

Funding Futures

OC's Workforce Development & Basic Studies Division is helping students achieve their dreams

Jamie Fitzpatrick knew she wanted to go back to college, she just wasn't sure how she was going to pay for it. Having already earned an associate degree in business administration from an online university, Jamie was no longer eligible for federal financial aid. She eventually learned of OC's Worker Retraining program, which can fund tuition, fees, books, childcare, and other expenses for qualified students.

Worker Retraining is a state program administered by colleges like OC that provides college funding to individuals who meet certain criteria such as being separated from the military or unemployed in the past 48 months; a single homemaker; or self-employed in a struggling business. It's an incredible program for those who qualify, and just one of many funding sources managed by OC's Workforce Development & Basic Studies Division.

Students like Jamie meet with Transitions Coordinators who work with them one-on-one to identify which funding sources they qualify for. Other programs administered by Workforce Development & Basic Studies are Basic Food Employment & Training which provides funding to those who qualify for, or are already on food stamps; WorkFirst, which funds students who are on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; and Opportunity Grant which can fund limited income students enrolled in specific career oriented programs.

"As a Transitions Coordinator, students come to us with their goals and aspirations and it's our job to help make them a reality," says Ellen Handyside. "We have this powerful opportunity to help students gain the confidence and skills they need to successfully rejoin the workforce."

Beyond funding support, transitions coordinators connect students with employers and career coaching, where they write cover letters and resumes, and learn interview techniques.

Jamie worked closely with Ellen to identify funding sources and academic programs that were a good match. The two stay in regular contact to track Jamie's progress in her program, and to ensure funding needs are met.

"Ellen has been extremely helpful and I make sure to check in with her at least once a month," Jamie says.

Worker Retraining was able to fund tuition, fees and books for her first two quarters at OC. This quarter, Opportunity Grant is funding her tuition, with Worker Retraining covering the balance.

"Worker Retraining and the Opportunity grant have been a godsend for me," she said. "I would not be able to go to school without the help of these programs," she said.

Jamie began at OC in spring quarter 2018 and is pursuing an accounting technology degree. She hopes to use her degree to land a job with opportunities for advancement and funding for continued education so she can complete her bachelor's degree.



Angelo Flores (above) was down to his last month of unemployment benefits when he met OC Shelton Transitions Coordinator Rose Ferri who helped him secure funding for college. Transitions Coordinator Ellen Handyside (below, left) works with students like Jamie Fitzpatrick (below, right) to identify funding sources and career training programs so they may successfully rejoin the workforce.



Turning Points

It was spring of 2013 and Angelo Flores was running out of options. A single father, Angelo had worked his way up the ladder with Fred Meyer from 2006-11 only to join the ranks of the unemployed, displaced by the Great Recession. He was down to his last month of unemployment benefits when he met Rose Ferri, Transitions Coordinator at OC Shelton.

The Shelton unemployment center recommended Rose and the OC Workforce Development & Basic Studies Division. She worked with Angelo one-on-one, directing him through all of the steps in the financial aid process. That spring, he completed a welding certificate program funded entirely by Worker Retraining and Opportunity Grant.

"That was a turning point in my life. I was hanging on by a thread and spiraling downward," Angelo recalls. "Rose coached me through all the steps in the Financial Aid process. It was an amazing thing she did for me."

However, Angelo's education journey was not yet complete. With renewed confidence, Angelo decided to pursue his high school passion, computer engineering.

He earned an associate degree from OC, with emphasis in computer information systems funded entirely by federal Pell Grants. Angelo is now one quarter away from completing his bachelor's in software engineering from St. Martin's University. Having landed an internship with Nordstrom, Angelo is on the verge of realizing his dreams. He's interviewed with companies like Costco, Expedia and others and is considering accepting a position with Nordstrom, after his internship, to become part of a team that is innovating machine learning for the company's e-commerce program.

"I'm not sure I'd be where I am today if it weren't for Rose and Olympic College," he said.

For Rose, it never gets old hearing from students like Angelo.

"It is rewarding to know that Olympic College is helping stu-

dents receive the training and education they need to be successful in the workplace," she said.

It is a dramatic transformation for Angelo, who was not only displaced by the recession, but experienced homelessness in his youth. He's excited about the future he is creating for his two young children.

"I don't want my kids to have to experience the challenges I

went through growing up. I hope they will take the progress I've made and use it as a foundation for their own education so they can go forward."

Students like Jamie and Angelo are overcoming great odds to achieve their goals and OC is proud to be a partner in their journeys. See below for more information about OC's Workforce Development & Basic Studies programs.

Workforce Development & Basic Studies Funding Sources

With help from OC's Workforce Development & Basic Studies program, financial challenges do not have to be a barrier to going to college. Workforce Development oversees numerous funding sources that can pay for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and childcare for qualified students.

Last year, they awarded \$1.3 million in student aid. See below for a list of eligibility requirements and to identify the funding sources and programs that you may qualify for, as well as contact information to connect you to the staff that can guide you through the process.



WORKFIRST

The WorkFirst Program provides financial assistance to WorkFirst participants attending Olympic College while receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Services Include:

- Financial assistance for tuition, fees and books
- Career planning
- Customized job skills options
- Work Study employment
- Working Connections Childcare

Eligibility Criteria:

- Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Referred for education and training by the Department of Social & Health Services.

PROGRAM CONTACT | Bremerton & Poulsbo Campus
Pauline Carlton
WorkFirst Transitions Coordinator
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BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (BFET)

In partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services, BFET provides funding for tuition, fees, books and child care for students enrolled in professional/technical programs such as accounting, business management, electronics, fashion marketing, manufacturing, welding, and many more.

Eligibility Criteria

- Currently receiving or eligible to receive food stamps

PROGRAM CONTACT | Bremerton & Poulsbo Campus
Christine Kubli
BFET Program Specialist
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WORKER RETRAINING

May pay for tuition, fees, books, supplies and more for eligible students enrolled in professional/technical programs.

Eligibility Criteria

- Active duty military, dependent or veteran within the last 48 months
- Unemployed, soon to be, or laid off within the last 48 months
- Displaced homemaker
- Self employed, but facing financial hardship

PROGRAM CONTACT | Bremerton & Poulsbo Campus
Ellen Handyside
Worker Retraining Transitions Coordinator
ehandyside@olympic.edu, 360-475-7231



OPPORTUNITY GRANT

Helps limited income adults increase skills and career options by enrolling in selected professional/technical programs. Assistance may cover tuition, fees, textbooks, and materials.

Eligibility Criteria

- Family Size
- Monthly Income

PROGRAM CONTACT | Bremerton & Poulsbo Campus
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SHELTON CAMPUS

For Workforce Development & Basic Studies funding opportunities at our Shelton Campus:

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