

Strategies for Sustaining and Scaling an Integrated Services Model

Sustainability—The continuation of a project’s goals, principles, and efforts to achieve desired outcomes.

-U.S. Department of Labor

The integrated services strategy that is central to the WSSN model was developed to help low-income students reach financial stability and move up the economic ladder by promoting an innovative framework that integrates and bundles three distinct but related services:

1. **Education and employment advancement**
2. **Income and work supports**
3. **Financial services and asset building**

Strategies that ensure the scalability and sustainability of this integrated support services model help colleges build their capacity to support a student-focused culture in each of ATD’s Institutional Capacity Framework areas. These strategies reflect the collective learnings of WSSN colleges, state partners, and ATD facilitators.



ATD’s Institutional Capacity Framework

Leadership & Vision

- Embed strategies, goals, and objectives into the college and/or department’s strategic plan.
- Establish milestones for tracking progress and communicating success.
- Ensure services have a defined “home” within a designated department with clear accountability/reporting to the senior leadership on campus.
- Support campus professional enrichment and training that incorporates WSSN concepts and goals.
- Share sustainability planning activities with partners and supporters. Include communication about your project in annual planning and budgeting processes.

Data & Technology

- Use grant performance data to determine which activities to continue, new focus areas and the scale of the activities that you want to sustain.
- Quarterly performance reviews will allow project staff and partners to make informed decisions when planning sustainability.
- Share WSSN data with internal and external partners to communicate progress on goals and strengthen involvement across the organization and community.

Equity

- Ensure that your college has a clearly defined equity vision statement and a strategic plan for implementation.
- Establish clear policies and practices for equity and diversity. In addition to the WSSN data, specifically monitor achievement gaps for at-risk populations.
- Train faculty and staff on cultural competency with low-income students and students of color.
- Provide and integrate WSSN services where vulnerable student populations are already engaged.

Teaching & Learning

- Engage academic leadership and faculty in efforts to build the WSSN content into the curriculum and learning outcomes. When these changes are put through established rules and processes for changing curricula, it helps sustain the changes over time.
- Develop faculty understanding of the protocol for engaging students in need, and empowering faculty with tools to refer students to WSSN services.
- Identify the spheres of influence across faculty and cultivate champions who will promote the student success initiatives among their colleagues.

Engagement & Communication

- Collaborate with organizations serving at-risk students by aligning around common goals. Maintain lines of communication and information sharing.
- Engage area employers in curriculum development based on market needs. Can they assist with pro bono services, in-kind resources or other means?
- Market student outcomes across the college community and with local partners, industry associations and other state or national organizations.
- Develop an integrated communications plan that shares student successes in collaboration with the college communications office.

Strategy & Planning

- Develop a list of ‘high-priority’ activities you want to champion. What are the intended outcomes? Whose help and participation will you need?
- For high-priority activities, identify tasks, timelines and benchmarks to measure progress. Adjust your strategy as needed based on changes in the environment.
- Actively pursue resources needed for program sustainability. Assemble a team of internally and externally connected colleagues to scout for funding opportunities.

Policies & Practices

- Use the framework of the college’s vision, mission and goals to communicate the linkages between day-to-day successes and the college’s big-picture policies.
- Identify policies that present barriers to the goals of an integrated services model. Suggest alternate solutions to honor the policy without negatively impacting at-risk students.
- Document memorable stories that capture the relationship between the student’s experience and policies intended to impact success.
- Identify colleagues and online resources that will keep you abreast of changes in state policy and legislation impacting services for at-risk students.
- Cultivate relationships with state agencies that oversee student benefits and services. Use these contacts to navigate eligibility issues and policy changes.