



CTE Partnership Profile Template

Project Name:	Training Futures
Partner College(s):	Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA)
Partner Non-Profit:	Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS)
Target Industry:	Office Services/Administration, with a concentration in health care administration
Target Population:	Very diverse mix of low-income adults, representing a variety of immigrant populations in Northern Virginia as well as low-income native African American and white residents. Approximately 80% of the trainees were born outside of the United States. Most participants have a work history in very low-wage jobs. Many foreign born participants have participated in post-secondary education in their home country.

Project Innovations

- » “Imaginal” education model
- » Business model that leverages financial aid for college coursework, with revenues shared with the CBO via contract
- » Accent-reduction classes for non-native English speakers

Project Summary:

The NOVA-NVFS Training Futures Steps to Success partnership utilizes a training and business immersion approach to prepare low-income trainees for a variety of entry-level office jobs with career growth potential in the health care and business sectors. Training Futures was established in 1996 and since that time has served over 1,100 trainees.

Partner Organizations:

Northern Virginia Family Service is a non-profit organization established in 1924 to support individuals, families and communities. The organization provides a wide range of social services including Early Head Start, transitional housing, therapeutic foster care, employment training, health access, mental health counseling, homelessness prevention, and more. In 2006, Northern Virginia Family Service provided assistance to 24,000 clients.

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is the largest educational institution in Virginia and the second-largest community college in the United States. Located in the suburbs of Washington D.C., NOVA serves more than 70,000 students annually and

employs approximately 2,300 faculty and staff members. NOVA is also one of the most internationally diverse colleges in the United States, with a student body consisting of individuals from more than 180 countries.

Academic/Vocational Program:

Training Futures operates a 6-month training program in office procedures with a concentration in health care administration. Cycles run two times a year, and each cycle includes approximately 50 students. TF has adopted an “imaginal education” model, whereby it’s low-income and mostly immigrant trainees are encouraged to envision themselves as competent, confident and successful professionals. This approach building positive self-perceptions among the trainees is integrated into the curriculum in a variety of ways including hands-on classroom and workplace-based learning, peer support and case management, and the use of what Training Futures calls “quote bombardment.” At the beginning of each class session, students are given a motivational quote which works to influence the way they think about themselves and their futures.

A central component of Training Future’s imaginal education model is the immersion of students into a simulated business environment. Training is provided in a professional office atmosphere where timesheets, progressive discipline policies, performance reviews and dress codes are in place. TF rents space on the lower level of an office building that is otherwise occupied by Booz Allen Hamilton, a major international consulting firm. When students report for training, they walk into a polished office building located in the heart of Northern Virginia’s corporate business center. The curriculum also includes a three-week internship where students are able to build self-confidence by putting the skills they have learned to practice. Placement in internships is a major source of job placement for students. Staff estimates that about half of the students are placed in health-related administrative jobs, and the remainder in a variety of other administrative jobs in consulting firms, law offices and other office environments. Some placements are made through staffing agencies. Current placement wages average about \$14 per hour.

Upon completion of the program, students earn up to 17 credits at NOVA, but must pass the accuplacer exam for the credits to be activated. The accuplacer is administered toward the end of the Training Futures course of study.

Supportive Services:

All TF trainees receive a high level of personalized support while in the program including integrated basic skills training, counseling and peer support structures, and links to a wide range of support services offered by NVFS and other local providers. Students are organized into work groups with an assigned trainer acting as “supervisor.” Supervisor-trainers are intentional both in their efforts to teach and to motivate students to re-imagine their occupational opportunities and their abilities. In addition, there is a social worker who comes to offer private counseling sessions once a week. All students visit the organization’s clothing closet early on in the program to select clothing appropriate to TF’s professional environment. Professional speech pathologists provide weekly accent reduction classes to non-native English speakers. Additional support

services offered through NVFS and other agencies include housing, transportation, physical and mental health care, child care, food banks, financial counseling, and more.

Advanced Educational Pathway:

Because of the 17 NOVA college credits that they earn in the TF program, most Training Future graduates are eligible, if they take 3 additional courses (15 credits), to receive a Business Information Technology Certification (BIT) from Northern Virginia Community College. TF has been developing ways to facilitate completion of the additional courses by seeking opportunities to offer condensed night courses at its site.

Industry/Employer Engagement:

Originally, the Training Futures program was designed for general office administration occupations. The health care focus of the Training Futures program, which was added later, arose out of strategic planning that was conducted in 2004-2005 by an initiative of NOVA called HealthForce. HealthForce was a coalition of major regional health care systems that was convened to study industry labor gaps, diagnose the scale of workforce problems and propose courses of action. Among suggested solutions to the pipeline problem, the group recommended expansion of NOVA's medical campus and Training Future's health care program was developed as a part of the new pipeline.

Today employers support the Training Futures program by providing internship opportunities and by sending volunteers who participate on informational panels, help students in the computer lab, provide mock interviews, tutor/mentor students, and more. In total, TF engages 75-100 professional volunteers each year who collectively provide approximately 3,500 hours of volunteer time.

Notes on Funding Sources and Strategies:

Training Futures has an approximate annual budget of \$500,000. Funding for Training Futures is derived from a mix of individual contributions, foundation grants, government grants and contracts and program service fees. While Northern Virginia Family Service is the fiscal agent for the program, the college also makes an important financial investment in the program. Federal and state financial aid funds participants' tuition for the college credit courses within the program, and a portion of these revenues are transferred by NOVA to NVFS under a business agreement to help underwrite instruction and facility costs. Well maintained computer hardware and software, which is essential for training for administrative careers, is provided to the program by NOVA every couple of years when, by state mandate, it is required to update all on-campus computer equipment. Presently, NOVA and NVFS are working together to develop a plan for the creative use of work-study funds to support paid internships at the end of the training. Training Futures also benefits from renting space from Booz Allen Hamilton, one of the program's most active corporate partners, at a cost that is significantly below market rate.

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