

Cal Success: Expanding Student Supports and Workforce Services in California Community Colleges

Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET) dollars fund programs that help Food Stamp recipients gain the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. A new model of FSET delivery, known as Cal Success, supports community college participation in the program. FSET offers tremendous flexibility in the type of services that can be funded, with significant administrative requirements for program implementation. FSET oversight is provided by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and County Food Stamp offices. Existing food stamp recipients as well as eligible students (including those in households with incomes at or below 130% of federal poverty guidelines) may be candidates for Cal Success. Cal Success is similar to CalWORKs in many ways, but CalWORKs students cannot participate in the program.

FSET requires a 50/50 match of non-federal funding for FSET-allowable costs. Community colleges can use existing FTES apportionment as well as other allowable public funds, private grants, and in-kind resources to meet this match requirement. With match funding, colleges can draw down federal FSET dollars to fully fund new allowable services.

Cal Success services can include academic tutoring and case management, industry partnership development, job search and placement assistance, work experience, and job readiness training. Cal Success can also reimburse students for job or training-related expenses such as transportation to classes, textbooks, dependent care, personal safety items, uniforms, and course supplies. Federal monies cannot be used to fund courses or other existing services. Cal Success is an integral part of the Food Stamp program, and community colleges must interact regularly with county Food Stamp offices around issues such as Food Stamp eligibility and Cal Success enrollment.

Cal Success is in its early stages of development. The first round of pilot projects includes Cabrillo College, Foothill/DeAnza Colleges, and Skyline College, where implementation began this year. Other colleges plan to implement Cal Success in the near future. The FSET Expansion Initiative, a project of the nonprofit Insight Center for Community Economic Development, is leading the California effort to design and disseminate the Cal Success model in collaboration with the USDA, CDSS, and community college partners.

Cal Success provides colleges with an opportunity to provide significant new student supports and workforce services. For more information on Cal Success, please contact Aimee Chitayat, Program Director, at (510) 251-2600 x133.