

Project QUEST (Quality Employment through Skills Training)

Intervention Snapshot | Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Topic Area

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™
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Rising employer demand for skilled workers has driven efforts to better align occupational training programs to industry needs. Yet, even as the demand for skilled workers increases, less than half of students who enter occupational training programs receive a credential within six years. Community-based organizations are partnering with community colleges and occupational training providers to find faster and more effective ways to train those in need of basic skills instruction in math, reading, or job skills, and provide wraparound supports to help students succeed in college or occupational training programs.

Project QUEST (Quality Employment through Skills Training) provides comprehensive support services to help participants complete occupational training programs at local community colleges and professional training institutes, pass certification exams, and obtain well-paying jobs in targeted sectors of the local economy. *Project QUEST* started in 1992 in San Antonio, Texas, and has been adapted

in other locations in Texas and Arizona under different names, including *VIDA (Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement)* in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, *Capital IDEA* in Austin, Texas and Houston, Texas, *Project ARRIBA (Advanced Retraining & Redevelopment Initiative in Border Areas)* in El Paso, Texas, and *JobPath* in Tucson, Arizona.

This What Works Clearinghouse™ (WWC) report, part of the WWC’s Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area, explores the effects of *Project QUEST* on education and labor market outcomes. The WWC identified five studies of *Project QUEST*. Three of these studies meet WWC standards.

Findings on *Project QUEST* from three studies that meet WWC standards are shown below. The table reports an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention’s effect on an outcome.

What Happens When Students Participate in *Project QUEST*?

The WWC found that implementing <i>Project QUEST</i> :	Effectiveness rating	Study findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
Is likely to increase industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion	Positive effects	+15	2	1,301
May increase credit accumulation	Potentially positive effects	+14	1	958
May result in little to no change in medium-term employment	No discernible effects	+8	1	343
May result in little to no change in medium-term earnings	No discernible effects	+7	1	410
May result in little to no change in long-term earnings	No discernible effects	+4	1	410
May result in little to no change in short-term earnings	No discernible effects	+4	1	410
May result in little to no change in short-term employment	No discernible effects	-1	2	1,555
May decrease postsecondary degree attainment	Potentially negative effects	-3	2	1,301

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. A positive improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant.

FINDINGS ARE BASED ON:

3 studies with 2,580 postsecondary students in Texas



STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS:

Gender: 73% female	Race: 71% minority	Ethnicity: 67% Hispanic
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What Does *Project QUEST* Cost?

Costs of implementing *Project QUEST* include salaries for staff, including counselors, basic skills instructors, and other support staff such as employment coordinators; facilities; equipment and materials; financial support for academic and non-academic expenses; fundraising;

and administrative costs. As reported in Roder & Elliott (2018), the average cost of *Project QUEST* was \$10,501 per participant over an average of 22 months. Rolston et al. (2017) reported that the cost of *VIDA* was approximately \$13,750 per participant over an average of two and a half years.

LEARN MORE



Read more about the *Project QUEST* intervention and the studies that are summarized here in the [Intervention Report](#).

Contact [Project QUEST](#) for additional information on implementing *Project QUEST*.