

TITLE: CLIMB Health Initiative

DESCRIPTION: The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee received an overview of the CLIMB Health initiative and how its work will be conducted over the next year.

STAFF CONTACT: Leslie Sizemore, Assistant Vice President, Workforce Initiatives

COMMITTEE'S REVIEW

The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee received this information update at their October 23, 2023, meeting. It will not be covered or presented in detail at the November 17 board meeting; however, staff will be available for questions. A copy of the slides presented are included in your materials.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The CLIMB Health initiative, funded by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, establishes career ladders in mental and behavioral health for individuals with lived experience in addiction recovery. It promotes higher education led opportunities for workforce re-entry and encourages healing for the Kentucky communities most affected by the effects of drug abuse and addiction.

CLIMB Health focuses on three key components: recovery/re-entry directed pathways, facilitation of relationships between specialty courts and participating campuses, and dedicated infrastructure for distinct educational opportunities available exclusively from CLIMB campuses. The program invites individuals, who have been previously excluded from workforce participation, to capitalize on educational opportunities designed for workforce re-entry into mental and behavioral health professions.

Program Objectives - CLIMB Health will improve career outcomes through access to educational opportunities that take advantage of lived experience in addiction recovery. Specific objectives include:

- Providing participating campuses with a system wide curriculum and pathway structure beginning with peer support specialist certification.
- Expansion of educational opportunities to allow participants to build on their achievements through completion of an AAS degree in Human Services and eventual seamless transition to partnering four-year institutions for degree completion in social work.

- Assistance with implementation and management of the CLIMB Health initiative through financial support and training of a specialized staff.
- Breaking down social barriers to allow participating individuals to gain the benefits of meaningful workforce participation.
- Expansion of peer support certification training availability through KY Career and Technical College System (KCTCS) campuses.
- Promotion of collaborative partnerships which will expose previously underutilized talent pools to achieve healthcare workforce development efforts in the fields of mental and behavioral health.
- Establish credential-based/multi-degree career ladders integrating behavioral healthcare occupations.

Program Activities - Some of the strategies provided through CLIMB Health include:

- Coordination of partnerships with four-year universities, drug courts, job developers/re-entry or recovery employment specialists, and mental and behavioral health providers.
- Implementation of CLIMB Health career pathways on select KCTCS campuses within the contract year.
- Improvements to the existing adult peer support specialist certification and development of a new certification course of instruction for youth and family peer support specialists, compliant with state regulatory requirements.
- Expansion of at least one peer support specialist certification course at all participating campuses by the end of the first contract year.
- Coordination of a community of practice for participating campuses for the purposes of providing professional support, best practices, and professional development experiences.
- Participation in a statewide convening to showcase program successes and create interest in new behavioral health partnerships and programs.
- Development of a communications and marketing plan targeting recruitment of minoritized and marginalized populations.
- Identification of performance metrics including program and student outcomes, and use of data for continuous quality improvement efforts.

Resource Allocation - The CLIMB Health initiative will allocate the necessary budget, personnel, technology, and infrastructure to support program activities. Funding will be specific to the development needs of the participating community and technical colleges but will cap at \$165,000 per campus.

Communication and Reporting - Participating campuses will be required to maintain regular communication with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and as needed to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) representative(s). Quarterly data reports reporting program metrics must be submitted to CPE. Funds will be accessed through invoiced expenses.