

CROSS-SECTOR RESILIENCY A CONSORTIUM FOR STUDENT SUCCESS AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Another project that aims to build resilience by addressing post-secondary success for marginalized workers is the Northeast Resiliency Consortium (NRC), a collaboration of seven colleges in four states funded by a USDOL Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant (TAACCCT).

Partners include Passaic County Community College (NJ), Atlantic Cape Community College (NJ), LaGuardia Community College (NY), Kingsborough Community College (NY), Capital Community College (CT), Housatonic Community College (CT), and Bunker Hill Community College (MA), as well as Achieving the Dream and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The consortium, formed to serve trade-impacted and low-skill adults, is dedicated to capacity-building based on four strategies critical to workforce development and post-secondary success:

- Accelerated learning to speed the acquisition of credentials
- Advanced technology to support learning and completion
- Employer engagement to shape curriculum and provide job opportunities
- Support services to enhance post-secondary persistence and labor market success

From these approaches, the consortium plucks a stout basket of workforce and adult education chestnuts — e.g., competency-based, industry-recognized, stackable credentials; credit for prior learning; contextualized math; credit-bearing, work-based learning; career guidance — and a number of technological gems, including online advising, adaptive learning platforms, gaming technology, and simulation.

These approaches will be implemented or strengthened in programs across three industry sectors critical to disaster preparedness and response: information technology, health, and energy/environment. Targeted occupations include Paramedics, Medical Coders, Electronic Health Records Technicians, Community Health Workers, Cyber Security Specialists, Computer Support Specialists, Mobile Application Developers, Energy Industry Technicians, Green Building and Maintenance Technicians, and Construction Management Personnel. Related programs of study in which the partner colleges have shown most interest to date include emergency management, food and food service, mobile app development, sustainability, and community health.⁴⁷

NRC has also begun a discussion on core competencies in resilience — roughly defined as adaptation to both natural catastrophe and economic change. Over the next two years, the consortium's action plan includes:

- Deciding upon a core definition of resiliency for the NRC
- Defining and categorizing resilience competencies — and an assessment strategy — with industry and other partners
- Establishing a national resiliency advisory council
- Validating the competencies with input from NRC colleges and partners as well as the national advisory council

The seven partner colleges will then determine how to best refine and align programs of study with NRC resiliency competencies, and start to offer programs of study incorporating them. Finally, in September 2016, the consortium will hold a resiliency summit to evaluate progress and assess prospects for making the resiliency competencies available to a broader network of community colleges.