

# SUPPORTING SINGLE PARENTS AND DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS

Recruitment Super Strategies

Introduction

## WHO ARE SINGLE PARENTS AND DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS?

**Single parent:** an individual who is unmarried or legally separated from a spouse and has a minor child or children for which the parent has either custody or joint custody or is pregnant.

**Displaced Homemaker:** An individual who has worked primarily without remuneration to care for a home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills; has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; or is a parent whose youngest dependent child will become ineligible to receive assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) not later than 2 years after the date on which the parent applies for assistance under such title; and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.<sup>1</sup>

Recruitment of single parents and displaced homemakers involves attracting them to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs using a variety of outreach efforts such as media, communications, community involvement, and persistent follow-through.

### Recruitment efforts should be designed to:

- reach individuals who may not be in the school setting but are in need of career and technical training;
- inform single parents or displaced homemakers about the program, its support services, and its relevance to their needs;
- provide information about financial benefits of livable-wage career and technical training and focus on local employment opportunities; and
- connect with the surrounding community in order to spread information about the program, and to gain more resources and opportunities for single parents and displaced homemakers.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Displaced homemakers are 99% women and 75% single parents. Many have experienced spousal abuse.<sup>2</sup>

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# SUPPORTING SINGLE PARENTS AND DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS

## Recruitment Super Strategies

## Recommendations

Single parents and displaced homemakers face unique barriers that may reduce the effectiveness of traditional marketing campaigns for that audience. Recruitment strategies should be designed to overcome these barriers.

- Establish rapport with other stakeholders including community leaders, human service agencies, administrators, educational entities, or non-profit organizations to gain their assistance in recruiting single parents or displaced homemakers seeking their services.
- ✓ Supply organizations with informational material related to your programs or services.
- ✓ Articulate the opportunities your programs offer for single parents and displaced homemakers to community organizations that may not have expertise in the area but share a stake in the wellbeing of community members (i.e. churches).
- ✓ Be prepared to describe how your programs and services assist single parents and displaced homemakers and how those services relate to the mission of the organization.
- ✓ Ask organizations to refer clients they feel would benefit from your programs.
- ✓ Follow up with single parent or displaced homemakers who express interest in your program to find out if they were referred.
- ✓ Remember to refer students to partner organizations if they could benefit from services.
- ✓ Ensure that your recruitment strategies are designed to overcome local barriers related to demographic factors.
- ✓ Produce recruitment materials in different languages for non-English speaking communities to facilitate awareness of programs and services that can be spread by word of mouth.
- ✓ Do not rely on digital marketing such as the college website or social media pages.
- ✓ Present information related to education, training, and employment opportunities available within specific communities.
- Word of mouth is an important way for potential students to learn about services and programs: design informational material in a way that it can be easily communicated to a secondary audience.
- In order to be effective individuals may need to come into contact with your message multiple times.
- ✓ Diversify your recruitment strategy to incorporate multiple locations and formats.
- Conduct ongoing recruitment campaigns for the target audience
- Designate a single point of contact to walk individuals through the initial enrollment steps and to provide ongoing support.
- Ensure advertising includes information about the program and support services available through the college.
- Market materials that feature photos and testimonials of single parents and displaced homemakers. Display materials in strategic locations that have specific relevance to single parents or displaced homemakers.
- ✓ Relevant locations include childcare and educational facilities where children of single parents or displaced homemakers are likely to attend; common gathering places that facilitate community engagement (churches, community centers, popular businesses that serve as gathering places); or service centers that cater to the target population (i.e. Department of Human Services, non-profits, or public health organizations and clinics).

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act S. 250, 109th Cong., 6 (2006) (enacted). Print

<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Council for Women. Successful Practices for Displaced Homemaker Programs. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Council for Women, North Carolina Department of Administration, 2011. <http://www.nccfwdvc.com/documents/publications/successful-practices-for-displaced-homemaker-programs.pdf>.

# SUPPORTING SINGLE PARENTS AND DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS

Retention Super Strategies

Introduction

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A key for successful retention of any learner is to create a challenging, non-stigmatizing learning environment that meets individual learner needs. Single parents and displaced homemakers face potential barriers to academic success and completion.

Some of these barriers include:

- the need for full-time or part-time employment leading to increased time necessary for completion;
- limited financial resources, limited access to transportation, and scheduling commitments related to head of household responsibilities that impact access to opportunities and materials needed for success; and
- the potential for lowered self-esteem and a loss of confidence related to academic success (many displaced homemakers have been involved with spousal abuse which can also impact self-esteem).



Through carefully designed services colleges can attempt to limit the impact of barriers and encourage student success.

## DID YOU KNOW?

8.7% of all households in the United States in 2015, were headed by single mothers with children under the age of 18. The rate in Illinois was 7.11%.<sup>3</sup>

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# SUPPORTING SINGLE PARENTS AND DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS

## Retention Super Strategies

## Recommendations

WHEN DEVELOPING SYSTEMATIC RETENTION PROCESSES PROGRAMS SHOULD:

### **Provide orientation and career counseling that includes information regarding Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.**

- Establish benchmarks and strategies for improving participation of single parents and displaced homemakers in career and technical education programs.
- Increase awareness of programs and develop workplace skills by establishing a resource center, with flexible hours, where learners can go to explore their interests and aptitudes using computerized career information software.

### **Reduce time to completion by verifying coursework is relevant to the career pathway.**

- Be prepared to be flexible by creating program maps that anticipate the needs of part-time students.

### **Assess the learner's eligibility for specialized support services.**

- Provide upfront information about assistance related to childcare services, transportation, high school equivalency certification, and financial resources that would allow greater access to CTE programs.
- Connect with community networks to provide families with additional assistance.

### **Issue invitations to seminars on issues that are important to single parents and displaced homemakers and provide incentives for attendance.**

Examples include courses on

- budgeting,
- time management, and
- essential employability skills and interview skills.

### **Establish support organizations or clubs that encourage interaction with other single parents or displaced homemakers.**

- For example new parents' networks, cohort support groups, teen parent support programs, and groups that facilitate relationships with mentors.
- Connect with community networks to provide families with additional assistance.

- Adequately address the need for role models.

### **Coordinate with the financial aid office to make financial aid accessible for part-time learners.**

- Act as a liaison.

### **Adequately represent the community's demographics within the clients served. Individuals will feel more comfortable in your program if they recognize that the individuals served accurately portray the community with which they are familiar.**

- Try to ensure program staff and advisory committees also reflect the demographics of the population being served and understand the complex problems the target population faces.

### **SOURCES:**

<sup>1</sup> Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act S. 250, 109th Cong., 6 (2006) (enacted). Print

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<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau. "Percentage of Single Mother Households in the U.S. 2015, by State | Statistic." Statista. Accessed August 12, 2016. <http://www.statista.com/statistics/242302/percentage-of-single-mother-households-in-the-us-by-state/>.