

wages and benefits. The partners work to develop and sustain close relationships with employers in the sector. ACC and Capital IDEA are members of the Health Industries Steering Committee (HISC), an industry-led and community sponsored group that exists to address collectively the workforce needs of the health care industry in the Greater Austin Community. ACC has developed employer-specific incumbent worker training for two large hospital systems and is in ongoing contact with a range of employers to understand their needs and to arrange for clinical slots for its students. And Capital IDEA has developed close relationships and formal agreements with local employers who communicate their current and anticipated needs regarding job openings on a regular basis. By conducting ongoing information-gathering about health care careers in demand and those for which demand is anticipated to wane, the partnership is able to base employment projections on real-time, primary information from employers.

Notes on Funding Sources and Strategies:

Capital IDEA has a very diverse funding base, including public and private sources, that allows it to provide and sustain over time a wide variety of critical non-academic services to students.

Capital IDEA is unusual in the non-profit workforce development field in that it receives substantial amounts of funding from city and county general revenues. With the support of active advocacy organized by Austin Interfaith, Capital IDEA has been able to make the case for public investment in its strategies. Having seen the positive outcomes brought about by the organization's work, the local public sector appears to recognize the necessity of the services that Capital Idea provides to support education success.

In 2003, Capital IDEA undertook a private fundraising initiative that created an office of Resource Development and a 4-year strategic plan to increase private giving. In 2003, the year before Capital IDEA undertook its Capacity Expansion Project, the organization received just 16 gifts from foundations, corporate donors, and individuals totaling \$125,975. By 2008, the agency had an annual private fundraising goal of \$1.25 million and anticipates raising another \$1.25 million in donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals in 2009.

Capital IDEA also receives private sector support through formal agreements with several health care employers who pay a \$5,000-8,000 retention fee over 8 quarters after hiring a graduate who was supported by Capital IDEA.

In addition, the Capital IDEA/ACC partnership benefits from active and long-term collaboration with WIA-funded WorkSource Career Centers. WorkSource annually co-enrolls 70 Capital IDEA-supported students into WIA for the final 1 ½ years of training (enrolling 13-20 new co-enrollees each semester). These students qualify for Individual Training Accounts to pay for tuition, fees, books, gas cards worth \$200/month, uniforms, required tools, crisis payments for things like utilities or car repairs that would be a barrier to completing school, and sometimes childcare. The average total drawdown on an individual training account for these students is \$4,500—well within the maximum (\$7,000) and with good outcomes according to WorkSource.

CTE Project Contacts:

Ellen Wuertz (ACC)

Dazzie McKelvy (Capital IDEA)