ROCHESTER
COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

## BACKGROUND

Bridges to Careers is a collaborative effort between Hawthorne Adult Basic Education, Rochester Community and Technical College, Workforce Development, Inc. and area employers. This team of innovators have come together to develop a model that meets the academic aspirations of adult immigrants or refugees and individuals who did not graduate from high school or who lack basic job skills. Ultimately, the goal is to prepare a pipeline of skilled workers for high-demand jobs to meet regional workforce gaps. Through education and career coaching, students within the program are empowered to pursue successful and fulfilling careers.

## THE MODEL

Bridges to Careers students take college prep courses through the Adult Basic Education program where they complete essential skills such as reading, writing, math, and technology courses, as well as career-specific classes to prepare them for their future career/educational endeavors. These students work in partnership with a Career Navigator to identify and address potential barriers they may have when going to school or attaining a successful and rewarding career. In concert with a College Transition Advisor, students complete their college application, registration, and financial aid processes. Once transitioned to the college, the advisor continues to provide additional support to students so they are confident and ready to continue their coursework at Rochester Community & Technical College.

Using a set of student IDs supplied by Hawthorne supervisors, IE&P tracked these students over time to measure both their personal success and their RCTC outcomes impact.

## KEY FINDINGS

Generally, Hawthorne students are quite successful once enrolled in college level work, which has a positive impact on RCTC's outcome metrics.

Since 2015, 299 Hawthorne students have transitioned to college-level work at RCTC. Among the 299:

- 119 earned a credential, for a completion rate of about 40%. This is roughly on par with the general student population over the same timeframe.
- They enrolled in 41 different majors
- They enrolled in a total of 10,718 credits

- They produced 357.3 FYE, generating almost $2 million in revenue for the college

## IMPLICATIONS

Upon enrollment in college-level work at RCTC, Hawthorne students are generally as successful as their non-Hawthorne peers. Moreover, they are woven into many different facets of our institution while pursuing degree programs across multiple areas of the college. They make up a critical component of our student population who would not naturally gravitate to a college academic setting.

## ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to their educational background and personal circumstances, Hawthorne students are often some of the most at-risk for failure to succeed at RCTC. Generally, one would expect such students to struggle when compared with the performance of their peers. What these data demonstrate is that this is not the case. The logical conclusion to draw from these findings is that the Hawthorne program is successful in preparing its students to be productive members of RCTC's community. Additionally, the data suggests that Hawthorne prepares students for college-level rigor so they can successfully complete their credential/degree. Therefore, this academic model demonstrates that Hawthorne students are receiving the knowledge, skills, and background to be successful in their studies and achieve their educational goals. Additionally, according to program leaders, this has led hundreds of these students for careers in the local workforce.

IE&P recommends that programs serving multiple at-risk populations meet and coordinate their efforts to both share best practices and align expectations to ensure a seamless transition from the Hawthorne program to RCTC. For example, many Hawthorne students will qualify for additional supports, such as Pell grants and the TRiO program. All of these areas should coordinate their efforts to ensure that students within the Hawthorne pipeline receive adequate support through their full trajectory while also sharing best practices among different programmatic groups to further increase student success and program enrollment.

*Questions about this research brief?*
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