

Meeting Location: _____ **Date:** _____

Overcoming Barriers to Career Education

The Nebraska Department of Education is conducting a study to identify barriers to career education for Special Populations, as defined by Perkins IV. Students in most of the Perkins IV Special Population categories, including English Language Learners (including migrant students), students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students (including foster students), and teen/single parents are generally less likely to complete high school, to participate and complete career and technical education courses, to meet academic requirements, and, for those who graduate, less likely to continue their career education.

Educators and other analysts have identified a number of barriers to career education for some members of these Special Population groups. Your input is sought on the underlying reasons and possible strategies for overcoming those barriers. The issues and strategies may vary among the groups.

1. What is your role in relation to the education of young people (check all that apply)

- community outreach/educator
- non profit organization administrator/program leader
- parent
- volunteer
- school teacher
- school administrator
- school counselor
- other (please specify) _____

2. What education level of students do you work with primarily (check all that apply)

- elementary
- middle school
- high school
- postsecondary
- adult ed

3. Please indicate below which group or groups you are referencing in your responses:

- economically disadvantaged students, including students in foster care
- English Language Learners, including migrants
- students with learning disabilities
- students with physical disabilities
- single/teen parents

**4. Which racial/ethnic groups are represented among the students with whom you work?
Please list from highest to lowest percentage.**

1. No future orientation

Some students do not consider their future, or if they do, have a negative view. As a consequence, they do not apply themselves at school, may drop out, and are not prepared to continue their education or enter the workforce on a career path.

Underlying reasons:

- family and neighbors provide few positive role models for success in the workforce
- family doesn't see the workforce necessity of education, especially postsecondary
- student has very low expectations for his or her future
- student sees relatively few similar adults in the community or through the media who are successful in the workforce

Please identify any other reasons for lack of a future orientation:

What are some strategies that you think can help overcome any of the barriers, identified above, to having a future orientation?

2. Inadequate preparation

Some students, even those with a future orientation, may be unprepared for college-level work and/or lack the basic skills for successfully entering the workforce.

Underlying reasons:

- poor school attendance and behaviors
- poor study skills
- no advanced or specialized coursework
- low expectations by teachers and counselors
- inadequate parental guidance and supervision
- families moving frequently
- inappropriate role models
- unrealistic attitudes about meeting their future goals

Please identify any other reasons for inadequate preparation:

What are some strategies that you think can help overcome any of the barriers, identified above, to adequate preparation for college-level work and/or the workforce?

3. Career indecision or limited interests

Some students have difficulty identifying possible career options and don't know what postsecondary education programs, if any, to pursue. Or, they may limit their consideration of careers to a few, familiar paths, which do not reflect the full range of their aptitudes and might exclude many appropriate careers in high-demand and high-wage fields.

Underlying reasons:

- inadequate exposure to a variety of career role models through family and friends
- lack of parental experience and guidance
- lack of direct experience with basic skills that are useful in a variety of occupations
- lack of self-confidence in ability to pursue any career path
- not seeing connections between coursework and career options
- gender stereotyping in many career areas
- inadequate career counseling

Please identify any other reasons for career and postsecondary education indecision or limited interests:

What are some strategies that you think could help overcome any of the barriers, identified above, to adequate career and postsecondary education decision making?

4. Uncertainty about career education options and procedures

Some students may have a career goal, but don't know how to identify and choose among the education and training options, and may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the procedures necessary for pursuing that career education.

Underlying reasons:

- lack of information about the postsecondary education options for them
- lack of information about financial aid resources and applications
- parental inexperience with college application and enrollment procedures
- student/family confusion and/or intimidation about the paperwork requirements
- lack of options or awareness on starting career education during high school

Please identify any other reasons for uncertainty about career education options and procedures:

What are some strategies that you think can help overcome some of the barriers, identified above, to identifying career education options and successfully navigating the required procedures?

5. Inadequate financial resources

Some students find it difficult to meet the direct costs of education while meeting the basic costs of living for themselves, and, in some cases, for family members.

Underlying reasons:

- high costs of tuition, books, supplies, computer
- high costs of basic needs: transportation, housing, food, health care, child care
- lack of awareness and information about financial aid resources and applications
- ineligibility for federal financial aid
- lack of information and connections to apprenticeship opportunities
- limited employment options that coordinate with coursework schedules
- no financial support from family
- need to support children or other family members

Please identify any other reasons for inadequate financial resources for completing a career education program:

What are some strategies that you think can help overcome any of the barriers, identified above, to adequate financial resources for completing a career education program?

6. Limited access to employment opportunities in their career field

Some students who complete career education programs may have a difficult time securing employment in that field.

- student does not have a good network for seeking employment in that field
- student experiences discrimination based on gender, race/ethnicity, language, citizenship status or disabilities
- student's education has not prepared him or her to meet the standards of a highly competitive job market in that career field

Please identify any other reasons for limited access to employment opportunities:

What are some strategies that you think can help overcome any of the barriers, identified above, which limit access to employment opportunities?

7. Other Barriers to Career Education

Please describe any other career education barriers that you are aware of for some members of special population groups.

What are some strategies that you think can help overcome any of the barriers you have identified.

8. Model Programs for Overcoming Barriers to Career Education

Please identify any model programs (in Nebraska or other states) that you believe have shown success in helping to overcome any of the career education barriers for special populations.

Optional: Name _____
Organization _____
email _____

Thank you very much for your participation.

For questions about this study or to request a link to an online version of the survey, contact:
Dr. Patricia Funk, patfunkcareered@cox.net.