



## WHAT MAKES THE CPI PROGRAM WORK?

Final phase research: quantitative and qualitative asked “What is the secret to CPI’s Success?”

### METHODOLOGY

Years of student exit surveys

Online email survey of completers and non-completers

Ethnographers’ in-depth telephone and video-taped in-person interviews with participants and staff

### CONSISTENT FINDINGS

- **Critical financial aid** overcomes obstacles for at-risk students
- **Holistic case management** encourages student persistence, regardless of challenges
- **CPI case managers are transformative agents** encouraging, mentoring, counseling, assessing and meeting needs – providing the varied kinds of support students need to persist in their journey toward a better life.
- **High satisfaction** – 93% to 96% were very likely to recommend the program to friends or relatives.
- **Support and ongoing advisement** from staff most helpful
- **CPI staff rated as excellent or outstanding** with respect to efficiency, program knowledge and motivation.
- **Other important components:** financial assistance; gas vouchers; assistance with books; child-care assistance, and job search assistance.
- **Participant recommendations:** serve more students; increase CPI funding and staffing; expand the CPI to four-year colleges and universities.
- **But most were completely satisfied with the program** “I wouldn’t change a thing. This program alone made it possible for me to attend college.”

**One student, who completed an AA degree and is now enrolled at a four-year university, summed up her experience in the Career Pathways Program and the support she received:**

*“I don’t think that I would have honestly finished. I hate to say that, but I don’t know if I would have been as successful as I have been. They gave me the resources at that time that I needed, being a single mother, driving back and forth, not having the money for daycare. With their educational classes that they had, too, that also helped me, and Miss Johnnie [case manager] really did help me when I needed it, like anytime that I needed it. I just feel like having that support system really is what helped me to finish my goals.”*

**For further information on the College Count\$ research study, please contact:**

Dr. Katherine Boswell, Project Manager • kaboswell@gmail.com • t (801) 278.0713 • c (801) 599.4276

SPONSORED BY:




# COLLEGE COUNT\$

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

## THE ARKANSAS CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE: PHASE ONE RESEARCH RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS



In order to qualify, participants must be a custodial parent eligible for public assistance through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and be at 250% or below the federal poverty level.

#### SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS

- Need help with transportation
- Need help with childcare
- Lack basic skills, requiring remediation to be successful in college
- Vast majority are first generation college students who lack role models to show them how to successfully negotiate higher education

#### SUPPORT FROM CPI

- Personalized case management, tutoring and mentoring
- Financial support as needed including assistance with tuition and books, and when appropriate childcare vouchers or gas cards.
- Individual counseling

#### THE AVERAGE CPI PARTICIPANT IS:

- ✓ 31 years of age
- ✓ Female (89% of participants)
- ✓ A single parent
- ✓ 65% of CPI students are White
- ✓ 30% are African American and 5% are Hispanic, Asian, or Native American

### The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI)

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is managed by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education at 25 community and technical colleges across the state. It has provided case management, education, and training to more than 30,000 Arkansans since 2006. CPI helps low-income parents complete degrees and certificates leading to high-demand higher-wage jobs. Funds for the program come from federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) appropriations through the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services.

### College Count\$: Evidence of Impact

College Count\$ is an external evaluation which is measuring the student success, social impacts, and economic benefits to low-income families resulting from this investment of federal TANF dollars into the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative. The study compares income, education, and employment outcomes of CPI participants with non-participants – to determine whether the program is successfully lifting Arkansas families out of poverty and providing a return on investment to the state.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES



National studies report degree completion is directly correlated with **improved employment, higher lifetime earnings and social benefits.**

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) has **significantly increased educational outcomes and achievement** for low-income participants when compared to their peers:

**52%** Of 27,517 low-income participants enrolled in the CPI between 2006 and 2013, more than **52%** graduated with a degree or certificate. This is **double the completion rate** of Arkansas community college students who did not participate in CPI.

**24%** Only **24%** of all non-CPI two-year college students enrolled between 2006 and 2013 completed a degree or certificate.

The CPI graduation rate is even more impressive compared to completion rates nationwide.

**62%** of CPI students enrolled in 2008 completed a degree or certificate by 2013.

Only **39%** of students who enrolled at a public two-year college nationwide in 2008 completed a degree or certificate by 2014.

Successful rates of program graduation and completion have **continued to improve over time.**

**Six times** as many CPI participants earned Associate Degrees by 2013, compared to non-CPI college students who enrolled in an Arkansas community college in 2011.

**Three times** more CPI participants earned Certificates of Proficiency or Technical Certificates when compared with their community college peers.

## CERTIFICATE/DEGREE COMPLETION

### FROM 2005 TO 2013...

**55.6%** of **HISPANIC CPI PARTICIPANTS** attained at least one Higher Education Certificate or Degree, compared to **14.2%** of Hispanic Non-CPI Students in Arkansas.

**45.2%** of **AFRICAN AMERICAN CPI PARTICIPANTS** attained at least one Higher Education Certificate or Degree, compared to **16.9%** of African American Non-CPI Students in Arkansas.

#### KEY:



Arkansas Community College student participating in CPI



Arkansas Community College student not participating in CPI



Nationwide Community College student not participating in CPI



TANF recipients not enrolled in Arkansas Community College

## ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

CPI graduates **earned significantly more** than their low-income TANF peers.



CPI graduates who enrolled in 2009 earned **\$2,600 more** in their first year than their matched TANF counterparts from the same region and field of employment, despite having earned similar incomes prior to entry into the program.

The wage bump increased to **\$3,100 per year more** for all CPI participants who enrolled in 2011, compared to income levels of matched TANF recipients.



In the Allied Health and Education employment sector which employs 60% of all CPI graduates and includes high demand nursing fields, CPI graduates who enrolled in 2011 earned an average of **\$3,176 more per year** than their matched TANF counterparts according to state employment records.

In early years of the CPI program, first year CPI students earned an average of \$6,400 less than their community college peers who entered the workforce the same year.



By 2011 CPI students narrowed the average annual wage gap to **\$1,584**, eliminating it entirely in some career fields.



CPI graduates tend to be single parents who are far more likely than their community college peers to initially work part-time rather than full-time. Low-income CPI participants often start work at a lower rung on the career ladder, but over time they catch up to their peers as they progress along the career pathway and earn additional credentials.

**THE ROI PROJECTS THAT EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN CPI PROVIDES A RETURN OF \$1.79 TO THE STATE.**

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT: ROI

In **2016**, College Count\$ turned its focus to measuring CPI's success through the lens of public investments made by the state of Arkansas. The study revealed that not only does the CPI program benefit the lives of individual low-income Arkansans both in the near and long-term future, but that CPI brings a significant financial return on investment (ROI) to the state.



#### PROGRAM COST

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) reports that the state paid an average of **\$1,142** per participant in 2009, for a collective cost of **\$1,799.792** in total.



#### DECREASE IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The ROI Model estimates public assistance savings of **\$4,110,247 over 5 years** – within the 2009 cohort alone. Over an 11-year span of investment in CPI since 2005 totaling **\$113,450,000**, net savings to taxpayers amount to **\$90,079,300**.



#### INCREASE IN TAX REVENUE VIA EARNINGS GAIN

Increased tax revenues from participant employment outcomes and decreased state spending on public assistance benefits to CPI participants result in a return on its initial investment in CPI of **179%** to the state of Arkansas and its taxpayers over five years.