

A Conversation with an Adult Education Director: Ensuring Student Success through Guided Pathways

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Jobs for the Future (JFF) is a national nonprofit that builds educational and economic opportunity for underserved populations in the United States. JFF develops innovative programs and public policies that increase college readiness and career success and build a more highly skilled, competitive workforce. With over 30 years of experience, JFF is a recognized national leader in bridging education and work to increase economic mobility and strengthen our economy.

The need for improvements in college completion is compelling. Between 1970 and 2009, undergraduate enrollment in the United States more than doubled, while the completion rate has been virtually unchanged. Jobs for the Future's [Postsecondary State Policy](#) work advocates for state policies that support structured, accelerated student pathways through community college to high-value credentials and transfer, including innovating and reforming remedial or developmental education.

At the winter 2017 meeting of Jobs for the Future's Postsecondary State Policy Network, JFF Vice President Michael Lawrence Collins sat down with Jon Kerr, the Washington State Director for Basic Education for Adults, to discuss why community colleges should be more intentional in connecting adult basic education to guided pathways and how federal and state policy could help forge greater ties. Kerr is a member of the Policy Leadership Trust for Student Success, which JFF convenes to promote evidenced-based, practitioner-informed policies for scaling guided pathways.

Mr. Kerr stated that "...only about 18 states deliver adult basic education programming through their community and technical colleges. In the other states, basic skills programs are overseen by the K-12 system or community-based organizations. Because of this, basic skills are often left out of the guided pathways conversation." He goes on to explain how in Washington, they require all of the basic skills students, no matter what their level, to be on a college and career pathway. Mr. Kerr further details how "Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training, puts students who might not be college ready into college-level career technical and academic transfer programs. This allows students without a high school diploma or GED to learn their basic skills at the same time they're learning critical workforce skills."

Read more on JFF Blog.

Source: JFF Blog, Voices for Opportunity, Tuesday May 9, 2017 – [A Conversation with an Adult Education Director: Ensuring Student Success through Guided Pathways](#) . by David Altstadt