



# From Education to Employment

A Program for Single Mothers in College

# Program Mission

Fall 2013 – present

In partnership with the WNY Women's Foundation, NCCC offers a unique program designed to:

- 1) Improve retention and graduation rates for low-income single mothers enrolled at the College.
- 2) Help single mothers advance their career, ultimately by finding employment in their field with family-sustaining income.

# Mapping Opportunities for Moms (MOMs): Why?

Women have responded to changes in the workforce and the economy by enrolling in community colleges in large numbers, where they now make up the majority of students.

- In 2010, 57% of students at two-year institutions were women.
- The number of single mothers enrolling in undergraduate programs has doubled in the last 20 years.
- Currently, more than 4 million women attend two-year colleges, more than the number of women attending four-year colleges and universities.
- More than 1 million of these students (25%) are mothers, half of whom are unmarried.

50% of mothers attending community colleges are single mothers, an historically underserved population facing challenges and obstacles to graduation that other students do not experience.

# Essential Components of MOMs Program

Achievement Coach: Offers individualized guidance to overcome academic and personal obstacles and advocates for student to help ensure academic success.

Career Coach: Offers a wide range of career services, including assistance choosing a major and obtaining jobs and internships.

- The MOMs Program utilizes a case management approach, with services tailored to the specific needs and challenges program participants face during their time at NCCC and following graduation.
- Outreach to community agencies in order to inform the public of opportunities for single mothers facing economic challenges, and to offer assistance in becoming a college student.
- Expansion of support system for single moms and promotion of campus environment that is sensitive to the unique challenges single mothers face in college.
- Appropriate on-campus and community referrals based on individual student and family needs.

# Achievement Coach

- Guide students through the College's admission process.
- Help students complete the FAFSA and TAP application.
- Help students create workable schedules.
- Academic monitoring: midterm warnings, non-attendance, registration and holds, degree evaluations, verifying applications for graduation.
- Organize MOMs Support Group meetings and other workshops (e.g. stress management, study strategies, financial literacy).
- Conduct self-assessments with students (financial literacy, learning style).
- Direct students to free online VARK Questionnaire (measures visual, aural, read/write, and kinesthetic sensory modalities to identify learning style).
- Identify on-campus and community resources for the cohort (e.g. funding sources, tutoring services, counseling services, childcare providers).
- Conduct community outreach to promote program.
- Organize special events (e.g. Christmas Giving Tree).
- Advocate for students to help create a campus environment that is sensitive to the needs of single moms in college.
- Serve as an extra support system for program participants.

# Career Coach

- Help undecided students identify career paths and choose a major.
- Educate students on job prospects (e.g. salary comparisons).
- Ensure students understand job-specific education/credentialing requirements.
- Utilize assessment tools in career development (Focus 2, MBTI).
- Advise students on obtaining employment or internships offering valuable experience prior to graduation.
- Help students and graduates find and obtain internships and jobs.
- Help students/grads understand job announcements, create effective applications, and navigate the application process (e.g. online systems).
- Teach resume writing, cover letter writing, job search techniques, and prepare students and graduates for interviews.
- Locate funding sources for degree programs and vocational training.
- Advertise career development services to help recruit new students into program.
- Manage program tracking systems and collaborate with Office of Information Technology to develop tracking capabilities.
- Conduct regular student outreach to promote program involvement.
- Assist with retention initiatives to ensure forward progress on career path.

# Programming

## Workshops:

- Financial Literacy
- Effective Job Search
- Resume Writing
- Cover Letter Writing
- Finding and Applying for Scholarships
- Interview Techniques
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Study Strategies
- Single Mothers in College

## MOMs Support Group:

- Bi-monthly meeting where students collaborate to support each other.
- Programming as determined by group (e.g. discussion topics, guest speakers).

# Example: Financial Literacy

- MOMs Support Group participants identified student need.
- NCCC identified and obtained grant funding for program.
- MOMs staff met with different organizations to secure ideal workshop facilitator.
- MOMs Program participants learned material and then led group discussions and mentored other students.

## Subject Areas

Understanding and Managing Credit: Explores credit reports and their purpose, who views them and why, the information listed on a credit report, how to access credit reports, how credit scores are calculated, how to establish credit, and how to raise credit scores.

Banking 101: Explores the difference between banks and credit unions, the reasons for creating a bank account, bank account options, responsible lending vs. predatory lending, consolidation loans, dangers of co-signing and joint ownership of loans, savings and checking accounts.

Preparing a Household Budget: Explores the importance of preparing a budget, the reasons for setting financial goals, and basic methods for household and family budgeting.

# Scholarships

STEM Scholarship: Need-based competitive scholarship of up to \$2,500 for students in approved programs. Award is intended to encourage enrollment in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), where women have been historically underrepresented.

- 3 awarded, 1 application pending
- Funding for 5 awards in 2014-2015 academic year

Emergency Scholarship: Need-based, one-time award of up to \$500 for emergencies. Award must solve a problem that threatens student retention.

- 17 awarded

Workforce Development Scholarship: Need-based, competitive award of up to \$1,400 for approved non-credit vocational training programs and certification exam fees.

- 25 awarded

# Advocacy : Promoting Single Moms' Enrollment in STEM Fields

Community colleges cover a wide range of occupational and academic programs in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, math), but women remain underrepresented in high-demand, historically “male” fields such as chemistry, advanced manufacturing, and engineering.

Women tend to pursue occupations such as nursing, education, and office administration, but are underrepresented in most STEM fields.

- In 2012, 91% of registered nurses were women, but women accounted for just 27% of computer support specialists and 1% of automotive service techs and mechanics.
- With the exception of nursing and other health-related fields, historically “female” occupations offer lower wages and fewer opportunities for career advancement than math and science fields requiring a comparable level of education.
- The number of STEM jobs is expected to grow at twice the rate of non-STEM jobs in the next decade. Single moms' low participation in STEM fields limits their access to the benefits these fields offer.

# Encouraging single moms' enrollment in STEM majors will help reduce income inequality and stop the cycle of poverty for many families.

In Niagara County, 68% of families in poverty are headed by single mothers. Single moms stand to benefit the most from a community college education, but the numbers for female college graduates are deceiving.

- Women who receive an associate degree see a 22% average increase in earnings, versus 13% for men, compared to workers with only a high school education.
- The higher returns for women are due in part to their concentration in allied health fields, such as nursing, which offer relatively high salaries for community college graduates.
- Although women earn the majority of associate degrees and certificates awarded by community colleges, they are concentrated in lower-wage fields with fewer opportunities for advancement (excluding certain allied health fields).
- Under-representation in scientific and technical occupations reduces the likelihood that a single mom's education will bring the expected payoff.

## Associate Degrees Conferred by Community Colleges in Select Programs, by Gender, 2009-10

Major	Women	Men
Health professions and related programs	84,526	15,778
Education	11,577	2,877
Computer and information sciences	3,359	10,860
Engineering technologies	2,628	15,629
Personal and culinary services	2,500	1,560
Mechanical and repair technologies	785	11,332
Engineering	282	1,902

## Certificates Conferred by Community Colleges in Select Programs, by Gender, 2009-10

Major	Women	Men
Health professions and related programs	112,775	28,354
Personal and culinary services	12,697	3,603
Education	4,624	973
Computer and information sciences	4,555	10,191
Engineering technologies	2,283	13,668
Mechanical and repair technologies	2,049	36,768
Engineering	25	178

**Community colleges enroll the majority of women in higher education. They have an opportunity to positively impact women's participation in STEM fields by actively addressing the barriers single moms face in their education and careers.**

- Gender stereotypes and a lack of information and support are significant barriers to women's participation in STEM programs at community colleges.
- Women often lack information about opportunities in STEM and other “nontraditional” majors for women. Stereotypes about appropriate work for women, a lack of support for single moms, and limited work experience in STEM fields are barriers to participation and success.
- A 2004 survey found that female respondents were uninterested in pursuing IT careers because they believed the work environment is mostly solitary; were concerned about isolation and a lack of female role models and support; did not realize IT jobs are available in fields like education and health care; and did not have significant experience or exposure to working with electronics.
- The same survey found that women in low-wage jobs were more likely to enter IT programs at community colleges after learning more about salaries, entry-level positions, and training opportunities.

# Case Management

## Retention:

- Monitor census reporting from faculty (attendance).
- Provide timely information on campus processes and important academic dates.
- Monitor registration status.
- Assist with registering and creating convenient schedules.
- Academic assistance and referrals to campus resources.

## Career Development:

- Provide tailored services to individuals on a case-by-case basis.
- Follow-up with students/grads to identify job/internships obtained, troubleshoot problems, and to offer services.
- Maintain contact with students/grads through and regular email outreach promoting job/internship opportunities and MOMs Program career services.
- Assist with retention initiatives to ensure forward progress on career path.

# Intake Process

Revised: 11.3.14

## NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE OFFICE OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT MOMS PROGRAM STUDENT INTAKE FORM

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student #: @ \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ School Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

What is your age and date of birth? Age: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Of your children, how many do you claim on your taxes as dependents? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please give the information below about your children. If you have more than three children, please list the information separately.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Custody: Y N N/A Custody: Y N N/A Custody: Y N N/A

How did you hear about the MOMs program? \_\_\_\_\_

What subjects/workshops would you be interested in learning more about? (Circle all that apply)

Financial Literacy	Study Skills	Time Management	Stress Management	Parenting
Scholarship Search	Cover Letter Writing	Resume Writing	Interview Skills	Job Search
Community Resources	Other? _____			

Would you be interested in meeting other single mothers? Y N

Are there any activities you would like to see offered through the MOMs program for you and/or your children? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider campus housing for you and your family should it be available? Y N

Do you rely on public transportation to get to and from school? Y N

### ACADEMIC INFORMATION

I earned my (please circle): High School Diploma GED Year Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

When was your first semester at NCCC? \_\_\_\_\_ Current Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you intend to switch your major? Y N

If yes, what is your intended major? \_\_\_\_\_

Why have you chosen this major? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to attend NCCC? \_\_\_\_\_

What career goals do you plan on achieving with your education? \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: 11.3.14

Are you interested in exploring degree or certificate programs that differ from your current or intended major if they were to better serve your interests? Y N

Upon completion of your studies at NCCC, do you plan on obtaining full-time, gainful employment in your field, or do you plan on transferring to a 4-year institution? (Please circle) Employment Transfer

If transferring, what institution and major? \_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Are you currently employed? (Please circle) Yes No

*If yes:*

Current employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of industry: \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer location (city, state): \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly wage or salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Full time or part time: FT PT

Start date (month & year): \_\_\_\_\_

Hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical schedule: \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you employed at this job? \_\_\_\_\_

*If no:*

Previous employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of industry: \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer location (city, state): \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly wage or salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Full time or part time: FT PT

Start & end date (month & year): \_\_\_\_\_

Hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical schedule: \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you leave this job? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in finding new employment while you are a student? Y N

If so, what type of employment would you like to pursue? What would you like from a job at this point? \_\_\_\_\_

# Skills Assessment



## Skills Self-Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Study Skills:**

1. When is the last time you attended school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Last school attended (please circle):  
High School   GED/High School Equivalency   College (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
3. How were your grades when you last attended school (explain)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What were your study habits when you last attended school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What study habits have worked for you in the past? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What study habits did not work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Coach recommendation for Study Strategies assistance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Skills Self-Assessment

### **Time Management:**

1. How many children do you have and what ages? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you work? YES   NO  
If yes: How many hours a week? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is your typical work schedule? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you care for anyone other than your children? YES   NO  
If yes please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have additional demands on your time (if yes, please explain)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you feel that you are a good manager of your time (explain)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are your plans on scheduling time for school work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Coach recommendation for Time Management assistance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Success Agreement

## Skills Self-Assessment

### Stress Management:

1. How do you feel when you have several deadlines coming up, or have several things to accomplish at the same time?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you find time for yourself? YES NO  
If yes, what do you do for yourself?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many hours of sleep do you get at night? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you feel rested and have energy (explain)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What kind of support system do you have (explain)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you have personal issues that trouble you (ex. health issues, relationship issues, difficulties at work etc.)? YES NO  
Optional explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you interested in stress management techniques or information (circle one):  
I am very interested I am somewhat interested I am not interested
8. Are there any specific areas of stress management that you would like to explore:  
YES NO I do not know  
If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Coach recommendation for Stress Management assistance?

_____
_____
_____

## NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE OFFICE OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT **MOMS Academic Success Agreement**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID @ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**As part of my effort to reach my highest academic potential,  
I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to actively follow this academic  
success agreement throughout the \_\_\_\_\_ semester.**

1. Meet with Kelly a minimum of once a month, but up to once a week, to check my progress and voice any of my concerns.
2. *First time students* – complete a learning style assessment during second appointment, which should be one week after initial appointment. Date of this appointment: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
*Returning students* – complete a review of your current study strategies to see if/how you can modify it for better success. Date of this appointment: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Attend ALL of my classes and complete all of my assignments on time.
4. Take advantage of FREE academic support by going to the Learning Commons (tutoring) for help on my assignments; Library, second floor, 614-6222.
5. Attend *at least* 2 Programs (workshops or MOMS Support Group) per seminars.  
The following fit my interests and my schedule:  
a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Try my best!

**\*\*Mutually agreed upon frequency of appointments based on assessment:**

Reoccurring appointment: M T W TH F Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly Biweekly Monthly By appointment

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's initials: \_\_\_\_

**Signing this Academic Success Agreement means I have read and understood the document  
I signed and will actively follow the terms listed above.**

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Coach's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Original: Student Development  
Copy: Student



# Program Recruitment

- Each semester, run OIT report indicating students who self-identified as single moms on the NCCC admissions application.
- Present to community organizations throughout Niagara County.
- Present to NCCC faculty and staff whenever possible.
- Maintain information tables at NCCC Open Houses, Child Development Center Open Houses, registration events, career fairs, and other events.
- Maintain database of all contact with qualifying potential NCCC students for follow up.
- Implement email and postal mail campaign each semester, advertising services.
- Distribute fliers throughout campus and community, advertising services, scholarships, and MOMs Program workshops and events.
- Encourage program participants to bring their friends and relatives to meetings and events.
- Organize Single Mothers in College Workshop to attract currently enrolled students.

# Tracking

Apply student attributes to generate reports indicating student:

- Enrollment status (current, graduated, withdrawal).
- Current schedule.
- GPA.
- Number of completed credit hours.
- Advisor name.
- Contact information on file with the College.
- Demographic data.
- Semester of MOMs Program enrollment.

Create and manage spreadsheets indicating:

- Employment information.
- Enrollment information that can be cross-referenced with reports.
- Scholarship awardees and fund balances.
- Potential program participants (e.g. enrolled single moms who have not yet joined the MOMs Program).
- Potential NCCC students (e.g. interested single moms met through outreach initiatives).

# MOMs Program Enrollment

## Year 1: Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

- 67 in credit-bearing programs.
- 17 in non-credit, Workforce Development programs.
- 5 alumni (graduated prior to Fall 2013).

87 total

## Year 2: Fall 2014 – present

- 118 in credit-bearing programs.
- 9 in non-credit, Workforce Development programs.
- 4 alumni (graduated prior to Fall 2013).

131 total (FA13 – SP14 WFD & alumni still eligible for services)

\* \* \*

17 for-credit students have graduated while enrolled in program. All 26 WFD students have completed their programs. All grads eligible for services.

45 participants have obtained employment after receiving services. Over 90% have found employment related to their major.

- 29 students, 16 grads/alumni.

36 participants have obtained internships after receiving services.

# Considerations

Strengths: Case management model and adequate staffing ensure individual student needs are met. Voluntary participation creates non-stressful environment in which students choose the services they receive. Provides an at-risk, underserved population with an extra support system.

Weaknesses: Difficulty helping cohort overcome some of the most difficult obstacles to their success: cost of childcare, cost of attendance when financial aid is not an option, conflicting responsibilities, and lack of transportation.

Opportunities: Improve retention, graduation, employment and earning rates for underserved population. Promotion of STEM majors to a demographic historically underrepresented in those fields. Serve as a model to other colleges who are interested in developing a similar program. Improve sensitivity to needs of cohort within the College.

Challenges: Continued funding of the program, which is partially funded by an outside grant. As program continues the population grows, putting stress on case management model. Advocating for specialized accommodations that are responsive to the needs of single mothers is difficult in an academic setting.

## Bibliography

Belfield, C. R., and T. Bailey. "The benefits of attending community college: A review of the evidence." *Community College Review* 39.1: 46-68. Available: [www.crw.sagepub.com](http://www.crw.sagepub.com).

Goldrick-Rab, S., and K. Sorensen. *Unmarried parents in college: Pathways to success*. Fast Focus 9. Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, 2011. Available: [www.irp.wisc.edu](http://www.irp.wisc.edu).

Miller, K., B. Gault, and A. Thorman. *Improving child care access to promote postsecondary success among low-income parents*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2011. Available: <http://www.iwpr.org>.

American Association of University Women (AAUW). *Why so few? Women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics*. Washington, DC: AAUW, 2010. Available: [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

Women Employed Institute. *Low income single mothers at community college: Recommendations for practices to improve completion*. Chicago: Women Employed, 2012. Available: [www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org).

US Department of Education. *Beginning postsecondary students longitudinal study (BPS:04/09)*. National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2011. Available: [www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov).

———. *Integrated postsecondary education data system (IPEDS) fall enrollment survey*. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2010. Available: [www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov).

———. *Integrated postsecondary education data system (IPEDS) fall enrollment survey*. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2009. Available: [www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov).

US Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2012-13 edition. Washington, DC: US Department of Labor. Available: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).