### WOMEN EMPLOYED



## For Adult Education and Developmental Bridge Programs

Bridge programs serve a wide variety of students with different strengths, support systems, and needs. However, as with any student, life, work, family, and school demands can become overwhelming requiring a little extra support. A network of proactive transition services provides students with the resources and support they need to transition from one level of education to the next or to successfully transition into careers. Transition services include academic, personal, and financial services, and should also support another core element of bridge programs, career development. Examples of transition services include, but are not limited to: tutoring, child care assistance, career counseling, regular advising or counseling, referrals to supportive housing, and assistance accessing income supports or other types of financial aid such as grants or scholarships. Use the Transition Services Self-Assessment Toolkit to help your bridge program team assess current usage and provision of transition services, as well as make a Service Improvement Plan (SIP) to build on existing strengths and improve the student experience.

#### What are bridge programs?

Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training leading to employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. In order to be recognized as a bridge program in Illinois, programs must include: contextualized instruction, career development, and transition services. Contextualized instruction integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge. Career development includes career exploration and planning, as well as understanding the world of work. Transition services help students complete the bridge program and transition to and succeed in credit or occupational training and employment. The three general types of transition services are personal (or support services), academic, and financial.

Source: Illinois Community College Board bridge program definition

Three documents comprise the toolkit. The first document in the toolkit is the Team Survey. The team can use the survey to assess program design and how team members perceive the types and usage of transition services. The toolkit also includes a Service Usage Evaluation (SUE) which can be completed by a few members on the team and shared with the rest of the team to help the team get a clearer understanding of how services are actually being used. Finally, once the team has completed the other two documents and discussed them, the

third document, the Service Improvement Plan (SIP), can be used to help the team decide on priorities and responsibilities for making any necessary improvements to transition services. Transition services are always a work in progress, especially in tight fiscal times, so even the best program is likely to find a strength to build on or a service that is being underutilized.

Teams are also encouraged to develop a student survey or hold focus groups to provide a more robust, accurate view of service provision.

Improving Student Outcomes: Teams can use aspects of the toolkit to measure improvements. The self-assessment process can be part of the college or organization's strategic planning, annual planning, or bridge program application each year. The Team Survey includes numerical scores which can help to compare team members' perceptions of transition service provisions or track program progress from year to year. Part or all of the service usage section can help the team identify how many students are using services. Once the team has identified strengths and areas for improvement in the group meeting, it is important to use SIP to prioritize which issues the group will focus on and to engage team members from each area in identifying and working towards solutions collaboratively. The college or organization can also share results and priorities for improvement with their funder or agency contact who can then ensure the college or organization receives any additional help needed to make progress on its goals.

**How to Begin:** Please keep in mind, this toolkit is intended to be helpful, not a burden. Teams can decide to amend the process or use the sections of the toolkit in a different way that would better suit the needs of their bridge program.

Bridge providers are encouraged to assemble a team of administrators, faculty or teachers, and staff leaders, including those working directly with bridge students and those working on support services and research or institutional effectiveness. The team should include those who are involved with the day-to-day operation of the bridge program and those who provide strategic direction or can provide resources from other departments of the institution. Each individual team member or a representative from each department should complete the Team Survey portion. One or two team members who have access to service usage and other quantitative data should be asked to fill out SUE and share results with the team. The team should then meet to discuss their Team Survey and SUE results and use SIP to develop a plan for building on strengths or addressing weaknesses.

Prepared for the Illinois Community College Board in collaboration with the Shifting Gears 2.0 Student Services Subcommittee.



Women Employed's mission is to improve women's economic status and remove barriers to economic equity. We promote fair workplace practices, increase access to training and education, and provide women with innovative tools and information to move into careers paying family-supporting wages.



## TEAM SURVEY

#### Transition Services Self-Assessment Toolkit

The Team Survey is the first document of the toolkit. The team can use the survey to assess program design and better understand how team members perceive the types and usage of transition services.

#### The Team Survey is based on three themes of bridge program student success:

- Early bridge student engagement
- Supporting success
- Team commitment to student success

Each theme has categories within it and these include benchmarks. The benchmarks provide a high-mark target or goal for which the bridge program can plan.

The Team Survey includes a numeric scale to assess team members' opinions or knowledge of the level of services provided. Each item on the scale is explained below:

- *None* (0): Program does not provide this service.
- Planning (1): Program is not offering the service but is planning to offer it.
- *Underutilized* (2): Service is rarely utilized by students, faculty, or staff.
- *Some* (3): Service is being used by some students, faculty, or staff.
- A Lot (4): Service is used by a large number of students, faculty or staff.

The team can average individual results and compare them, or average all the teams' results for each area and use them in conjunction with the results of SUE to set priorities for improvements and track progress over time. Please note: it may be useful for the team to pay attention to areas where multiple team members were unable to answer questions as this may indicate a service area that needs improvement or that students are not being referred to the service.



**Directions:** Please answer all questions candidly as they apply to bridge program students at your institution. Because there may be multiple types of bridge programs, the response sections are divided according to population — Adult Education and Developmental Education. If your institution has only one type of bridge program, or if you only have knowledge of one program, leave the other scale blank. If you don't know the answer to a question, leave it blank. Use the notes section at the end of the team survey to keep track of questions for the other team members and areas for improvement.

#### Theme 1: Early Bridge Student Engagement

**Benchmark:** Well in advance of the program start date, bridge students meet with a staff person or faculty member who identifies student strengths to build on and possible barriers to completion, and connects students to additional resources, including financial aid and income supports, such as food stamps. Staff gives students individualized help to assess career fit, develop a realistic education plan, and budget for lost wages and program costs.

Early Bridge Student Engagement	Ext	Adult Education Extent of Service Provision				Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision					
	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	
Before the program starts, entering students are engaged in career exploration and receive help to determine whether the bridge program is a good fit.	00	01	02	<b>O</b> 3	<b>O</b> 4	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4	
Staff meets with each bridge student prior to the start of class to help create a course schedule and an academic plan.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O4	
Staff meets with each bridge student prior to the start of class to help identify support systems and resources to meet needs.	00	01	02	O3	<b>O</b> 4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O4	
A transition coordinator, case manager, or assigned advisor is available after work hours or on Saturdays to accommodate students' work schedules.	00	01	02	O3	O4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O4	
Bridge students receive budgeting tools, and staff is available to help students with budgeting for lost income and/or any course expenses.	00	01	02	O3	O4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O4	
Staff helps bridge students learn about various types of financial aid and apply for all available sources.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4	00	01	O 2	O 3	<b>O</b> 4	



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Early Bridge Student Engagement (continued)	Exte	Adult Education Extent of Service Provision					Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision				
Lingagemeni (commuea)	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	
Staff helps bridge students learn about income supports, such as child care subsidies and food stamps, and apply for all available sources.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4	0 0	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	<b>O</b> 4	
Outreach to developmental education bridge students occurs well in advance of financial aid cut-offs.			N/A			0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O4	
	Adult Education Strongly Strongly Disagree Agree			Developmental Education Strongly Disagree				on Strongly Agree			
Services and supports are well-advertised, and students learn about them when they first express interest in the program.	00	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O4	
Materials and websites do not use insider acronyms or unfamiliar terms when explaining transition services.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4	0 0	01	0 2	O 3	O4	
Early Student Engagement Total Score											
Early Student Engagement (Divide total score by the number of questions answered.)  Average Score											



#### **Theme 2: Supporting Success**

**Benchmark:** The college or organization provides proactive academic and personal supports to address barriers to completion, and helps bridge students transition to careers and further education. Students meet with an advisor, counselor, or transition coordinator at least once a semester. Staff are trained to recognize (not diagnose) signs of major challenges such as homelessness, mental health issues, or domestic violence. The program has strong links to community resources to ensure students receive the help they need.

Providing Academic and	Ext		It Educe Service I		ion	Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision				
Personal Supports	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot
An advisor/counselor or transition coordinator meets with each student before the semester for academic planning and to address student needs.	O 0	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O 4	O 0	01	O 2	O 3	O4
An advisor/counselor or transition coordinator meets with each student at least once during the semester for academic planning and to address student needs.	00	01	02	<b>O</b> 3	O4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O4
Tutors provide dyadic or one-on-one tutoring in multiple subject areas at times and places convenient to students.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O4
An early alert program is in place with clear faculty and staff roles, including procedures to proactively identify and assist students at risk of dropping out or failing courses.	00	01	O 2	O3	O4	00	01	0 2	O 3	<b>O</b> 4
Childcare is available for infants through school age during day, evening, and weekend classes for all students, or through a partnership with an outside organization.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	<b>O</b> 4	00	01	0 2	<b>O</b> 3	O4
Staff is familiar with the childcare referral network resources and website, and proactively assists students.	00	01	02	O3	<b>O</b> 4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O4
Staff and faculty are trained to recognize potential signs of personal issues, such as substance abuse or domestic violence, refer bridge students to service providers, and follow up to make sure they have gotten the help they needed.	00	01	02	O3	<b>O</b> 4	00	01	0 2	03	O4
Program has referral relationships with other organizations, such as housing providers and food banks.	O 0	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O 4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O4
Staff proactively refers students to needed resources.	00	01	O 2	O3	O4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O4
Providing Academic and Personal Supports  Total Score										
Providing Academic and Personal Supports (Divide total score by the number of questions answered.)  Average Score										



Financial Aid and Income	Adult Education Extent of Service Provision			Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision						
Supports	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot
Staff proactively provides low-income bridge students with uniforms, books, exams, or transportation vouchers.	O 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O4
Low-income developmental and Career/ Technical Education bridge students receive multiple types of financial aid.	O 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	0 2	O 3	O 4
Staff proactively provides bridge students with emergency help, such as emergency grants or transportation vouchers.	O 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Staff meets with bridge students who are struggling financially to help them budget or identify additional resources, including income supports such as food stamps.	O 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	O 0	01	O 2	O 3	<b>O</b> 4
Financial Aid and Income Supports  Total Score										
Financial Aid and Income Supports (Divide total score by the number of questions answered.)  Average Score										



Transitioning to Further Education and Employment	Exte		ult Educc Service I		ion	Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision				
Edocation and Employment	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot
Staff orients bridge students to Career/ Technical Education, college credit, or transfer programs, including an introduction to staff/ faculty members, services, and program standards and expectations.	00	01	02	O3	O4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O4
Bridge students receive help applying for further study, including applying for financial aid, before they complete their current program.	O 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	O 0	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Bridge students receive help planning for the next level of technical or academic study, including help selecting classes.	00	01	02	O3	O4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O4
All bridge students receive resources to help them find entry-level employment in their field (starter jobs) or internships.	O 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Local employers participate in networking or job search events or assist with mock interviews and provide detailed feedback.	O 0	01	02	O3	O4	00	01	O 2	O 3	<b>O</b> 4
Staff meets with all bridge students to provide career counseling and career planning assistance.	00	01	O 2	O3	O4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O4
Transitioning to Further Education and Employment Total Score										
Transitioning to Further Education and Employment ( <i>Divide total score by the number of questions answered.</i> ) <b>Average Score</b>										



## **Theme 3: Team Commitment to Student Success**

**Benchmark:** Changes to program offerings or transition services are made based on data. Dedicated teams or committees guide and monitor student success efforts. Staff receives high-quality training.

Team Commitment to Student Success	Ex		ılt Educa İmplem		ion	Developmental Education Extent of Implementation				
Student Success	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Under- utilized	Some	A lot
Disaggregated data is collected, measured, and evaluated to assess program and transition service effectiveness.	00	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Students are engaged in surveys, focus groups, or interviews, and the results inform program and resource decisions.	0 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	01	0 2	O 3	O 4
There is a clear, well-organized process for evaluating data and implementing solutions, engaging multiple stakeholders.	0 0	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O 4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O 4
All staff and instructors view academic success of bridge students as their job, and are responsible for helping meet improvement goals.	00	01	O 2	O3	O 4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Leaders are willing to make changes to resources, policies, or procedures to improve student success.	00	01	O 2	O3	O 4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Staff knows when and where bridge students drop out or begin having problems and actively work to find solutions.	00	01	O 2	<b>O</b> 3	O 4	00	01	O 2	O 3	O 4
Staff members work together to address student needs and help bridge students complete.	O 0	01	O 2	03	O 4	0 0	01	0 2	O 3	O 4
New instructors, tutors, and staff receive training based on best practices for working with adult learners.	0 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	0 0	0 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
Instructors, tutors, and staff receive on-going staff development opportunities based on best practices for working with adult learners.	0 0	01	O 2	O3	O 4	00	01	0 2	O 3	O 4
Team Commitment to Success Total Score										
Team Commitment to Success (Divide total score by the number of questions answered.)  Average Score										



Insert your totals and averages from each section.

Theme Scores	Adult Education		Developmental Education			
		Total Score	Average		Total Score	Average
Early Student Engagement						
Supporting Success:						
Providing Academic and Personal Supports						
Financial Aid and Income Supports						
Transitioning to Further Education and Employment						
Team Commitment to Success						

Notes and Questions		

Areas for Improvement		



## SERVICE USAGE EVALUATION

#### Transition Services Self-Assessment Toolkit

Collecting data on service usage and sharing it with the bridge team can help clarify which services are having the desired impact and which need improvement. The Service Usage Evaluation (SUE), the second document in the self-assessment toolkit, can help supplement the information gathered in the Team Survey to provide the team with more objective information on what services are available to students and used by students. Teams are also encouraged to supplement the information found in SUE with occasional student surveys or focus groups.

Teams can use the results of SUE each year to measure improvements over time. For many programs, some of the data included in this form may be challenging to find. If necessary, the team can decide to collect the information that will be most helpful in making strategic transition service decisions. After the team has selected priorities and made a Service Improvement Plan (SIP), in the following year the team can also decide to focus only on those aspects of SUE needed for meeting the core priorities. However, it is suggested that the team collect the other data every few years to see if the team needs to take on other priorities and create a revised SIP.

**How to Begin:** After assembling a team of administrators, faculty or teachers, and staff leaders, *one or two team members who have access to service usage and other quantitative data should fill out SUE and share results with the team*. The team can then use the results of the Team Survey in conjunction with SUE to help set priorities for any necessary service improvements.

**Directions:** Please answer all questions candidly as they apply to bridge program students at your institution. Because there may be different levels of bridge programs, questions are divided according to population – Adult Education and Developmental Education. If your institution has only one type of bridge program, leave the other scale blank.



## **Theme 1: Early Bridge Student Engagement**

Indicate outside referral relationships held by the college or organization.

Services	Organization	Cost to Students
		(Choose one: Free, Sliding Scale, or Full-Price)



## **Theme 1: Early Bridge Student Engagement** (continued)

Compile the following statistics to help the team understand how many students are using some of the services related to strong early engagement.

Early Bridge Student Engagement FY 20	% of Adult Education Bridge Students	% of Developmental Education Bridge Students
Met individually with counselor, advisor, case manager, or transition coordinator prior to start of classes		
Received information on financial aid and help applying in Winter or Early Spring before the start of classes		
Received information on income supports in the semester before the start of classes		
Received help applying for income supports in the semester before the start of classes		
Completed career testing		
Prior to the start of classes		
Prior to the end of the first semester		
Completed individualized career counseling session		
Prior to the start of classes		
Prior to the end of the first semester		
Developed an academic plan		
Prior to the start of classes		
Prior to the end of the first semester		

## **Theme 2: Supporting Success**

Supporting Success: Providing Academic and Personal Supports FY 20	% of Adult Education Bridge Students	% of Developmental Education Bridge Students
Met individually with advisor, counselor, case manager, or transition coordinator at least once per semester.		
Referred to tutoring		
Attended tutoring at least once a semester		
% of this number who passed course		
% of this number who improved GPA		
Attended tutoring at least once a month		
% of this number who passed course		
% of this number who improved GPA		
Attended once a week		
% of this number who passed course		
% of this number who improved GPA		
Were assisted in finding childcare or applying for subsidy		
Referred to early alert		
Contacted by one or more early alert staff members		
% of this number who responded		
% of this number who received a referral/assistance		
% of this number who showed improvements (e.g., passed course, improved GPA)		
Referred to outside assistance (list type of assistance below):		

Supporting Success: Financial Aid and Income Supports FY 20	% of Adult Education Bridge Students	% of Developmental Education Bridge Students
Completed budget or financial aid plan		
Were assisted with applying for financial aid		
Received financial aid		
Received voucher or grant for uniforms, books, exams, transportation or childcare		
Received emergency help to address financial issues		
Were assisted with applying for public assistance/ subsidies to fill remaining need		

Supporting Success: Transitioning to Further Education and Employment FY 20	% of Adult Education Bridge Students	% of Developmental Education Bridge Students
Attended at least one workshop or activity that increased college or career/tech preparation		
Learned about financial aid and received help filling out a FAFSA (prior to college credit or Career/Technical Education program entry)		
Completed a career skills workshop		
Used job placement tools or services		
Participated in internships		



# SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

#### Transition Services Self-Assessment Toolkit

**Instructions:** Using the results of the Team Survey and Service Usage Evaluation (SUE), as a team discuss bridge program strengths and come to a consensus on areas for improvement. All team members should share concrete steps each can take to contribute to improvement in one or more priority areas. The team should take care to ensure that no one team member is overburdened and duties are spread out over multiple team members.

#### **Bridge Program Strengths**

•	What strengths	does the	program or	staff cur	rently have?
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• How can we build on these strengths to improve student success measures?

#### **College or Organization Areas for Improvement**

• Are there any areas the team is currently improving or has plans to improve?

• Are there any areas the team wants to improve after completing this assessment tool?

• Are there any synergies between existing strategic initiatives or outside grants and areas for improver the bridge program?	ment in
• Which of these areas have the biggest impact on student success? What data do you have to support t	this?
• Which of the high-impact areas have the lowest cost?	
• Identify program, college, or partner strengths the team can leverage to help make improvements.	
• What are the team's top three priorities for improvement?	



### **Service Improvement Plan**

Institution: \_

**Instructions:** Drawing on the team's top priorities for improvement, use this section to help plan how the team will build transition services capacity or quality for bridge students. Under Resources, make sure to include current strengths the team can leverage to help make improvements in other areas.

Prepared by:			
Date Prepared:	Prepared	for Academic or Fiscal Yea	r
Program Goals:			
Team Members:			
Target Area 1: Team Leader:			
How will the team measure success?			
Activities	Resources (team members, strengths, funding, etc.	Expected Outcomes	Target Date



Target Area 2:		Team Leader:		
How will the team measure	success?			
Activities	Resources (team members, strengths, funding, etc.)	Expected Outcomes	Target Date	
Target Area 3:	Team	Leader:		
	<b>'</b>			
How will the team measure	success?			
How will the team measure  Activities	Resources (team members, strengths, funding, etc.)	Expected Outcomes	Target Date	
	Resources			



Alternate:	Team Leader:			
How will the team measure success?				
Activities	Resources (team members, strengths, funding, etc.)	Expected Outcomes	Target Date	