

# Individuals from Economically Disadvantaged Families, Including Low-Income Youth and Adults

## Defined:

*Economically Disadvantaged Families* - Any individual or member of a family who receives need-based financial assistance, or whose income is at or below the poverty level as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is considered an individual who is from an economically disadvantaged background.

*Economically Disadvantaged Youth* - A person 18-24 years old whose annual family income is at or below the income guidelines for Federal Free or Reduced Lunch Programs, and who has significant barriers to employment, as defined by the Federal Workforce Investment Act.

**\*Nearly one-third of college students are low-income, and most don't know the resources and programs that can help them.**

**\*Students from low-income communities are three times less likely to earn a postsecondary degree.**

**\*2023 Data**



## Access and Equity Considerations:

- Students experiencing poverty may need more or different types of support to achieve the same outcomes as those with more economic resources.
- Integrated and holistic services and supports across three pillars: (1) employment and career advancement, (2) income and work supports, and (3) financial services and asset building.
- Changing college staff members' mindsets about students struggling with poverty and related challenges, as well as attitudes toward the colleges' role in addressing these issues
- Implement a Short-Term Enrichment Program (STEP) that pairs economically disadvantaged students with role models that help them with the development of education and career goals.
- Provide affordable living options and/or resources for students to find affordable living options near campus.
- Evaluate how Financial Aid eligibility rules hinder access to other assistance and ways to address and eliminate the barriers.
- Disadvantaged students often are under a lot of stress, so it's important to make the classroom a place where they can seek support and feel understood.
- Find effective ways to eliminate class one-time out-of-pocket costs that are only needed for the class and have no usefulness after the class is completed.
- Do not assume that economically disadvantaged students have the funding available to access technology or that I will have ongoing access to technology.

# Program Examples and Additional Information

## Program Examples:

- Amarillo College – No Excuses
- Circle of Support – Community partnership so non-academic barriers such as emergency expenses, child care, transportation, housing, and food do not hinder students from academic success.
- PACE (Partners for Student Access, Collaboration, and Equitable Outcomes) – implementation of community liaison and student case manager for ease of access.
- PASS Program (Providing Academic Support to Students) – Advising team that does case management and works with other programs to help with holistic support such as textbooks or childcare needs.
- Ranger Closet – Clothes, Shoes, and Toiletries to assist students with the transition from education to careers (interviewing) and emergency needs where they have lost support.
- Social Services Benefits Navigator – Individual that works with community partners and students to apply all available help and options holistically.

## Current Literature and Research:

- Building Equity by Supporting the Whole Student: Findings from Case Studies of Two Colleges in the Working Students Success Network. By Ann E. Person, Daisy Gonzalez, Gina Lucchesi, and Margaret Sullivan, Mathematica Anne Price and Jhumpa Bhattacharya, Insight Center for Community Economic Development. October 2020.
- Creating a College-Going Culture for Economically Disadvantaged Students Through Social Justice Counseling. By Loni Crumb & Rufus Larkin 2018.
- Helping Hand: Resources & Support for Low Income College Students. By STEPS (Student Training & Education in Public Service. September 2020.
- Keeping College Within Reach How Texas Can Move More Low-Income and Adult Students through College. By Garrett Groves and Leslie Helmcamp. April 2015.
- Must-have resources for Low-Income College Students. By Jon Fortenbury. December 2019.
- State of Student Aid and Higher Education in Texas. By Trellis Foundation. 2021.
- Strategies for Closing the Gap: Predicting Student Performance in Economically Disadvantaged Schools. By Hassan Tajalli and Cynthia Opheim. 2004.

## Additional Information

### Organizations

- College Possible
- Education Trust
- Equal Opportunity Schools
- Manpower Demonstration Research Corp.
- National College Attainment Network
- One Goal – Graduation

### Initiatives

- 3 Impactful Ways to Help Economically Disadvantaged Students
- Amarillo College – Creating a Systematic Approach to Poverty in Higher Education
- Lumina Foundation
- Texas College Access Network
- Trellis Foundation – Learning and Resources

### Services

- *Compudopt* – Providing technology access and education to under-resourced youth and their families.
- Get Connected, Get Help. 211.org
- Feed America – Because no one should go hungry.
- iMentor – Every student deserves a champion.
- Unitedway.org
  - United Way supports 211, the 24/7 go-to resource that helps people across the U.S. and Canada find the local resources they need.

