

Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Students

Recruitment and Retention Super Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Who are Economically Disadvantaged Students?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines an economically disadvantaged individual as one who:

1. receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the temporary assistance for needy families program, or the supplemental security income program, or State or local income-based public assistance;
2. is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of—
 - a. the poverty line; or
 - b. 70 percent of the lower living standard income level;
3. is a homeless individual (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 H. R. 803—12 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6))), or a homeless child or youth (as defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)));
4. receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.);
5. is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made; or
6. is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirement of #2, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

Recruitment and Retention Super Strategies | RECOMMENDATIONS

The term “economically disadvantaged” covers a wide range of students. Recruitment and retention efforts should be designed around the unique barriers faced by each special population included within the definition of economically disadvantaged.

- Utilize the Super Strategy documents created for:
 - ✓ Foster Care Involved Youth
 - ✓ Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
 - ✓ Individuals with Disabilities
- Continual review of quantitative and qualitative institutional data can help determine accurate numbers and characteristics of economically disadvantaged students. These data can inform how students experience the institution, and which factors affect their ability to succeed.
- Address underlying reasons for differences in rates of economically disadvantaged students’ retention, persistence, and completion.
- Build internal and external partnerships to leverage and expand institutional capacity to meet the needs of students.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local area high schools.
 - ✓ Academic and guidance counselors can promote the benefits of CTE programs.
 - ✓ Students can be informed of support services available on campus prior to enrollment.
- Emphasize potential earnings and timelines for completion when marketing specific career and technical education (CTE) programs.
- Take steps to improve the accessibility of financial supports.
 - ✓ Reduce “hassle” factors.
 - ✓ Simplify students’ choice-making.
 - ✓ Provide clear messages and reminders to students about financial support services.
- Empower students to use available resources by normalizing the use of financial supports.
 - ✓ Consider “opt-out” versus “opt-in” models.
- Review internal processes and practices to ensure they have not become ineffective or have unintended consequences on economically disadvantaged students.

Did You Know?

In academic year 2017-2018 the number of Monetary Award Program (MAP) recipients in Illinois totaled 129,517 with fifty percent of the recipients lacking additional resources to pay for postsecondary education.²

Sources:

- ¹ Beyond Financial Aid: How Colleges Can Strengthen the Financial Stability of Low-Income Students and Improve Student Outcomes. Lumina Foundation, 16 May 2018, www.luminafoundation.org/resources/beyond-financial-aid.
- ² Monetary Award Program (MAP) Evaluation. Illinois Student Assistance Commission, February 2019.
- ³ Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act H.R.2353, 115th Cong., (2018) (enacted). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2353/text?r=2>.
- ⁴ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. H.R. 803, 113th Cong., (2014) (enacted). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/803/text>.