

## ***The Navigator Model:***

# **Connecting to Employment**

*December 2011*

***How navigators connect employment and other services to support jobseekers and trainees—each step of the way***



### ***Inside:***

- **What navigators are and what they do**
- **Two models of navigator services**
- **Case studies of successful programs**

**Navigators make a big impact when it comes to training programs—in student retention, successful completion of training, and gaining employment.**

Since the national roll-out of Disability Navigators several years ago, local systems—including education, social services, workforce, immigration, disability and others—have adopted and modified Navigator positions to provide individual support and assistance in navigating a career path.

In one example funded by the Workforce Development Council, students who worked with a navigator during their automotive training finished the course at a rate of 81%—compared to 30% of trainees who didn't. After the program, they were far more likely to be employed, working in an auto-related field, and working full-time.

Another WDC partnership linked homeless jobseekers and staff members with a navigator who helped them access the WorkSource system of employment resources. 58% of these participants enrolled in a job-training or job-search program as a result.

At its core, the navigator's job is to link between and within systems and industries in order to help the individual succeed at all the steps in his or her career path and become more self-sufficient.

**This report shares what the WDC has learned about the navigator's unique role in supporting students, jobseekers and staff for maximum impact.**

# Background and Definitions:

## What Does a Navigator Offer?

### Knowledge

- Labor market
- Industry sector(s)
- Sector(s) hiring practices and employment needs
- Insider knowledge of procedures, resources and components of multiple systems, including education, workforce, disability, housing systems, etc.

### Skills

- Cultural competency
- Go-getter, self-starter, self-motivated
- Problem solver for variety of demands faced by customers (jobs, families, personal issues, financial/housing instability, transportation)
- Address misconceptions by systems/customers
- Communicator, relationship builder/maintainer

### Activities

- One-on-one assistance
- Work with client to develop education and career plan
- Support persistence in gaining access to services, etc.

- Facilitate advancement
- Connect to resources for job placement, career progression, continued training
- Onsite presence and regular interaction in collaborative meetings and task forces within systems and their administrators, staff, faculty, etc.
- Work collaboratively with 'service team' members, including social services, education providers, job developers, employers

### Location

- Success hinges on accessibility, so location matters
- **Education** – Located on campus
- **Employment** – Located at an employer site or at a Work-Source site
- **Social Services** – Travels between two or more Work-Source sites
- **Combination** – Provides navigator services to access two or more systems (e.g., Education/Workforce/Employer; Social Services/Education/ Workforce)

## Two Navigator Models

Several Navigator models can be successfully applied depending on the goal(s) and situation. The two models used in the WorkSource Seattle-King County system are *Customer Resource* and *Staff Resource*.

### Customer Resource

*The Navigator serves as the leader of a customer's integrated "service team," eliminating duplication of services and stretching resources.*

### Staff Resource

*The Navigator serves as a knowledge resource and relationship broker to staff members and employers.*

Services Provided	Customer Resource	Staff Resource
<b>Assessment</b>	Develops a career plan with clear education goals (including financing), and employment goals; if barriers are identified, provides connections to a case manager	As requested, reviews assessments developed by case managers and makes recommendations to achieve plans/goals
<b>Guidance</b>	Tracks progress of plan, supports persistence, and facilitates advancement and career progression	Provides training to staff about system components, processes, labor market, industries, employers, career paths
<b>Linkages</b>	Connects client as needed to support services, education/training providers and components, career and industry information, and job opportunities	Informs job developers about industry hiring practices and needs, and provides connections to employers
<b>Advocacy</b>	Serves as a liaison between client and the 'systems' being accessed (social services, education/training, industries and employers) and their components (e.g., housing, financial aid, advising, student services, HR, etc.)	Provides employers with information about system resources

# Staff Resource Model: Homeless Employment Navigator

In spring 2010, the WDC and Building Changes entered into a formal partnership to promote system integration between housing and employment services in King County.

The resulting Homeless Employment Navigator pilot project engages navigators to outreach to individuals within Washington Family Fund housing units in King County and bridge them to WorkSource and other employment services.

It also aims to enhance the WorkSource system's understanding and capacity to serve customers who may be experiencing homelessness.

Three Homeless Employment Navigators are employed by the YWCA, the service provider for this project. In addition to meeting individually with customers during office hours at four different transitional housing sites, the navigators provide workshops, computer labs and job clubs at the sites. They worked with 33 individuals, 19 of whom (58%) either accessed Workforce Investment Act services at WorkSource or enrolled in further training, including GED or short-term skills training at community/technical colleges.

The navigators are also charged with training and acting as a resource for WorkSource staff. Navigators trained more than 100 staff of WorkSource and partner agencies in "Working with Homeless Jobseekers." The sessions improved and ex-

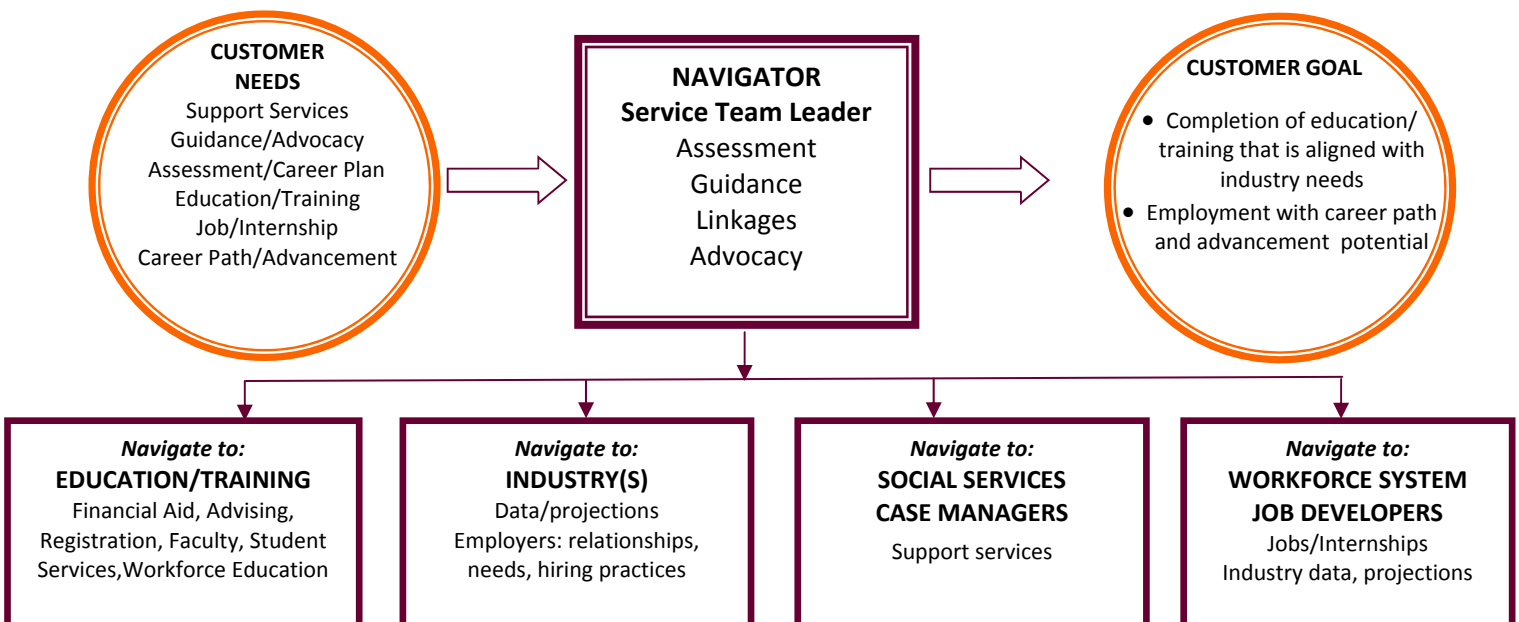


panded knowledge and relationships, resulting in more effective partnerships.

The navigators also established desk space and hours at WorkSource, furthering cross-system coordination and service provision as they attend WorkSource partner and team meetings. Clear referral guidelines for Workforce Investment Act training programs were established.

Thanks to Navigator coordination with the Region Four Work-First Coordinator, some Navigator activities are now approved to count toward WorkFirst requirements. This reduced one of the project's key conflicts for customers receiving TANF.

## Staff Resource Model: How It Works



# Customer Resource Model: Automotive Career Pathways

Through a grant from the Aspen Institute, the WDC partnered with Shoreline Community College to create the Automotive Career Pathways program.

Students in the General Service Technician program learn technical automotive skills in Shoreline’s state-of-the-art Automotive Training Center while being supported by a career navigator. The navigator works on site with students, but is employed by Pacific Associates, a WorkSource partner—thus bridging the gap between the college and the workforce systems.

Each student forms a personal connection with the navigator, who:

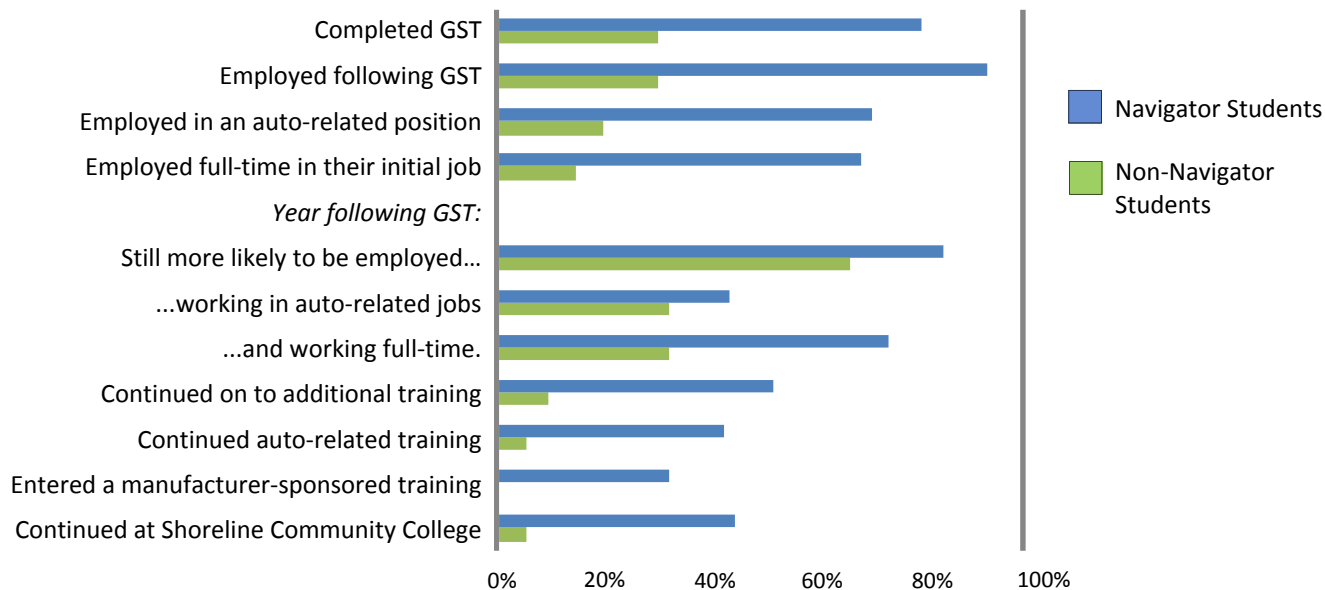
- Facilitates college enrollment and registration.
- Helps the student identify financial aid from multiple sources (including the college, WorkSource, and scholar-

ships) and access these resources.

- Can help to cover emergency expenses that might otherwise derail a student’s training.
- Connects students with other services available in the community for multiple needs.
- Works closely with employers to chart career ladders and develop internship opportunities.
- Keeps in touch with students as they graduate and gain employment, helping them continue to learn and advance in the field.



**Results:** An evaluation by the Aspen Institute showed that students who enrolled in navigator services were much more likely to finish the General Service Technician program, and afterwards, were more likely to be employed, working in an auto-related field, and working full-time, as shown in the chart below:



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