

Missouri Credential Completion and Employment (CCE) Program

PART I: OVERVIEW

Every child in Missouri represents hope and promise; an economic investment that helps them develop their skills and abilities is an investment in the future. Foster youth, like their peers have dreams and goals but through no fault of their own, they do not have the family support needed to make decisions, big and small that will lead to postsecondary education and training success.

Since being established in 2016, the Missouri Credential Completion and Employment (CCE) Program has provided targeted funding and intensive support and guidance to help young adults earn a recognized credential and enter the workforce. Youth in the program are under age 26, experienced foster care and all are struggling to live independently. Applicants have a myriad of complex problems; their trajectory continues to be impacted by the legacy of birth family dysfunction and trauma. Their health and wellness are impaired and their secondary education was most likely interrupted multiple times leaving further and further behind their peers.

With CCE support, some young people can overcome circumstances and obstacles to earn a credential and develop or hone the soft skills necessary to find and keep a job. However, all of their lives are complicated, so despite their best intentions, some cannot achieve their goals in a short amount of time. Since the program launched, in addition to the 28 young people who started a training program, 167 have received information and guidance about certificate programs that lead to employment and the stability needed to complete the training. It is our assumption that some will pursue training now or in the near future, while others may never be in a position to succeed in a formal training program.

The design of CCE includes combining much-needed financial assistance with concrete and targeted coaching, to help youth be in a position to succeed in a short-term credential program and enter the workforce. Critical to the success of these young people is the collaboration between FC2S and local community colleges and workforce providers who can also assist and support.

One such example is the partnership that CCE developed with NPower, St. Louis. This program supports youth from underserved communities by providing technology training and connecting them with internships that can lead to career-focused employment. CCE worked

with a young man to explore his aptitudes and the job training opportunities in his community. Once he expressed interest in the IT field, CCE assisted him with applying to NPower. He received IT training and employability skills from NPower while CCE worked with him to address his critical gaps in basic independent living skills such as decision-making, time management, budgeting and household management. He received CCE financial assistance for transportation and work attire. When he was on the brink of being homeless, CCE and NPower worked together to help him find stable and affordable housing quickly. CCE funding was used to pay the deposit and two months of rent, so he could complete his training and internship. The young man graduated from NPower in May of 2018, is employed full-time, and living in his own apartment.

CCE youth outcomes:

- Twenty-eight have received funding and support totaling \$159,402;
- Thirteen completed a training program;
- Two did not enroll - \$50 & \$300 were paid to cover registration fees, testing and a uniform;
- Nine did not complete the training program;
- Four are currently enrolled and attending.

Participants	Credential Program	Average Wage
2	Certified Nursing Assistant	\$12.40
2	Cosmetology	\$13.70
1	Customer Service	\$16.00
1	EMT	\$15.40
1	Teacher Assistant	\$11.58
1	HVAC	\$21.70
1	IT Certificate	\$15.80
4	Medical Assistant	\$14.70
2	Patient Care Tech	\$14.20
1	Personal Trainer	\$17.10
1	Pharmacy Tech	\$12.60
7	Phlebotomy	\$15.25
1	Police Academy	\$24.50
1	Firefighter Training	\$19.23
2	Welding	\$18.20

PART II: CCE STUDENT PROFILES

Youth who started but did not complete a program:

T.B. was working as a campus safety officer and wanted to attend the police academy. Initially, he was doing well but he started questioning his career choice when presented with scenario exercises. Because he was unable to complete the active shooter simulation, he withdrew from the academy. Fortunately, he transitioned into a firefighter- training program, which was a better fit for his aspirations.

T.B. was accepted into a welding program at the local community college; however, prior to the start date, he was notified by out-of-state law enforcement officials that the remains of his murdered biological mother had been discovered. He deferred enrollment to cope with his emotions and became homeless. A temporary housing arrangement was made so he could begin training, but he was traumatized and unable to start a rigorous program. Although he was motivated to pursue a welding career, he left the state with a goal of making a fresh start.

E. D. was excited about a career in health care. She was working as a part-time caregiver but she recognized that with a Certified Nursing Assistant certificate she would earn more money and be able to work full-time. Her grandmother lived nearby and agreed to provide childcare for her daughter. E.D. completed the CNA coursework and was doing well with her clinicals when her grandmother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Within days, she lost her childcare and took on caregiving responsibilities for her grandmother. Because she did not complete the required clinical hours, she was unable to take the CNA certification exam.

A.G. was doing well in her cosmetology program until she had a surgical procedure and had to take a medical leave because she developed an infection. Although her instructor was supportive and told her that she could return to her program, her grandfather suddenly died and she moved to Texas to help her grandmother.

T.G. was accepted into an HVAC program through a local training provider. Initially, he did well and was able to balance his personal, work and school responsibilities. However, as the training became more complex, he struggled to grasp new material and he became increasingly frustrated and discouraged; he dropped out of the training program.

P.H. was an engaged student and was on track to complete her phlebotomy coursework. She was working part-time and parenting a school age child. While in the program she learned that she was pregnant. On the day of her final exam, she was rushed to the emergency room. Her instructor offered a make-up the exam but P.H. felt physically and emotionally unable to take the comprehensive final exam, therefore she did not complete the clinical hours required to sit for the phlebotomy certification exam.

J.K. enrolled in the police academy but was struggling with the academic work because of low reading comprehension. She was unable to earn a passing mark on the Radar test despite taking it two times and as a result, was not able to continue in the program.

T.W. was unable to pass the certification exam to earn her Certified Nursing Assistant exam because of low literacy and numeracy. Throughout the course, she attended class and applied herself to the best of her ability but was not academically able to complete the coursework. She was advised to access adult education and literacy services to improve her reading and math skills.

L.W. was on track to complete a teaching assistant certificate program when her parents were seriously injured in a head-on collision. Despite efforts to support her, she stopped attending and would not respond to calls from CCE program staff.

Youth who did not start a program:

A.R. applied for an EMT program (\$50 fee) when she was physically assaulted by a domestic partner; enrollment has been deferred until she can recover physically and emotionally from her injuries.

A.C. was accepted into a medical assistant program, (\$300 registration fee and uniform) and was eager to start the program. However, just prior to starting, she had a miscarriage and was unable to begin the program.

Youth who completed a program:

Z.B. completed her phlebotomy course; she is preparing for the certification exam and expects to be offered a full-time job once she is certified.

A.C. successfully completed the phlebotomy training and has applied for employment at a local hospital. She will take the certification exam in early January 2019.

A.D. completed Medical Assistant program. Because of the high cost of infant/child care, she is not working.

C.F. completed a personal trainer program; she is working in customer service.

Z.F. graduated from the a IT training program and is preparing to take the CompTIA certification test. He is working full time for E.L. earning \$15.95/hour and he has a stable housing arrangement.

K.K. graduated from a Medical Assistant program and is working full-time. She continues to take classes at the local community college and is working towards a Licensed Practical Nursing degree.

L.N. graduated with a dual certification in phlebotomy and medical lab tech. She was hired immediately after completing her internship at a local hospital at a starting hourly wage of \$21.75/hour.

B.S. graduated from a cosmetology program and is currently employed asa stylist. She loves what she does and aspires to open her own salon one day.

P.S. completed her patient care tech training and is employed at a local hospital making \$11.69/hour. She has been working in her field for over a year earning \$11.94 an hour with health insurance.

T.S. completed a pharmacy technician training program. After finishing the program, she worked for a local pharmacy for several months and but left this position to pursue another employment opportunity out-of-state.

L.W. completed a MIG/TIG welding certificate program through her local community college. Upon graduation, she had several offers of employment.

J.W. completed a patient care tech program and was employed at a local hospital.

P.W. completed a phlebotomy program and was offered employment upon completion of her clinical hours. Additionally, she is now independently training to become a Certified Nursing Assistant.

Youth who are currently enrolled in a program:

K.G. is enrolled in a phlebotomy program.

J.F. is enrolled in a phlebotomy program.

S.J. will complete *Customer Information Support Services* in February of 2019 and the training program helps students find full-time jobs upon program completion.

H.P. is on track to complete her Medical Assistant training with a Clinical Externship Program through the University of Central Missouri. The average starting wage is \$15.80 an hour, full-time.