

Pikes Peak Community College and Pikes Peak Community College Consortium

Background

Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) and the Consortium have established a mindset of a competitive request for proposal process for Perkins funding. This mindset contributed to the development of a plan and selection of actions steps that meet the objectives of the Perkins grant and led the Perkins Field Council to select PPCC's plan and the Consortium's plan as exemplary. A Field Council Member was able to discuss plan specifics and general philosophy behind the PPCC and the Consortium's Perkins process with Perkins Plan Administrator.

At PPCC and the Consortium the process for requesting funding is what drives the innovation and exemplary nature of the plan. Faculty and staff that submit requests are guided with a series of questions:

1. Describe the overall concept of your proposal?
2. What observations were made that helped you to determine that this proposal was needed? Provide examples.
3. Describe how your proposal fulfills the objectives of the project? Be specific!
4. Provide examples of typical student projects and/or assignments that will be accomplished if this proposal is funded.
5. What are the expected student outcomes upon completion of this proposal? Provide detail.
6. What measures are in place to monitor student performance and outcomes?

These questions force the requestor of funds to be strategic and consider outcomes of the action step. Also present in the Perkins planning process is constant communication between Consortium faculty and PPCC faculty. This breeds organic collaboration and helps to strengthen the funding requests while developing pathways for the student. By coupling this approach with the new perspectives in the Consortium toward an enhanced focus on industry relationships and community partnerships, PPCC and the Consortium has a recipe for results driven Perkins plans which positively impact the K-12 and postsecondary institutions and the students and workforce in the service area.

Key Innovations(s)

There is a focus on cross disciplinary programs between PPCC and the Consortium members. Welding, Interior Design, and CAD programs are working on joint student projects that incorporate all aspects of a product from design to fabrication. This cross discipline approach to the curriculum allows for the student to understand not only the specific program they are enrolled in, but also the full lifecycle of a product and how their work impacts the entire fabrication and design process. This collaboration leads to better student outcomes and increased creativity for future Perkins submissions. Perkins funding was secured for the purchase of various equipment needs.

The Consortium plan includes funding to help fuel the expansion of Career and Technical Education in middle and high schools. Examples include increased offerings of computer gaming and information technology troubleshooting curriculum. The expansion of the Arts program at Manitou is multi-faceted and includes digital design, sculpting, and advanced woodworking. Embracing Perkins funding opportunities to develop and enhance these arts programs will result in students developing advanced skills such as the ability to work with CAD to effectively convey project ideas, apply mathematics to the carving and sculpture techniques, and produce products and art from multiple mediums.

PPCC has embraced partnerships with industry in order to effectively use Perkins funding and ensure equipment and initiatives prepare students for the workforce. The Dental Assisting program acquired a panoramic x-ray trainer used for full mouth imaging. This piece of equipment is industry cutting edge and can be found in the best dental offices. This purchase allows students to stand out upon graduation as a job candidate that not only has the knowledge about cutting edge technology but also the ability to operate the technology.

The HVAC program at PPCC has capitalized on Perkins funding to help establish simulations and a virtual environment for student learning. This simulation and virtual environment allows for the full scope of skills training without the need to lease a large building. Students will use iPads and other technology to access systems remotely thus providing them ability to take real time and real world measurements from existing rooms. Students are also able to partner with PPCC facility operations to troubleshoot and learn in a complex environment. This has resulted in a reduction in overhead costs and facility needs in addition to benefiting the students understanding of HVAC.

Key Factors to Implementation

PPCC and Consortium have identified several components that lead to the success of their Perkins Plan.

- A team approach to administration of Perkins. Creating a culture of collaboration and cross functional communication has help to establish a process that is competitive and strategic.
- Transparency during the Perkins funding process. All stakeholders in the Consortium and at PPCC are able to access documents and information about the funding decisions. All requests are archived and shared on a server.
- Having a “go-to” person for the administration of the Perkins funding process. This allows for one on one meetings and information sessions and lessens the confusion about the process.
- Consistency in the process and leadership of Perkins. The ability of faculty and staff to know the simple when, where, and how of the process while still meeting the funding and outcome requirements has been beneficial.
- Good support. Support from CCCS, the PPCC president and Consortium leadership has been an essential component for valuing the grant and benefits that it can provide to the student, workforce, and institution.
- Engagement with the program advisory boards. A requirement for Perkins to be a part of the advisory board agenda has help to elevate the partnership with the employers and establish strategic funding requests.

Replications

- During the decision making stage for funding proposals it is essential to look at the funding needs and determine if the action step will be the icing on the cake or the one thing that will make the program stand out to draw the student enrollment.
- Encourage requestors to think about innovation, eliminating redundancies, and what could energize the program.
- Engagement of the program advisory boards via the meeting agenda. This input from the workforce is crucial and they are sometimes untapped resources for guiding the use of Perkins funds.
- Transparency and information sharing breeds collaboration and innovative thinking about funding requests.