Moving from Commitment to Action:

Leveraging Partnerships between Higher Education and P-12 Systems to Support Students Through Federal Work-Study Roles

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INTRODUCTION

In May 2023, the U.S. Department of Education called upon institutions of higher education (IHEs) to set public goals to use more of their Federal Work-Study (FWS) funding and other programs to support P-12 students through tutoring, mentoring, postsecondary transition coaching, student success coaching, and/or wraparound/integrated student support coordination ("NPSS roles") in schools or out-of-school time programs.

Y*our institution can contribute to this national effort by setting a public goal* to either:

1. *Use at least 15% of your FWS funds to compensate college students employed in community service activities*, devoting any increase in FWS compensation for community service employment in NPSS roles located in schools or out-of-school time programs by June 2025,
OR
2. *Significantly increase the number of college students* that your institution will place in NPSS roles regardless of the funding source supporting these roles by June 2025.

Your institution can also contribute by *sharing data* with the National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) on the number of college students serving in these roles, including those receiving support through FWS or other programs.

WHAT NEXT?

The National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) Higher Education Coalition provides multiple mechanisms of support to institutions of higher education (IHEs) and communities striving towards meeting this goal. This guide outlines initial steps and considerations for IHEs moving from commitment to action, from joining the NPSS Higher Education Coalition to placing college students in NPSS-aligned community service roles in P-12 schools and out-of-school time programs.

** Note: While the NPSS Higher Education Coalition focuses on FWS community service jobs as a crucial lever for answering the President's Call to Action, IHEs may also draw on additional funding sources (e.g., AmeriCorps), and/or other experiential learning opportunities (e.g., course credit, internship, pre-service teacher training, civic engagement efforts, etc.) to help meet this goal.

1: JOIN THE NPSS HIGHER EDUCATION COALITION AND BECOME PART OF A NATIONAL COMMUNITY ANSWERING THE PRESIDENT'S CALL TO ACTION

A. Set a public goal by joining the NPSS Higher Education Coalition.

Institutions in the coalition set a public goal to either:

1) Increase the percentage of FWS funds that your institution uses to compensate college students employed in community service activities, devoting any increase in FSW compensation toward this goal to employment in NPSS roles located in P-1 2 schools or out-of-school time programs by June 2025. We encourage institutions to set a goal of at least 15% FWS funds, but we acknowledge that many NPSS-aligned programs operated by colleges and universities may have been paused or scaled back during the pandemic. We encourage institutions to set ambitious but achievable goals.

OR

2) Increase the number of college students from your institution serving in NPSS roles in P-12 schools and out-of-school time programs by June 2025, regardless of the funding source supporting these roles.

This includes placing students in roles as tutors, mentors, student success coaches, postsecondary transition coaches, or wraparound support coordinators. In the form to join the Coalition, provide points of contact and institutional information, share baseline data on the number of students in NPSS roles at your institution, and set a public goal for your institution. Institutions in the coalition also agree to share data with the NPSS on the number of college students serving in NPSS roles (including those receiving support through FWS or other programs) on an annual basis through 2025.

B. Identify a coordinator for NPSS-aligned efforts at your institution.

Begin identifying potential colleagues who can coordinate NPSS-aligned efforts leveraging FWS community service roles to support P-12 students and schools. Does your college/university already have an initiative that enables your students to serve as tutors, mentors, post-secondary transition coaches, or success coaches in local schools or out-of-school time programs that could be expanded with additional FWS students? Does your college/university have a community partnerships coordinator, outreach coordinator, volunteer coordinator, AmeriCorps VISTA member, or similar staff position(s)? Is there an institutional office or campus center focused on student employment, community engagement, public service, educational opportunity, or similar initiatives? If so, these may be helpful places to start building collaborative relationships to support your institution's shared commitment to community service through people-powered P-12 student supports.

The National Student Support Accelerator's [High-Impact Tutoring: Higher Education Institution Playbook](#) offers ideas for partnering across college/university departments to coordinate tutoring programs, which may be relevant to collaboration on other high-impact student supports.

If your institution does not have someone in a position to coordinate NPSS-aligned efforts, consider applying to bring an AmeriCorps VISTA member on board to help build your college/university's capacity to do this work sustainably. This non-competitive program accepts concept papers and applications four times per year, and may be a helpful resource for your IHE. Learn more at the [AmeriCorps VISTA website](#).

02 GATHER INFORMATION ON WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO MEET YOUR CAMPUS' GOAL

A. Work with your financial aid office to understand the current FWS community service landscape of your institution. Information-gathering questions may include:

a. How many total students are currently employed in FWS positions of any kind, and how many of that group are working in community service roles? How have those numbers changed over time?
b. What percentage of FWS funds are spent on community service and NPSS-aligned roles right now? How has this percentage changed over time?
c. How many community service programs are currently using FWS students (or have done so in the past)? Do existing community service programs have the capacity to absorb more student workers?

> **To learn more about how to optimize FWS community service opportunities, see a resource by Campus Compact's Earn, Learn, and Serve: Getting the Most from Community Service Federal Work-Study resource.**

B. Calculate how many additional FWS students you will need to place in roles with local schools and/or nonprofit community organizations to provide NPSS-aligned student supports during the next two school years to reach your goal.

This will help determine how many students you could potentially employ to support a given school or out-of-school time program, and how many schools or programs you might be able to partner with. See further guidance later in Section 3 of this document.

C. Factor in transportation time to calculate how many hours per week, and how many days per week, FWS students will be able to provide P-12 student support services.

For example: A FWS student is employed for 12 hours of work-study per week. It takes 30 minutes to get from your campus to the P-12 school site each way. If the student is at the school 3 times per week, then 3 hours of their work time are used for transportation. Another 1.5 hours might be spent on training and preparation. So, the FWS student could serve at a school site for 7.5 hours per week, delivered 3 days a week, for 2.5 hours per day of student support services.

03 CULTIVATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH P-12 DISTRICTS, SCHOOLS, AND/OR NONPROFITS

The NPSS Hub provides free technical assistance to nonprofit or public institutions working to establish partnerships or expand programs that offer P-12 student support services through tutoring, mentoring, post-secondary transition coaching, student success coaching, and/or wraparound/integrated student support coordination. Consult with the NPSS Hub as needed to help identify partners and/or design high-impact, people-powered P-12 student support efforts in your region.

The National Student Support Accelerator created a [High-Impact Tutoring Higher Education Institution Playbook](#) to help IHEs understand essential design, planning, and implementation considerations when building or improving high-impact tutoring programs in partnership with school districts. These tutoring-focused resources may translate to partnerships for other high-impact student supports as well.

When cultivating partnerships between IHEs and P-12 systems and community-based nonprofits, focus on building the relationships and infrastructure needed to recruit, train, place, supervise, and support college students in high-impact NPSS roles in P-12 schools or out-of-school time contexts. If your IHE has existing partnerships or had them before the pandemic, this may be a fruitful place to begin. You might consider the following starting points for your effort.

A. Find out if your campus has current partnerships with P-12 schools/districts.

If so, ask if they are interested in expanding their current effort(s), or adding additional P-12 NPSS roles provided by undergraduate or graduate FWS students (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, postsecondary planning/transition advising roles).

> **See examples of existing programs that place college students in NPSS roles on the NPSS website here. See examples of P-12 tutoring programs using college and university students profiled by the National Student Support Accelerator here.**

Many campuses have long implemented America Reads or America Counts tutoring programs with local schools which could be expanded. First-generation and low-income student resource centers, college-going opportunity programs, and educational outreach initiatives may operate through your campus, and these efforts often focus on postsecondary transition coaching and student success coaching. Similar regional efforts such as pre-college programs for middle and high school students may also operate through broader state or federal initiatives, and could offer robust infrastructure models and historical knowledge of how to deploy high-impact student supports. For a federal example, see TRIO pre-college programs including Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math and Science, Talent Search, and GEAR UP. For a state example, see the California Student Opportunity and Access Program. Your campus' undergraduate and/or graduate departments may have existing P-12 school partnerships. For instance, social sciences departments (e.g., education, sociology, psychology, social work) may offer practicum or fieldwork courses in P-12 schools or out-of-school time programs. STEM departments (e.g., engineering, computer science, math) may run school service-focused initiatives, such as tutoring. Teachers' colleges and schools of education may have relationships with local schools and out-of-school time programs that are looking for teacher candidates to serve as tutors or student teachers. Undergraduate and/or graduate students themselves may also be leaders of this work on your campus. Service- or education-oriented student organizations and honors societies may partner with P-12 schools or out-of-school time programs. Connect with your colleagues to build on established partnerships or learn from their approach as you seek new partnerships.

In thinking about re-launching or expanding existing programming or partnerships, institutions should ensure that effort is placed on programs that demonstrate positive impacts on the students they serve and/or that are aligned with research on what makes NPSS-aligned work most impactful. To aid in this work, the NPSS has established a set of Voluntary Quality Standards outlining core program components that align with research on what can make tutoring, mentoring, student success coaching, post-secondary transition coaching, and wraparound/integrated student support coordination most impactful. These standards are designed for use by colleges, universities, schools, districts, state education agencies, youth-serving organizations, foundations, community groups, and others to better understand essential components of quality, set goals as part of existing or emerging continuous improvement processes, set goals when designing new programs, and consider prospective partners.

Institutions are also encouraged to request technical assistance from the NPSS Support Hub for support with expanding or improving existing programs with quality.

> **Learn more about the NPSS Voluntary Quality Standards and program components that align with research on what can be most impactful for P-12 students here.**

B. Contact your local school(s)/district(s) to determine support needs.

Meet with relevant school/district representatives to learn about the current challenges they are facing and determine collaboratively whether support from trained college students serving as tutors, mentors, postsecondary transition coaches, or in similar roles would be helpful or feasible for them. Ask which schools might benefit from additional people-powered supports of what type, if there are any pre-existing programs run by individual schools or the district that your institution's students might support, and how much support (e.g., number of hours per week) might be needed. To build on existing partnerships, ask which colleges, universities, and/or nonprofit organizations the district currently works with to provide these supports. The National Student Support Accelerator's High-Impact Tutoring Higher Education Institution Playbook includes resources for school district partnerships focused on tutoring programs, which may also be relevant for other high-impact student supports.

C. Identify local youth-serving nonprofit organizations and contact them to understand their support needs, learn about the impact of their programs, and find out if they partner with IHEs and/or schools/districts.

Many nonprofits operating through out-of-school time programs provide NPSS-aligned P-12 support services as a component of their broader youth development work. Such organizations may offer part-time, evening, weekend, and/or summer employment opportunities that college students would be well-positioned to fill.

Information-gathering questions may include:
- Does the nonprofit organization currently have open P-12 support positions that college students might be qualified to fill? What does the typical hiring cycle look like for such roles with the organization?
- In addition to any existing positions, is the nonprofit organization aware of opportunities for them to hire FWS students with support from their local IHEs?
- Does the nonprofit have the need and capacity to hire more student workers?
- How does the nonprofit work to ensure that its programs are high-impact? Has the nonprofit demonstrated positive impacts on students participating in its programs? Is the program aligned with evidence or research on program components that are most likely to have a positive impact on young people?

D. Learn more about the quality and impacts of potential partners on young people and the community to ensure that college students are placed in high-impact roles.

Ensuring that your students are placed in roles and programs that will have a positive impact on P-12 students, families, and communities is a crucial part of this work. To help guide conversations about quality programming, institutions are encouraged to reverence the NPSS [Voluntary Quality Standards](#) outlining core program components that align with research on what can make tutoring, mentoring, student success coaching, post-secondary transition coaching, and wraparound/integrated student support coordination most impactful. Institutions are encouraged to look for these core elements of quality when considering prospective partnerships. If some of these elements of quality are missing, institutions may consider whether their expertise may be able to augment the work of a local school, district, or nonprofit organization.

Institutions are also encouraged to request technical assistance from the NPSS Support Hub for support with identifying and understanding the work of potential partners in a way that aligns with research.

> **For support designing, implementing, improving, or expanding programs that offer tutoring, mentoring, student success coaching, post-secondary transition coaching, or wraparound/integrated student support coordination, or for support connecting with potential partners, institutions are encouraged to request technical assistance from the NPSS Support Hub, based at the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University and supported by the following national experts: Accelerate, City Year, Communities In Schools, MENTOR, the National College Attainment Network, and the National Student Support Accelerator.**

E. Identify sources of training and in-program support/coordination for college students.

Connecting with existing programs will help you build upon established infrastructure and expertise for training and placing undergraduates in student support roles. Explore which local IHEs, schools/districts, and nonprofit organizations offer P-12 employment, internship, or volunteer opportunities for college students. Such offerings may include undergraduate/graduate education practicum courses and fieldwork placements (e.g., aspiring teacher, counselor, or social worker training), family and community engagement efforts, or other P-12 school service programs. Consider partnering with a nonprofit organization to train and support your students working in NPSS-aligned roles. If this is not feasible, determine who will take this on within your institution, and identify what institutional support is needed.

F. Conduct partnership meetings with school/district/nonprofit representatives.

Agenda items to discuss might include: the intentions and goals of the partnership; your campus' commitment to community service and evidence-based P-12 student supports; the district/school/nonprofit's existing high-impact people-powered supports; potential roles for FWS student workers; infrastructure for student worker recruitment, training, placement, supervision, and ongoing support in these roles; required clearance documentation for student employees to work with minors in P-12 or out-of-school time contexts (e.g., background check, fingerprinting, immunization records).

If required by your respective organizations, draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Community Engagement Agreement, or other document reflecting the shared commitments for the partnership. Consider sourcing example agreements from existing P-12 student support programs at your institution, or consult with other IHEs that have community service partnerships with P-12 systems and nonprofits.

> See considerations for contracts and MOUs with school districts on page four of the NPSS' District Partnership Toolkit, and considerations for tutoring program MOUs with school districts in the National Student Support Accelerator's High-Impact Tutoring Higher Education Institution Playbook.

04 TROUBLESHOOT TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

A. Figure out how reliable transportation can be provided for FWS student employees going to and from off-campus P-12 worksites.

What transportation needs may arise for FWS students in getting to and from each school or community site? Speak with current FWS students and the organizations that employ them to understand transportation barriers and explore solutions.

B. Explore existing transportation services within your campus and community.

IHEs often operate their own buses, van shuttles, campus-affiliated rental car programs, rideshare voucher systems, bike rentals, or other services for students. Some institutions offer discounted parking permits for students who carpool to and from campus with peers. Through campus partnerships, cities may provide free or discounted public transportation for students, such as city-run buses, trolleys, or rideshare programs.

C. Determine how your institution will cover costs associated with transportation.

Identify opportunities to leverage existing funding to support FWS students' transportation needs. Additionally, investigate new potential funding sources and how you might secure resources, such as by applying for external grants. Some institutions have used small grants from philanthropic and nonprofit organizations to fund students' transportation needs for community service work.

D. Consider how your institution can offer guidance to help students find their own transportation, through the campus, city, or other avenues.

FWS students may benefit from access to tailored guidance and resources that can inform their own problem-solving for transportation needs. Consult with your campus' legal counsel to understand institutional best practices, limitations, and requirements around professional staff providing transportation guidance to students. For example, you may be allowed to provide informational factsheets about pre-approved campus and city transportation resources, but you may not be allowed to provide individually tailored transportation coordination or other logistical support to students directly. Also explore whether FWS students could get connected to resources and peer support via campus programs that are already doing community service work, as they may have expertise in navigating transportation challenges. Such programs might include departments that offer community-engaged/service-learning/practicum courses, volunteer and internship programs, and/or community service-focused student organizations.

05 PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A. Learn from peers at other IHEs who have done this work successfully.

Start by exploring examples of programs in action on the NPSS website here, and reading IHE Tutoring Program Profiles from the National Student Support Accelerator. These resources provide a glimpse into the practices of IHEs doing NPSS-aligned work, and offer strategies that other community service programs might model or build upon.

B. Join in professional learning opportunities hosted by the NPSS Hub.

Professional learning participation may involve one or more of the following activities, depending on capacity: Attending quarterly virtual small-group collaboration sessions; providing updates to NPSS about your institution's progress and outcomes; submitting online surveys about NPSS-aligned work; sharing challenges and successes with the NPSS network; and/or accessing other professional learning opportunities as appropriate.

C. Reach out to peers at IHEs in your city, state, or region, or similarly situated IHEs in other localities, to build your own network of support.

Within the national network of IHEs answering this call to action and navigating shared challenges and solutions, local community needs may vary. Connect with your peers to explore the strengths and complexities of your specific institutional context, lessons learned, pitfalls to avoid, and opportunities for collaboration and support.

Answer the President's Call to Action

BECOME PART OF A NATIONAL COMMUNITY

JOIN THE NPSS HIGHER EDUCATION COALITION BY SUBMITTING A GOAL TO

1. Use at least 15% of your FWS funds to compensate college students employed in community service activities, devoting any increase to NPSS roles in schools or out-of-school time programs.
OR
2. Increase the number of college students that your institution will place in NPSS roles regardless of the funding source.