Theory of Change: Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement

PROGRAM INPUTS

- VIDA
- VIDA counselors and management staff

ORGANIZATION

- Economic development corporations provide funding, information on demand occupations
- Funding from foundations and local governments
- Colleges and universities

PARTICIPANTS

- At least 18 years of age
 Unemployed, underemployed, or on
- public assistance
 A resident of Cameron,
 Hidalgo, Starr, or
 Willacy County
- High school diploma or GED
- Interest in high-demand occupations identified by VIDA

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

ASSESSMENT

- College entrance exam scores or math, reading and writing assessment completed during Placement Session
- Career Decision-Making System assessment
- Individual in-person interviews by VIDA counselors and senior staff (both at application and after admission to VIDA)
- Financial needs assessment

SUPPORTS

- Dedicated counselor to provide weekly counseling on academic and personal issues in group and individual settings
- Financial assistance with tuition, books, course-related materials, childcare and transportation, and emergency assistance
- Referrals to needed supports
- Required community service

INSTRUCTION

- 16-week College Prep Academy to prepare participants at grade levels 10-12 for college entrance exams
- Enrollment in local colleges' certificate and associate's degree programs related to in-demand occupations (less commonly, enrollment in last two years of bachelor's degree programs)

EMPLOYMENT

- Group counseling sessions on job search preparation and skills
- Support of credentials in high-demand occupations only
- Follow-up postcompletion to identify employment status; help unemployed with resume

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

GENERAL (21ST CENTURY) COMPETENCIES

- Improved basic academic skills for College Prep Academy participants
- Improved psycho-social skills (persistence, academic self-confidence, sense of belonging)

SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

• Improved occupational skills in desired area

CAREER KNOWLEDGE

- Increased awareness of steps needed to reach career goals
- Increased knowledge of labor market

RESOURCES

Constraints addressed through financial assistance and counseling services

LIFE CHALLENGES

- Reduced financial hardship
- Ability to address and mitigate stressors

MAIN OUTCOMES

POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT

- Enrollment in certificate or degree program tied to in-demand occupation
- Credits
- Credentials: completion of certificate or associate's degree program (less commonly, bachelor's degree program)

SUCCESSFUL IN CAREER-TRACK EMPLOYMENT

- Attainment of industry licenses, if applicable
- Employment in an in-demand occupation with benefits and living wage
- Employment progression and possibility for further education

OTHER LIFE OUTCOMES

- Improved individual and family well-being
- Improved family economic status

LOCAL POSTSECONDARY TRAINING SYSTEMS

 Certificate and degree programs offered by local colleges and universities

LOCAL ECONOMY

- Job openings in demand occupations
- Industry growth in demand occupations

OTHER COMMUNITY FACTORS

- Size, characteristics of target population
- Other service providers
- Referral partners

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS