

Training Futures

Case Study of a Nonprofit- Community College Partnership

Courses to Employment Demonstration Project

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Training Futures Program	5
Training Futures Participants	5
Participant Outcomes: The Success of Training Futures Students	7
Recruitment and Screening.....	7
Curriculum and the Imaginal Learning Approach to Training.....	8
Case Management and Supportive Services.....	10
Career Navigation and Job Placement.....	11
College Counseling Services: Continuing Training at NOVA After Training Futures	12
Employer Investment and Engagement.....	13
Training Futures Funding	13
The History and Evolution of the Training Futures Partnership	14
1996-2001: The Pre-Partnership Years	14
2002-2005: The Beginning of the Partnership, the Dual Enrollment Model, and the Move to Health Care	14
2006-2010: 17 Credits, a New MOU, and Revenue Sharing	16
Behind the Scenes: How the Training Futures Partnership Works	18
Getting Students Enrolled, Registered, and Applied for Financial Aid at NOVA: Key Staffing and Partnership Planning.....	19
Partners’ Roles and Responsibilities	23
Data Management and Participant Outcomes Tracking.....	25
Innovations and Lessons Learned from the Training Futures Partnership	25
Appendix A: Training Futures 25 Week Curriculum.....	27

Introduction

The Tysons Corner area, located just outside Washington, DC in Northern Virginia, is home to a maze of skyscrapers and professional office buildings. With more than 26.3 million square feet, the area has the largest concentration of professional office space in Virginia.¹ Booz-Allen Hamilton, USA Today, and Capital One are headquartered in Tysons Corner. Many other multinational corporations, including Northrop Grumman, Xerox and PricewaterhouseCoopers have large offices there as well. Sitting among these corporate giants is Training Futures, a training partnership between Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS). Training Futures is a six-month office administration program that prepares individuals for new careers and gets them started in work toward college certificates and degrees.

Twice per year, 94 percent of the approximately 50 students who enroll in Training Futures successfully complete the program. Eighty-five percent of graduates obtain jobs as administrative assistants, file clerks and other professional office occupations. And 84 percent of graduates earn 17 credit hours from Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA).²

Training Futures graduation ceremonies are emotional affairs as the accomplishments students have made come front and center. Training Futures students are all low-income, and many are immigrants to the United States. Prior to Training Futures, they were unemployed or underemployed in jobs such as cashiers and parking lot attendants. Most had never

Northern Virginia Family Service

Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) is a community-based organization headquartered in Falls Church, VA and founded in 1924. NVFS's mission is to empower individuals and families to improve their quality of life and to promote community cooperation and support in responding to family needs. In 1996, NVFS became the fiscal sponsor for Training Futures and remains so today. For more information about NVFS, please visit <http://www.nvfs.org>

Northern Virginia Community College

NOVA is the second-largest community college in the country and serves nearly 70,000 students each year. Students represent more than 180 different countries. NOVA has seven campuses and employs more than 2,300 faculty and staff.

¹ Area Business Report: Tyson's Corner. (March 2010). Fairfax County Economic Development Authority. Retrieved on June 10th, 2011 from http://www.fairfaxcountyeda.org/sites/default/files/publications/ABR_tysons.pdf

² All data related to Training Futures' participants provided in this profile come from the participant outcome data study of Training Futures' participants conducted by AspenWSI: Helmer, M. & Blair, A. (June 2011). *Courses to employment: Initial education and employment outcomes findings for community college-nonprofit partnership in Northern Virginia*. Available at <http://aspenwsi.org/publications/10-044.pdf>

attended college. The transformation these students make to skilled office professionals culminates at graduation as Training Futures' graduates mingle with high profile business professionals.

The transformational process that guides participants to reimagine their lives and career goals is carefully planned and choreographed by Training Futures staff, and results are perhaps clearest when a few graduates, who are selected by their peers, take the stage in front of hundreds of people to deliver commencement speeches. As they describe their stories of immigration to the U.S., their experiences with poverty, and their battles with confidence and self-esteem, it becomes clear that the graduate standing at the podium is not the same person he or she was six months previously. In the words of Training Futures graduate, "Before, it was like looking through binoculars. Now, I have a larger vision... I see new chances."

In this case study, we profile the Training Futures program and the partnership between NOVA and Northern Virginia Family Service that makes this program and its outcomes possible. We will share information about:

- Who the partnership serves through Training Futures, and the education and employment outcomes participants achieved
- Details about Training Futures' program design, including recruitment strategies, curriculum, training approach, services provided, employer involvement, and funding
- The history of how the partnership and program strategies developed and evolved
- How the partnership operates, including the roles and responsibilities of the partners, key staff members, planning processes, and data management
- Key innovations and lessons learned from the Training Futures partnership

Training Futures represents a clearly effective collaborative approach to helping low-income adults succeed in community college and the workforce. We hope this profile of the partnership will continue to build the knowledge of investors, practitioners, and policymakers about this growing field of collaborative practices that serves adult learners in our community colleges.

Courses to Employment Demonstration Project and Research Methodology

Summary

Courses to Employment (C2E) was a three-year demonstration (2008-2010), funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and designed to examine how partnerships between community colleges and nonprofit organizations can help low-income adults achieve greater success in post-secondary education and, ultimately, the workforce. Six community college-non-profit partnerships were selected competitively from a pool of 89 applicants in late 2007. C2E builds upon what has been learned through AspenWSI's broad body of research and evaluation that has identified the promise of sectoral approaches for improving low-income adults' employment outcomes. The Training Futures' partnership profiled in this publication

was one of the six community college-nonprofit partnerships investigated through C2E.

Research Questions and Research Methodology

Courses to Employment was designed to explore five key questions:

- What services do partnerships provide to adult learners?
- What roles, responsibilities, tasks and services are done by colleges? By nonprofits?
- How do partnerships finance and support their work? What do these strategies cost?
- What are the education, employment and earnings outcomes of participants served by these strategies?
- Can these strategies achieve greater “scale” in addressing community-wide needs?

To explore these questions, AspenWSI conducted formative evaluation activities as well as participant outcome assessments for each site. The six partnerships selected for the project were engaged in research activities designed to promote learning throughout the demonstration, and to provide information to the larger workforce development, education, funding and policy communities.

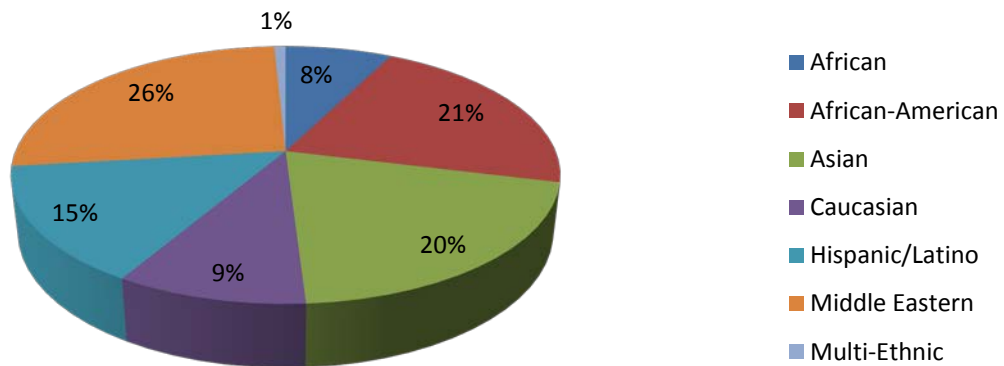
These activities included peer learning meetings where leaders from the six partnerships came to share information with AspenWSI about their evolving partnerships and strategies. These meetings also provided opportunities for the leaders to network with one another and share ideas and promising practices. AspenWSI also conducted annual site visits to each of the partnership sites to interview program staff and leaders, employers, leaders from other partnering organizations, students, and representatives from the public workforce system. Throughout the project, partnerships shared documents with AspenWSI including budgets, memorandums of understanding, job descriptions, and other materials relevant to the partnership. Finally, AspenWSI worked with each partnership to design a participant outcome assessment on students who were served by the partnership. The outcome assessments explore participants’ educational and employment experiences pre- and post-training. The information compiled in this profile is the cumulative result of all of these learning activities. To see more data on the education and employment outcomes of Training Futures’ participants, please visit <http://aspenwsi.org/publicationdetailsdb.asp?pid=44>

The Training Futures Program

Training Futures Participants

Participants in Training Futures represent a diverse set of backgrounds and cultures. Most participants are recent immigrants to the U.S., and 74 percent of participants are non-native English speakers. Participants who enrolled during the course of the C2E study spoke over 30 different native languages. As shown in the chart below, three different ethnic groups accounted for at least 20 percent each of participants—Middle Eastern, African-American, and Asian.

Ethnicity of Training Futures' Participants 2007-2010



Three out of four Training Futures participants are women. Participants have a median age of 38 years. This is much older than the typical community college student, whose median age is 23.³

Almost 50 percent of participants had attended some college prior to Training Futures. But most of this was at colleges located outside of the U.S. Only 27 percent of participants had attended college in the U.S. And only 14 percent had earned a certificate or degree in a U.S. post-secondary institution. At the time of enrollment, about half of participants were employed, earning a median of \$10.29 per hour and working a median of 30 hours per week. 79 percent of participants lived in households with incomes less than 125 percent of the poverty line. The cost of living in Northern Virginia is among the highest in the U.S., and this represents extreme income disadvantage.

³ NCES. (2009). 2007–08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) [AACC analysis]. Retrieved online on June 22, 2011 from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfacts.aspx>

Participant Outcomes: The Success of Training Futures Students

Completion and Credits Earned	93.7% of students completed the six month program.
	84.2% of students earned college credit for completing Training Futures.
	Students receiving credit earned a median of 17 college credits.
Employment and Earnings	84.4% of graduates obtained jobs after graduation. Graduates took a median of one month to find a job following graduation.
	In their initial job after Training Futures, graduates worked a median of 40 hours and earned a median of \$13.31 per hour. This is an increase of \$3.02 per hour and 10 hours per week for those who were working at enrollment.
	The most common job title for Training Futures graduates was administrative assistant. ??? When participants enrolled in the program, their most common job title was cashier.
Continuing Education*	30.4% of Training Futures graduates enrolled in additional non-credit or for-credit coursework at NOVA after completing Training Futures. Only 14.3% of these students had previously attended NOVA.
	Students who continued on enrolled for a median of one additional semester, enrolled in and completed a median of two courses, and attempted and earned a median of three college credits subsequent to completing Training Futures (during the C2E data study period).
	Students most commonly enrolled in English as a Second Language, English, Information Technology/Computer, Business, and Accounting classes. Students have successfully completed 76.3% of the coursework they enrolled in post-Training Futures.

** Courses to Employment followed students who enrolled in Training Futures between the fall of 2007 and spring of 2010, and followed students' progress up until the end of 2010. As a result, findings on students' continuing education outcomes are somewhat limited in that follow-up on these outcomes was limited to a relatively short-time frame, particularly for students who enrolled in 2009 and 2010.*

Recruitment and Screening

Participants in Training Futures are recruited from throughout Northern Virginia. Referrals from partnering organizations, social service agencies, and community based ESL programs are common, as are referrals via word-of-mouth. In order to be accepted into the program, applicants must take the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) and demonstrate at least a

seventh grade level in reading comprehension and mathematics. Participants are also evaluated on their writing skills. They are required to write an essay explaining their qualifications and desire to participate in the program. Applicants must have some prior employment experience and demonstrate a level of stability in their life. Participants in crisis are referred and linked to additional services as needed, but they are not allowed to participate in the program until their life situation is more stable. While Training Futures will accept individuals with a number of different barriers, applicants must demonstrate their willingness and ability to address those barriers. For example, prior to enrollment, participants must show that they can support themselves financially while in the program. Participants with children must also have child care arranged or be eligible to receive public child care assistance. Many Training Futures applicants are referred to other Northern Virginia training and employment resources so they can improve their skills before testing again or find other programs that help them find jobs.

“What brought me here was that you can get college credits and they would help you find a job and help you build a resume and a cover letter. A lot of colleges will not do that. You get your credits, you graduate, out the door you go.” --Training Futures Graduate

Curriculum and the Imaginal Learning Approach to Training

Training Futures provides six months of job training in office procedures with a concentration in health care administration twice a year to a total of approximately 100 students. The cornerstone of Training Futures lies in the imaginal education model the program uses, which is based on the work on transformational learning by Kenneth Boulding.⁴ In this model, crafted by the Institute for Cultural Affairs and used also by Training, Inc., training focuses on the whole person. Participants learn life and work skills in tandem with one another. For example, Training Futures students not only receive training in office procedures, but also must complete timesheets, participate in performance reviews, follow a professional office dress code, and adhere to discipline policies around behavior, attendance and punctuality. The adapted model Training Futures created immerses participants into a simulated business environment. Training Futures has always been located in a professional office building, and students are exposed to and interact with office workers during the course of coming and going to school.

This setting is a crucial aspect of the Training Futures imaginal learning model because participants breathe and study in this professional and corporate atmosphere on a daily basis. As trainees progress through training, they are constantly reminded of the environment and career they are training for. In the building where Training Futures is located, participants mingle with professionals in the elevator and get a taste of what their future job setting will be like. Working professionals from many local corporations and businesses mentor Training Futures’ participants through e-mail and in-person as they go through training and launch their new careers. Through its employer relationships, Training Futures arranges three-week

⁴ cite

internships for all trainees. These internships help give participants a taste for their new career and are also a major source of job placements for students.

To support this imaginal learning model, Training Futures employs staff who implement a “high-touch” model where instructors also serve as counselors and training supervisors. Trainees are assigned to a Training Futures staff person who acts as their coach and supervisor. Sometimes this almost becomes counseling and case management. Due to the time this takes, Training Futures provides an on-site case manager once a week. Groups of students who are assigned to the same supervisor hold weekly, 40-minute meetings with the supervisor each Friday. During these meetings, participants review the week, discuss challenges they faced, highlight accomplishments they achieved, discuss a motivational reading they were assigned, and collaboratively “name the week” based on a theme they saw or a notable moment they experienced.

Participants also meet individually with their supervisor at least twice during the cycle. At the first of these individual meetings, which typically occurs in week three or four of the program, supervisors provide Introductory feedback, discuss employability factors and help participants set personal achievement goals for the rest of the program. The bonds that staff members form with

“I love the atmosphere. I’ve been through other training things, through... other jobs. And this one here is very supportive. And it makes learning so much easier. You don’t feel threatened or criticized and you just go at your own pace. And it gives you better belief in yourself. And it just... it helps you see life. It just makes you see like there’s a light down at the end of that tunnel when I get there. And it’s very bright. And it’s just like every day I wake up and it’s like I can’t wait to get here.” --Training Futures participant describing the training environment

participants are highly personal—although a high level of professionalism is maintained.

In the classroom, participants build skills in typing, computers, filing, customer service, business math, and medical terminology. A great deal of priority is placed on development of communication skills and participants also benefit from a range of professional development activities. For instance, students participate in Speaking Club, based on Toastmasters, where they hone their public speaking skills and build confidence in their communication and language capabilities. Since many participants are non-native English speakers, the program also offers two hour-long Accent Reduction Workshops twice per week provided by volunteer speech pathologists.

Training Futures Classes

<u>NOVA Course</u>	<u>TF Description</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Student Development Orientation 100	College Success Skills	1 credit
Administrative Support Technology 206	Professional development	3 credits
Administrative Support Technology 130	Office Procedures	3 credits
Business 226	Computer Applications	3 credits
Administrative Support Technology 101	Keyboarding I	3 credits
Administrative Support Technology 137	Records Management	3 credits
Health 141	Medical terminology	1 credit

Equally important to the simulated business environment of the imaginal learning approach is Training Futures' focus on rebuilding participants' self-perceptions and self-esteem. According to AspenWSI's analysis of participants who enrolled between fall 2007 and spring 2010, nearly 80 percent of Training Futures' students had incomes below 125 percent of the poverty line; 64 percent were non-native English speakers; and the median age was 38. Only slightly more than half of participants were employed when they enrolled with Training Futures, and many were employed in jobs such as cashiers. Training Futures is designed to help participants to re-envision their life and career goals and see themselves as confident and highly skilled professionals. Motivational quotes play a huge role in helping participants to think positively and set their eyes on the future. At the beginning of each class, the instructor writes a quote on the blackboard and the participants analyze the quote and discuss what it means to their personal lives. During the course of training, participants are exposed to over 500 quotes, a

“And that’s what was so wonderful about this program. These are issues that people every day deal with for jobs. What am I going to do about day care? What am I going to do about this, that and the other? And they help you deal with your crises here and identify areas that could be a potential crisis for you later. And that was very insightful for many of us.” --Training Futures Graduate

process Training Futures calls “Quotes Bombardment.”

As part of this self-reflection and self-assessment process, participants also take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This assessment and the “Quotes Bombardment” are used to help participants develop a life

philosophy they can continue to reflect on and modify as they begin their new professions.

Case Management and Supportive Services

The supervisor the participant is assigned is the first go-to-person for supportive service needs. During intake, participants sign an agreement to come to their supervisor with any issues that may interfere with their success in the program. Supervisors, during individual and group meeting with participants, also try to help participants self-identify barriers to their own success. This process is designed to help participants develop the capacity to regularly evaluate their life situation so they can plan for work and school appropriately. Students' attendance is also carefully monitored because staff know that absence usually signals another issue or barrier.

Training Futures participants receive a variety of supportive services while in training. At the beginning of training, staff members help participants create carpools to meet transportation needs. Early on, participants also receive a professional office wardrobe through a volunteer-run clothing closet and partnering nonprofits. Students are required to dress professionally throughout their training, learn about (written or unwritten) dress codes, and are prepared for job interviews, networking events and their new jobs.

To help overcome barriers outside of the classroom, Training Futures employs a part-time social worker who is available to meet with students on an as-needed basis. The social worker and other staff help refer participants to other social service organizations for additional support services that many participants continue to receive during training. Training Futures staff members also prepare a weekly memo for participants sharing community resources that are available to them. On occasion, Training Futures will host service fairs where social support service providers from the surrounding community will come to talk to participants about services available in the community. To promote financial literacy, Capital One visits the class once per cycle to talk to students about skills such as developing and keeping a budget, checking their own credit status, and opening a checking account.

Training Futures and NVFS also help participants in emergency situations with resources such as gas cards, groceries, etc. And they advocate on behalf of participants working to establish eligibility for public services such as childcare assistance in the form of provider payment vouchers. Among other services offered by NVFS are Early Head Start pre-school, transitional housing, therapeutic foster care, health access, mental health counseling, financial counseling, and homelessness prevention.

Career Navigation and Job Placement

Participants in Training Futures come with a variety of work and educational experiences. Some have previous office experience and qualify for employment as an administrative assistant when they finish Training Futures. But many have no office experience and must enter the occupation through a more entry-level job such as file clerk, data entry, receptionist or accounts payable clerk in order to build experience. Training Futures employs two workforce development specialists, who also serve as training supervisors and instructors, to help participants figure out their career path and entry point into the industry.

From the moment a participant enters Training Futures, employment is the clear and stated goal. The training supervisors work directly with participants during the training process to develop resumes, practice interviewing skills, obtain internships, and search for jobs. As noted earlier, supervisors help participants identify issues that may affect their employability and help participants develop solutions to address those issues. These solutions often involve helping participants learn how to network, market their skills, develop personal sales pitches, demonstrate professional dress and behavior, and to show enthusiasm, confidence, and motivation. Participants' internships are often instrumental in allowing participants to develop this set of skills and capacities.

Training supervisors also work with students on wide-ranging job searches. Newspapers are scanned, websites are queried, cold calls are made, informational interviews are scheduled, existing employer relationships are leveraged, job fairs are attended, elevator pitches are given and Training Futures' alumni are engaged. The staff also work together to refer graduates to new businesses and employers who have not previously hired from Training Futures.

During the job search process, participants' employment status is regularly updated in Training Futures Management Information Systems. Each week, staff members meet to review who is working and who is unemployed so they can develop job placement strategies for those who are still looking for work. Workforce development specialists hold a Graduate Lab once a week for graduates who are not employed. The Graduate Lab is staffed by volunteers who help unemployed graduates with the job search process, which includes helping them stay motivated and encouraged. Staff members also lead a job club to share tips, ideas, and information about job openings. While employment is the primary goal in Training Futures, more and more Training Futures participants are also attending college after they finish the program.

College Counseling Services: Continuing Training at NOVA after Training Futures

For a growing number of Training Futures' students, Training Futures is a stepping stone to additional education at NOVA. Special college counselors from NOVA deliver workshops, provide individualized counseling, and assist current and past Training Futures students in making the transition from Training Futures to additional coursework at NOVA. During the workshops, counselors discuss standard U.S. education pathways (from certificates through doctoral programs), explain different types of financial aid and eligibility, assist students in understanding how to leverage prior coursework (from native countries and U.S. institutions), and provide general career counseling. Counselors also assist participants with their financial aid re-applications for the upcoming school year. After the workshops, counselors maintain regular contact with the students and assume the role of a case manager to help participants identify and address any barriers they may have that threaten their ability to continue at NOVA and achieve their academic goals.

Inspired by the initial success of the additional counseling NOVA provided to Training Futures' students, NOVA launched the Adult Career Pathways (ACP) for unemployed or underemployed workers, low-wage workers, work-eligible immigrants with strong English skills, and young career starters with a high school degree or GED in January 2011. The program works to connect low-income adults in the area with NOVA career counselors/coaches who assist the students with developing an education plan to earn a college degree, certification, or other credential.

Employer Investment and Engagement

Local employers play a variety of supportive roles for Training Futures not least of which is providing input on curriculum design. Healthforce, a coalition of health care industry employers and stakeholders coordinated by NOVA, helped update the curriculum to be more healthcare employment-focused. Employer input is sought regularly as Training Futures continually updates the program to include changing technologies and software being used in professional office settings.

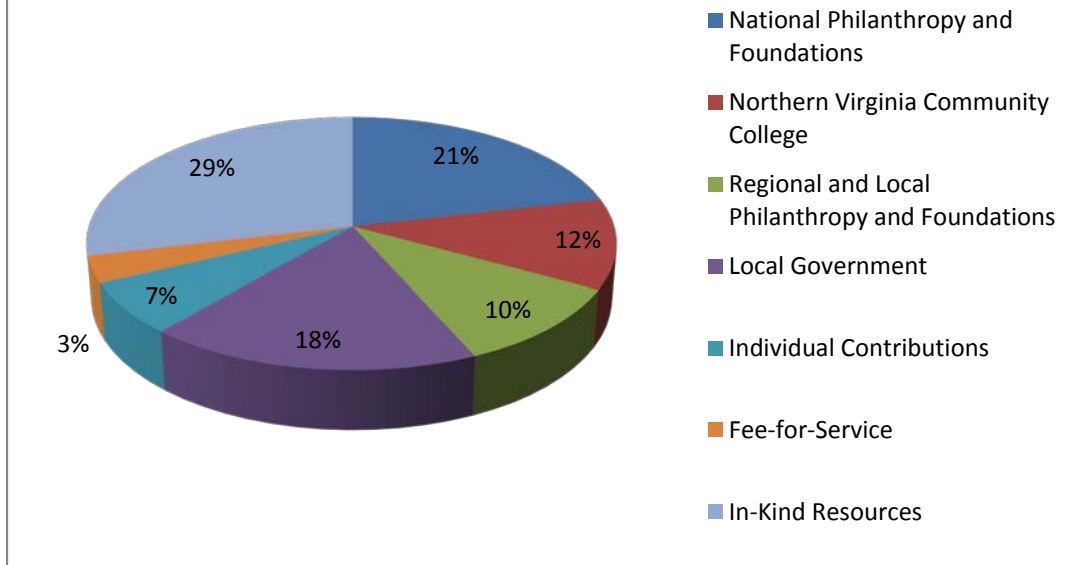
Local employers support Training Futures in many ways. They provide hundreds of internships, participate in job fairs, and hire graduates. Nearly 100 professional volunteers visit the TF classroom to share their expertise every year and contribute approximately 3,500 hours of volunteer time annually. Business professionals serve as guest presenters conduct mock interviews, and mentor trainees. Businesses representatives also attend Training Futures' graduation ceremonies. Employers we spoke with described the value of Training Futures' graduates in their workplace. They specifically praised their professionalism, lower attrition rates than individuals they hire from other sources, quality of their work, loyalty, and bilingualism.

To foster these close employer and business relationships, Training Futures maintains a consistent level of personal one-on-one engagement with their employer partners, which typically are employees in different companies' human resources departments. They send personalized thank you letters, involve employers in the highly evocative graduation ceremonies, and have graduates call employers and send cards to personally thank them for their help. Staff members record data about employers in TF's database to help track and improve their contact with employers. While all Training Futures' staff members are involved in job development and in building employer relationships, the program also employs a Business Developer. This person focuses on job placement with existing partners and helps to build additional employer relationships through cold-calling, informational interviews, and by joining service organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, etc. Although NOVA has several employer advisory committees, the vast majority of employer engagement for Training Futures is currently done by Training Futures staff.

Training Futures Funding

Similar to other nonprofit-community college partnerships, Training Futures blends multiple funding streams to operate the training program and provide the range of supports participants need to be successful. In 2010, Training Futures used a mix of corporate, individual, government, and philanthropic donations and grants to fund the training program. Training Futures typically operates on a budget of about \$500,000 per year though the program also often leverages additional resources of over \$200,000 annually through in-kind support including volunteer time, reduced office space rental, donated computer equipment, and donated clothing for their participants. The budget below shows the percentage of Training Futures' revenues by funding source including in-kind support.

Training Futures 2010 Revenues by Funding Source



The History and Evolution of the Training Futures Partnership

Training Futures, like many partnerships, started small and grew over time. The partners employed a lot of trial and error, experimented with different models, built additional capacities and obtained more resources to better serve their participants' needs. In this section, we take you step-by-step through the history of the partnership and how it grew to be where it is today.

1996-2001: Pre-Partnership Years

In 1996, Training Futures moved into Tysons Corner when Ms. Susan Craver and Ms. Marla Burton founded the program in cooperation with Northern Virginia Family Service. For the first six years, Training Futures was solely a project of Northern Virginia Family Service.

2002-2005: Beginning of the Partnership, Dual Enrollment Model, and Move to Health Care

After several successful years of operation in which hundreds of graduates were placed in jobs in professional offices, a 2002 Northern Virginia Family Service survey of Training Futures graduates found that nearly 90 percent of graduates were interested in going to college, but less than 15 percent had completed any college coursework. The timing of the survey could not have been better. During the same year, Mr. Bill Browning, a staff member of Training Futures, left to join Northern Virginia Community College, while Dr. Robert Templin, a supporter of Training Futures and colleague of Mr. Browning with a strong interest in building nonprofit-community college partnerships, became President of NOVA.

The partnership between Training Futures, NFVS and NOVA quickly accelerated in 2002. Leaders from each of the institutions quickly coalesced around a common goal of helping unemployed and underemployed residents of Northern Virginia improve their lives through education and training. Under the leadership and work of Dr. Templin and Mr. Browning at NOVA, and Ms. Craver and Ms. Burton at Training Futures, NOVA launched the partnership as a college pilot project in 2002 and 2003. To get the project off the ground, NOVA faculty first evaluated the Training Futures curriculum. The evaluators found that two Training Futures courses, Keyboarding and Introduction to Computers, corresponded to NOVA for-credit courses. The college approved Advanced Standing for these two courses, which enabled Training Futures graduates to earn six NOVA transfer credits upon acceptance at NOVA. Another credit in 2003 was added (for a total of seven) when NOVA exclusively offered Training Futures trainees a special section of a one-credit college orientation course.

Training Futures' graduates received the special surprise of these credits at their graduation ceremony in 2003. At the graduation ceremony, Dr. Templin, President of Northern Virginia Community College, gave the keynote speech. On the tables in front of the graduates, Dr. Templin had placed a letter of acceptance to Northern Virginia Community College that included seven credits of advanced standing they earned through the Training Futures program. He announced to the graduates, "You are now admitted to NOVA, and not only that, by completing Training Futures you've earned seven college credits." This graduation ceremony, and the awarding of credits to Training Futures graduates, was an important milestone in the partnership.

During these initial stages of the collaboration, the partners encountered a few challenges. Where would the training be held now that NOVA was involved? Who would teach the courses? How would the curriculum change? The answers to these questions became key to maintaining the uniqueness and effectiveness of the Training Futures' model, which, as described previously, uses an "imaginal learning" approach in which the professional office environment the participants are training to be employed in is carefully and deliberately simulated. To maintain this model, what Dr. Templin refers to as Training Futures' "special sauce", the partners agreed that the program would remain off-campus in a simulated business environment and that Training Futures instructors would continue to teach the courses and have control over the curriculum. However, Training Futures participants would be co-enrolled and receive support from both institutions. NOVA's state-approved dual-enrollment contracts with high schools served as a template and model for this new agreement with Training Futures.

As the partners began to formalize some aspects of their collaboration and the dual enrollment approach, they officially launched their collaboration known as the "Steps to Success" partnership in 2003. The launch involved all partners signing a letter of intent to work together and laid out a set of three-year objectives the partners hoped to accomplish from 2003 to 2006. The "Steps to Success" vision is seen in the diagram below:

Steps to Success Model

		Step 5	Continuing Education & Career Advancement
		Step 4	New Career-Track Jobs
	Step 3	Comprehensive Job Training with College Credit	
	Step 2	Foundation Literacy Skills/ESL	
Step 1	Outreach into Low-Income Communities		

The partnership steps were designed to be a pathway for low-income Northern Virginians that bridges them from Training Futures to quality jobs with ongoing career and educational advancement opportunities. From 2003 through 2005, the partners built on this basic framework and vision to deepen their collaborative work together and expand services to Training Futures graduates including:

- In Fall 2003, NOVA began offering four evening courses at Training Futures’ training site after a survey of graduates revealed they were more likely to enroll for additional training at NOVA if courses were offered at a familiar location. These four courses could be combined with credits earned from Training Futures to help graduates earn a Business Technology Certificate.
- Partners redesigned the curriculum to focus more on the health care sector in response to industry demand for administrators. The new focus was the result of labor market information derived from Healthforce, a coalition of health care industry employers and stakeholders. NOVA coordinates Healthforce, which in 2005 found a critical shortage of health care administrative professionals. NVFS subsequently conducted a needs assessment, including approximately 20 meetings with health care employers, to determine the entry-level job requirements for health care administrative positions. The new curriculum, with support from NOVA’s Medical and Alexandria campuses, included NOVA-delivered coursework on Medical Terminology and was designed to help Training Futures’ graduates access entry-level health care administrative opportunities.
- Partners created an ESL course contextualized around the health care industry to help participants denied entry into Training Futures because of limited language skills to gain the language proficiency they needed to re-apply for Training Futures in the next cycle. The course was eventually ceased and funds were pooled into a scholarship fund for Training Futures participants. In 2011, relaunched the ESL onramp for applicants who were not admitted into Training Futures because their English language skills fell below the 7th grade (TABE test).

After re-designing the curriculum, Training Futures re-launched in 2005 with a focus on administrative occupations in the health care sector. After the re-launch, the partners continued to advance their collaboration.

2006-2010: 17 Credits, a New MOU, and Revenue-Sharing

2006 became a monumental year for the Training Futures’ partners as they re-evaluated their collaboration. In the summer of that year, Ms. Jennie Graves, then Interim Provost of NOVA,

championed a faculty-led review of the entire Training Futures' curriculum. The review concluded that three additional Training Futures' courses, Office Procedures, Records Management, and Professional Development, could with a little revision, be aligned with courses in NOVA's catalog. The partnership made the revisions and NOVA granted advanced standing to these additional courses thereby qualifying Training Futures' graduates for 17 credits at NOVA, which eligible graduates who pass the Accuplacer for college enrollment continue to earn today. The courses students complete in Training Futures put them on a path toward a Business Information Technology Certificate at NOVA. Typically, students must complete another 15 credits, or one semester of full-time coursework to earn this certificate.

In order for the Training Futures classes to be accredited, the classes must be taught by NOVA instructors. To overcome this challenge, the partnership in mid-2006 began streamlining a process for Training Futures' instructors, hired and paid by nonprofit NVFS, to become approved college adjunct faculty. This process, that some described as arduous, includes gaining approval by NOVA's Provost, the Acting Dean, and human resources. Instructors must then also be entered into the college's payroll system, though payment comes from NVFS.

As 2006 progressed, and the Fall semester approached, the leaders of NVFS, NOVA, and Training Futures came together to formalize many aspects of their partnership. Though the partnership had previously operated under a Memorandum of Understanding, the previous agreement was fairly limited. Under the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding, agreements were reached on faculty, class schedules, student applications, enrollment processes, financial aid applications, tuition, and training space. The agreement, most of which is in effect today, is summarized in the table in the next section of this case study.

In 2007, the first group of Training Futures' students earned 17 credits for completion of the program. At around the same time, however, the economic recession began. Hiring freezes at hospitals and office buildings quickly impacted the partnership and the pace of job placements slowed. As the recession deepened, Training Futures launched an "all hands-on deck" approach to job placement. All staff began reaching out to employers to build the Training Futures brand and employer network. As seen later in the outcomes section, Training Futures was able to maintain consistently high placement rates even during the height of the economic recession.

Beginning in 2009, the partnership implemented a revenue-sharing model. Under this model, NOVA shares 85 percent of tuition revenue minus fees collected for students' coursework with Training Futures. Current tuition rates for in-state students are \$128.65 per credit hour and fee rates are \$9.10 per credit hour (though revenues from fees are not shared). Assuming a Training Futures participant enrolls in seventeen credit hours and receives financial aid to cover his/her tuition, Training Futures will receive \$1,858.99. However, many students receive only enough financial aid to pay for seven credits, and for those students who are not eligible for financial aid, Training Futures often pays the fees and tuition through scholarships. Additional deductions are made for payments to Training Futures for faculty paid by NOVA who teach coursework in Training Futures.

In 2010, the partnership once again tried some new approaches and offered additional services. First, Training Futures applied for and the partnership received a grant from the Community Foundation for the North Capitol Region to provide, in conjunction with NOVA Medical Campus, scholarships for 12 Training Futures graduates to continue their training toward a certificate in phlebotomy. Training Futures coursework fulfilled two pre-requisites for this certificate. Second, the partnership became increasingly aware that many more students than initially anticipated wanted to continue their education at NOVA after Training Futures. However, these students sometimes found this transition difficult. In response, NOVA launched the Special Counseling Project. Two college counselors were hired to make this transition more seamless. The counselors, on NOVA's payroll, reached out to past and current Training Futures' participants to help them address barriers to continuing their educations at NOVA. NOVA also began offering at least one course per semester, Business 101 (Introduction to Business) at the Training Futures location in order to promote continuing education by graduates, and to ease their transition into NOVA campus-based courses.

NOVA, NVFS and Training Futures have now been involved in partnership for nearly a decade. As Mr. Browning often puts it, "We went from flirting, to dating, to being engaged, and now we're married." But, how does this marriage work in practice? In the next section, we go behind-the-scenes to see some of what leaders and staff from the partnering institutions do to make the collaboration work seamlessly for the participants they serve.

Behind the Scenes: How the Training Futures Partnership Works

Making any partnership work requires trust, planning, compromise, and a willingness to do what is needed to achieve the mission of the partnership. Partnerships across institution types, such as community colleges and nonprofits, can be particularly challenging as cultures, work-styles, and personalities differ. Merging and/or aligning timelines and administrative processes require a lot of planning and organization as well. Training Futures was never an exception to these challenges. To make the partnership work, a lot of work goes into making sure a wide-variety of participants' academic and non-academic needs are met. Part of this work includes making the college system and bureaucracy more flexible and responsive to the needs of adult learners. Balancing the need to follow the rules imposed on the college system while maintaining the character, values and effective program characteristics of the Training Futures model, can be challenging.

"The college must operate under uncompromising state, accreditation and federal rules. A lot of work goes into figuring out how to stay within the regulatory framework without tampering with Training Futures' secret sauce." --Dr. Templin, President of NOVA

From the college's perspective, almost everything Training Futures does is non-standard. For example, Training Futures training schedule differs each year and is never aligned with the

college calendar. But both partners agree that the way in which the curriculum is organized in terms of timing is one of the things that makes it effective.

Commitment to serving Training Futures participants and meeting their needs has been the guiding compass for this partnership, so issues such as these are discussed and resolved in a way that promotes effectiveness of the Training Futures program. This commitment is deeply rooted in the leadership at all of the partnering institutions and is essential to making the collaboration work. Dr. Templin, Mr. Browning, Ms. Craver, Ms. Burton, and Program Manager at Northern Virginia Family Service, Ms. Sharon LeGrande make-up a cross-institutional team of leaders. The close involvement and strong buy-in of these leaders from NOVA, Training Futures, and NVFS is often pivotal to ensuring the collaboration continues to grow and develop. Together, leaders at these institutions are able to promote the vision of the partnership to stakeholders inside and outside of their organizations, and can enable staff on-the-ground to act and carry-out activities to ensure the partnership is working for students and is continuously improving.

As we saw in the history of the partnership, the partners continually evaluate participant needs and challenges, and then figure out who will address those issues and how they will do so. The strategies the partners have used and the roles and responsibilities they assign themselves have over time been worked into memoranda of understanding, and a joint planning tool the partnership uses to organize the wide variety of tasks they must accomplish together. In addition, the processes and work-arounds they have developed to better serve Training Futures participants have catalyzed a culture and working style not entirely the college's nor entirely the nonprofit's, but uniquely Training Futures'.

In this section, we begin by highlighting a few staff members who are key to making the collaboration work and give an example of the behind-the-scenes registration and enrollment processes that take place to help Training Futures' participants avoid common college traps in registration and financial aid. Next, we briefly explain a tool the partners use to plan their work together. We then detail some of the roles and responsibilities the partners assume with information taken from their current Memorandum of Understanding and end this section with a discussion how the partnership manages and tracks participant data.

Getting Students Enrolled and Registered, Applying for Financial Aid at NOVA: Key Staffing and Partnership Planning

In this section, we focus on key staff who are responsible for the administrative procedures that must occur for Training Futures to happen. In particular, we discuss how participants in Training Futures are transitioned into the community college system through enrollment, registration and financial aid applications, and how staff at NOVA and Training Futures work to make this happen. Other key staff roles, such as instructors and case managers, were described in previous sections.

A lot of troubleshooting is done by NOVA and Training Futures staff members to ensure that the program and the participants are meeting state and college regulations and requirements.

For example, because Training Futures is a six month program and operates on a schedule that is different from the regular college semester schedule, many registration forms, grade reports, and other processes had to be re-designed for the unique needs of the program. NOVA’s President, Dr. Templin, refers to the NOVA staff who play these crucial functions as “Boundary Crossers.” These “Boundary Crossers” such as the College Liaison, work with numerous staff members at the college and Training Futures on enrollment, registration and financial aid applications.

Key Staff in the Training Futures Partnership		
Job Title	Institution	Key Role
College Liaison	NOVA	Serves as Training Futures’ one point of contact at NOVA. Helps participants with financial aid and registration.
Administrative Assistant in the Business Technologies Division	NOVA	Works with Liaison and the Financial Aid Office to register students and troubleshoot financial aid and enrollment issues. Helps Training Futures’ instructors go through process to become adjunct faculty.
Central Financial Aid Director	NOVA	Helps get financial aid applications processed and registration holds removed. Places “do not drop” on participants’ records.
College Counselors	NOVA	Provides intensive one-on-one college and career counseling to students continuing on at NOVA after Training Futures.
Business Developer	Training Futures/NVFS	Oversees employer and industry relationships and engagement strategies for Training Futures.
Training Supervisors	Training Futures/NVFS	Provides case management, instruction, and job search and placement assistance to students. Works with College Liaison on issues related to college registration.

The complexities of dealing with bureaucracies and administrative issues across two institutions are many. Enrolling participants in not one, but two very different types of organizations is challenging. For adult learners, and immigrants especially, enrolling in college and applying for financial aid present many challenges that can lead to prospective students simply walking away from campus—without ever having stepped foot in a classroom. Together, staff from

both institutions have resolved a variety of issues related to registration and financial aid. For example, many students in Training Futures are foreign born. Many are the first in their family to attend college. For non-U.S. citizens, U.S. citizens who have never attended college, and citizens or non-citizens who previously attended college outside the U.S., the federal financial aid application (FASFA) form and process is often difficult and unfamiliar. Many participants are confused or intimidated by formal (and bureaucratic) FAFSA correspondence. To address these issues, participants in Training Futures complete practice FASFA forms and then complete official forms with the assistance of the College Liaison from NOVA. The Liaison works with students throughout the registration and financial aid application process to address any issues that arise. A common issue they provide assistance with is obtaining missing documentation of a variety of types. The Liaison also receives reports on students' financial aid packages and can, as a result, approach and help counsel participants individually on their financial aid packages instead of sending them computer-generated correspondence (which is the norm).

Participants in Training Futures who have previously attempted coursework at NOVA might have registration holds on their NOVA accounts. Holds can be due to a grade point average below 2.0, an outstanding balance owed to some department within NOVA, or student loans in default status. To prevent these students from being dropped, the Central Financial Aid Director at NOVA places a "do not drop" indicator on their student record until the issue can be resolved. In the diagram below, we show how a participant is enrolled in NOVA via Training Futures and detail the roles specific staff members such as the College Liaison play to make the registration, financial aid, and enrollment processes work for Training Futures' participants.

Registration and Enrollment Process for Training Futures Participants



Processes such as the one seen above, while cumbersome and arduous to plan for and implement, are crucial to helping Training Futures’ participants avoid some of the administrative and bureaucratic pitfalls that can occur during registration, enrollment, and the financial aid application process. Over-time the partnership developed a planning or project management tool that helps them keep track of the different activities and responsibilities the institutions and individuals assume to ensure students avoid these traps.

Partners use the planning tool to help set performance measurement outcomes, to outline roles and responsibilities, and to set deadlines and timelines for actions to occur. Partners plan for activities such as recruitment, registration and enrollment, financial aid applications, assessment, instruction, faculty certification, grade reports, revenue sharing, and the awarding of credits to students’ transcripts. The table below shows what information the partners

outline for each task and provides some examples of the tasks and activities the partners for together. Processes such as these, which the partners developed to integrate the program into the college, are now described in the partners' formal agreement.

Examples from Partners' Planning Tool			
Major Joint Activities and Action Steps	Target Date for Completion	Institutional Lead Accountability	Individual Accountabilities/Notes
Class recruitment		Training Futures	Training Futures Staff
Assist students with NOVA admissions		NOVA	College Liaison
Hold Financial Aid Workshops at Training Futures, help students complete FASFA online		NOVA	College Liaison
Enroll students in classes		NOVA	Administrative Assistant at Business Technologies Division
Place "do not drop" (DND) order for all students in computer system		NOVA	Central Financial Aid Director

Partners' Roles and Responsibilities

The partners in Training Futures developed their roles and responsibilities during the course of their relationship. As they came to better understand participants' changing needs, they often responded by adding another service or by implementing another strategy. Moreover, as their knowledge of each other's institutions and the corresponding strengths and weaknesses grew, roles were assigned to the institution that held the strongest capacity to assume that responsibility. The roles, responsibilities and processes described below represent the partnership's arrangements as of 2011.

Partners' Roles and Responsibilities	
Task	Detailed Processes and Strategies for Serving Training Futures Participants
Application, Enrollment and Registration of Students	<p>Training Futures' students fill out applications to NOVA in a proctored setting typically off-campus at a Training Futures' facility. Training Futures' staff submits the applications to a NOVA liaison in the Business Technologies Department. The liaison manages and oversees the enrollment of Training Futures' students into the appropriate classes. The NOVA liaison also troubleshoots problems with students' registration with other NOVA staff including problems with residency certification, financial aid, and student holds.</p> <p>Participants in Training Futures take the Accuplacer at the end of the program to allow them time to brush up on basic skills and test taking</p>

	strategies. This process was implemented because college applicants who fail the exam must take a very expensive 5-credit ESOL course, for which financial aid is not available, or take a course offered by a CBO and retake the exam within 6 months.
Students' Financial Aid Applications	Students apply for financial aid with guidance from Training Futures staff. Before officially applying, students complete practice FASFA applications. Staff in NOVA's financial aid department work with Training Futures' college liaison to help students address holds on their account and identify other financial resources.
Class Scheduling	Training Futures is a six-month program. As a result, the program always runs across two different semesters at NOVA. NOVA and Training Futures mutually coordinate and agree to class scheduling.
Instruction and Faculty Approval	Instructors for the program are recommended by Training Futures to NOVA. Recommended instructors must apply to NOVA for appointment to the college's adjunct faculty pool. Though instructors are technically hired by NOVA and entered into the college's payroll, instructors are paid by Training Futures/NVFS.
Students' Tuition and Fees	Participants in Training Futures usually qualify for financial aid. However, some students have a degree from their home country or do not qualify for financial aid for other reasons. To support these students, NOVA created a \$50,000 fund to support these participants and Training Futures also has scholarships available?????.
Training Space	Currently, Training Futures is located in the SAIC Enterprise Building after relocating from office space in a Booz Allen Hamilton building. Training Futures provides the training space and classroom facilities.
Training Materials	Training Futures is responsible for all equipment necessary for instruction. However, NOVA assists with providing computer hardware and software. State of Virginia laws requires that NOVA facilities update campus computer equipment every few years.
Students' Grades and Progress Reports	Training Futures instructors must submit grades to NOVA. Students receive a grade for each class they are registered in, which appears on their academic transcript. Training Futures students sign a waiver of student records confidentiality that allows NOVA to share information with Training Futures about participants' progress and grades
Participant Outcome Tracking	Training Futures employs a database specialist who tracks participants' demographics and relevant intake information as well as their education and employment outcomes. Training Futures' instructors, including those who are only NOVA faculty and not also Training Futures' staff, provide Training Futures with grade reports and student progress reports to aid outcome tracking. NOVA has also assigned an indicator in the college database specifically for Training Futures' participants to ease the collection and analysis of their data.

Data Management and Participant Outcomes Tracking

As seen in the last row of the table above, the nonprofit organization in this partnership assumes a lot of the responsibility for tracking participants' outcomes. Training Futures has a sophisticated management information system that is web-based and allows program staff located at multiple sites to input and use participant data. Staff collect information about a variety of demographic characteristics including native language, ethnicity, and educational history, among others. Training Futures staff also obtains information about employment experiences, before and after the training, directly from students through phone calls, in-person meetings, email and periodic on-line alumni surveys. Employment data includes students' employment status, including start and end dates of different jobs over time, hourly wage, number of hours worked, employer name and job title. Post-training employment data such as this is often difficult to collect and manage for many workforce programs. However, Training Futures' personal involvement and close relationships with trainees after program completion clearly facilitated their success with data collection.

To track participants' educational data, Training Futures' staff submit progress and grade reports. These reports allow Training Futures to track participants' completion of the program. In order to learn more about participants' education after they finished Training Futures, Northern Virginia Community College's Office of Institutional Research approved the addition of an indicator or "flag" to the enrollment record for each Training Futures student. This indicator allows Training Futures' participants' transcript data to be downloaded as a group for analysis. The transcript data is useful in showing how many credits students earned for Training Futures as well as their academic experiences and accomplishments at NOVA after Training Futures. Data such as this has proven useful in helping NOVA staff lobby for support and funding to aid the transition of Training Futures' participants to NOVA to pursue additional education.

Conclusion

The Training Futures partnership has in many ways served as the birth of a nonprofit-community college partnership movement within Northern Virginia Community College. Behind the leadership of President Dr. Templin, the college has taken what it has learned from the Training Futures partnership and Northern Virginia Family Service and expanded it to other nonprofits. Today, NOVA partners with several nonprofit organizations including the local Goodwill affiliate and often adopts similar dual-enrollment and revenue-sharing agreements. Through the Adult Career Pathways initiative, NOVA is working with over 15 nonprofit and public institutions to conduct outreach to low-income populations and provide adults from these communities with intensive enrollment, registration, financial aid and career counseling services.

In this short profile, we have highlighted just one model of a nonprofit-community college partnership. As Courses to Employment demonstrated, there is no one specific way of structuring, designing or implementing these type of collaborative efforts. However, Courses to Employment also showed that different nonprofit-community college partnerships can benefit from learning about each other's efforts and figuring out how a successful strategy in one partnership may be adopted and adapted into the work of another partnership. It is our hope is that this detailed profile and story of the Training Futures partnership will spawn new ideas for new and existing partnerships about how they can strengthen their

collaboration, and ultimately come together to serve low-income adults more effectively to foster their success in the classroom and the labor market.

Appendix A: Training Futures 25 Week Curriculum

Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Level	Skill Building							Skill Intensification							Skill Expansion in Business Setting			Skill Marketing							
Business Communications	Business English							Reading Comprehension, Writing and Listening Skills							I N T E R N S H I	Resume And Interview Preparation ———— Job Success Pyramid ———— Tailored Individual Projects ———— Keyboarding and 10-key Speed and Accuracy Review	J O B S E A R C								
	Toastmasters																								
Keyboarding	Keyboard Accuracy And Production Skills						Proofreading, Editing And Business Formats																		
Office Procedures	Professional Telephone Skills Customer Service			Records Management Alpha/Numeric Filing			Human Relations Skills																		
Business Calculations	10-key Calculator Keypad and Business Applications						Review of Business Math Procedures																		
Medical Office Skills	Medical Terminology, HIPAA confidentiality, Intro to Insurance, Billing and Coding.																								
Professional Development	Special Workshops and Presentations on Stress/Time Management, Business Ethics, Myers Briggs, Teamwork , Giving and Receiving Feedback, Office Politics, and Employer Expectations																								

Computer Applications	Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access) Internet (E-mail, Web)	P		H
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