



## Powerhouse Partnership Creates Success for Local Students and Workforce

*WIOA and UACCB break down barriers for students entering workforce*

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For many, there are several very real barriers to pursuing higher education. Individuals face a myriad of financial barriers or familial circumstances that inhibit an easy transition into furthering their educational pursuits. While a traditional four-year college degree isn't for everyone, two local organizations have partnered to ensure these perceived barriers do not hold any person back from the next step to propel them to success, whether that's a certificate program, an associate degree or more.

The University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) recognizes these barriers. Through a partnership with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), action is being taken to bridge this gap and help students secure the resources they need to achieve success. Through WIOA, a federally funded student assistance program, UACCB students can receive immediate assistance with needs such as money for fuel, childcare and required technology for courses at any level.

UACCB and WIOA have actually enjoyed a long history of working together to help students reach their educational and employment goals. Until recently, their work together would begin when WIOA identified a participant in need of educational services, or UACCB identified a potential student in need of WIOA services. During the pandemic, both organizations identified ways to improve and adjust their offerings and created a new, streamlined way to work together from the time of initial contact to create more effective results for the participants.

“Rather than waiting for one organization to make initial contact, we made a conscious change to proactively work together and combine outreach activities to provide help to more students who need it,” said Dr. Shonk, vice chancellor for academic affairs at UACCB.

Support from WIOA is available to both youth and adult age individuals seeking a degree in higher education. Students who have completed their high school education, have earned their GED, discontinued their high school education, or are currently enrolled college students who express a proven financial need, may be eligible to receive immediate assistance from the WIOA program.



Program assistance is not limited to those seeking a degree, WIOA also assists graduates with employment-related expenses such as specialized clothing, fuel to travel to work and other related expenses. GED assistance is also available to individuals who have not obtained a high school diploma.

“The partnership between UACCB and WIOA works to improve the residents’ quality of life, grow the local economy and provide more and better opportunities for community members,” said Dr. Shonk. “These organizations have developed strong relationships, allowing us all to better serve the community.”

Assistance from WIOA can include aid for tuition and fees, textbooks, childcare, housing, fuel to travel to and from school, purchase of supplies needed for learning including computers and other technology, and much more. In the event that a student is not eligible for assistance through WIOA, the teams work relentlessly to find another avenue of assistance for the student.

“I have seen the lengths the UACCB team will go just to help one individual,” said Elizabeth Smith, WIOA program manager. “As a partnership, we are able to create good members of the community because of the education and leadership skills that UACCB instills in them. They are able to look at their accomplishments with pride and are now able to make a living from the skills they have learned.”

UACCB is no stranger to providing support and assistance to their students. With dozens of scholarship opportunities and one-on-one financial aid assistance, UACCB ensures that students have everything they need, from completing their first day on campus, to walking across the stage at graduation. As a duo, these groups break down barriers and enable individuals to succeed both in the classroom and in the workforce.

UACCB and WIOA can help you achieve your education goals and provide assistance throughout your educational journey. To learn more, [contact UACCB today](#).

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