

NCSPHS 12-6-21



A-STEP Overview 2020-2021

“Access without support is not opportunity” – Dr. Vincent Tinto This remains the foundation on which the A-STEP program was built and it is how it has derived its 6 years of success.



A-STEP offers motivated low-income adults the resources and support to enter or reenter post-secondary programs in order to increase their earning potential and launch into a career of their choice.

A-STEP was developed and launched by Goodwill Industries of North Florida based off of the 25 years of success witnessed in the Take Stock in Children program. The concept of “one-life at a time” and “vocational self-selection” are the heart of the program. The support and wrap-around resources infused lead to outstanding results in postsecondary graduation rates.



A-STEP College Navigators are embedded at FSCJ, First Coast Technical College in St Johns County, Goodwill GoodCareers Centers and the position the city supports at the Emmett Reed Center.



Emmett Reed Community Center

College Navigators offer candidates:

- Assistance to find immediate employment, if needed
- Enrollment in GED classes, if needed
- Career assessment & readiness skills, computer skills, resume soft skills and interview techniques
- Northwest A-STEP Candidates receive one-on-one financial counseling through Goodwill's designation as a Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) through HUD
- College program enrollment
- Secure wrap-around services, if needed for candidate success (Including external dollars from scholarship programs or donor support)
- Gap funding (\$2,000 for needs not typically supported: childcare, transportation, tuition or books)
- Placement in employment and tracking success for 3 years

2020-2021 Results in Northwest Jacksonville

Number of residents assisted **132**

Number of graduates **12**

Number of A-STEP candidates **58**
enrolled into a program

Total dollars spent **\$145,000**

A-STEP Initiatives in priority zip codes

Medical Assistance Program – Sulzbacher Villages

- In July of 2021 in a collaboration between Goodwill's A-STEP program, FSCJ and Sulzbacher a Medical Assistance (MA) program was implemented. This was in response to the need for MA certified employees at Sulzbacher Health Centers and their healthcare providing partners.
- Currently, there are 9 individuals enrolled in the program being hosted at Sulzbacher Village. Classes are Mondays through Thursdays from 5-9 pm running through to October 30, 2022.
- All wrap-around resources are being provided including: child care, dinner, snacks and transportation (several candidates are utilizing a Goodwill van with appropriate child seats installed for each child).
- The class is being taught by a new adjunct professor who was one of A-STEP's very early graduates in 2016 – Liz Armstrong has come full circle to give back to the program that helped to transform her own life.
- Every MA Candidate who can pass their state exam is guaranteed a position with Sulzbacher or another healthcare provider.



Commercial Driver's License

- The lack of truck drivers is a national crisis. This past spring, Goodwill was determined to get ahead of transportation needs and created a truck driving education program where employees and clients of social serving agency partners could enroll in a CDL class through A-STEP and attend FSCJ.
- All graduates are guaranteed a position with Goodwill Industries or a partner transportation firm. This ensures candidates with a felony background have access to on-the-job training and employment creating the work history often required by other employers.
- In total the CDL has 2 graduates working, 3 currently enrolled and 13 who are on the interested list



CDL Candidate Testimony

Jeffrey was referred to the Goodwill A-STEP program by Operation New Hope in February 2021. He had just started working at an entry level job and had a strong desire to obtain his Commercial Driving License to increase his earning potential and future employment opportunities. He attended the Commercial Vehicle Driving program at Florida State College at Jacksonville. Jeffrey was very focused on his goal and showed excellent follow through every step of the way. He graduated in September and began working as a truck driver for the Goodwill Transportation Department immediately upon graduation.



Goodwill is a local, not-for-profit that removes barriers to employment through training, education and career opportunities.

goodwilljax.org