

# ARKANSAS WORKS: ADVANCING ARKANSAS STUDENTS



AS THE STATE TRIES TO ENSURE THAT A QUALIFIED WORKFORCE STANDS READY TO FILL 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY JOBS, ONE OF OUR STRUGGLES IS SHOWING A YOUNGER GENERATION OF ARKANSANS HOW TO REALIZE THEIR OWN DREAMS IN TROUBLED TIMES. BECAUSE TOO MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE KNOWN ONLY POVERTY, LOW EXPECTATIONS AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS, IT WILL BE UP TO US TO GIVE THEM A VISION FOR THEIR FUTURE, TO HELP THEM OPEN THEIR EYES TO THE POSSIBILITIES BEFORE THEM, TO REALIZE THE BENEFITS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, AND TO KNOW HOW THEIR STATE CAN HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR FUTURE CAREER GOALS. THAT IS THE MISSION OF ARKANSAS WORKS AND ARKANSAS'S COLLEGE AND CAREER COACHES.

- GOVERNOR MIKE BEEBE

## MISSION

Create an educated workforce in Arkansas that is prepared for 21<sup>st</sup>-century jobs by providing job training and educational opportunities beyond high school.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- College and Career Coaches
- Arkansas College and Career Planning System (powered by Kuder™)
- ACT Academies (summer and academic year)
- Career Cluster Camps and College Visits

## PARTNERSHIPS

Arkansas Works is a partnership among Governor Mike Beebe's Workforce Cabinet, comprised of the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (funding agency), Arkansas Economic Development Commission and Arkansas Science and Technology Authority. Additional partners include Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce.

Since January 2010, Arkansas Works college and career coaches have been providing college and career planning services to middle and high school students in the identified school districts and counties. Financial aid applications have increased by over 70 percent in those counties. The Arkansas Works ACT Academy has also shown success in increasing ACT scores. As many as three-fourths of Arkansas students enrolled in the program improved their test scores. And more than half scored 19 or higher on their ACTs and will not be required to take remedial courses in college. This is real progress, and it is beginning to make a real difference.

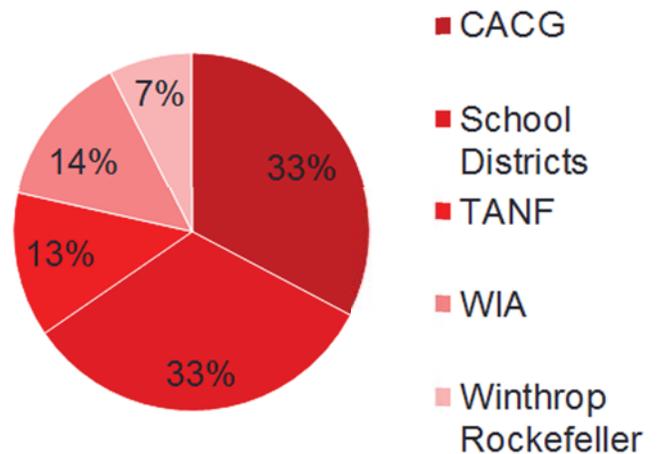


# How is the Program Currently Funded?

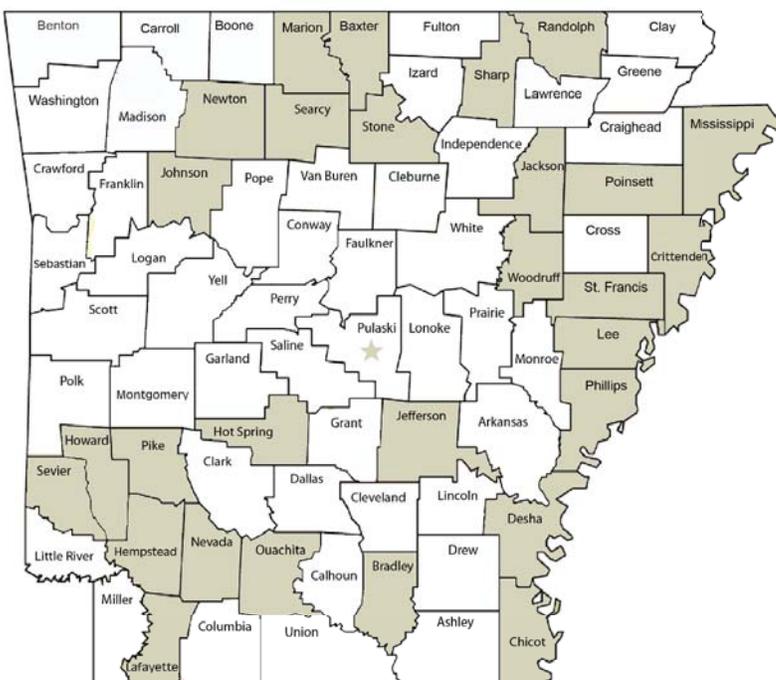
## The Career Coach Program is funded by multiple sources:

- Federal Grants (*TANF, College Challenge Access, and Workforce Investment ACT*)
- School Districts (*National School Lunch Act - NSLA - and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*)
- Non-Profit (Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation)

## Career Coach Program Funding



## COUNTIES TARGETED FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER COACHES PROGRAM



College and career coaches began working with students (grades 8-12) in 21 of the most economically challenged Arkansas counties in January of 2010. During the 2013 General Session, Act 1285 was passed and expanded the availability of the college and career coach programs to all counties in the state. Currently, the Arkansas Works College and Career Coach program is available in 28 counties. College and career coaches provide services and assistance in these areas:

- Developing and revising college and career plans
- Preparing for postsecondary education
- Applying for financial aid
- Making connections between education and careers
- Transitioning to postsecondary education

College and Career Coach programs are evaluated on the following Performance Measures:

- Increase High School Graduation Rate (ADE)
- Increase Enrollment in Smart Core (ADE)
- Increase College-Going Rate (ADHE)
- Increase ACT Scores (ADHE)
- Increase Applications for State Aid (ADHE)
- Increase Applications for Federal Aid (ADHE)
- Decrease Remediation Rate (ADHE)

\* The Arkansas departments of Education (ADE) and Higher Education (ADHE) are responsible for tracking and reporting data.

# PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND RESULTS

## 1. COLLEGE AND CAREER COACHES

- 15 Two-year colleges and 1 cooperative education agency were awarded grants and serve as co-location sites for College and Career Coach programs
- 49 school districts receive services from college and career coaches
- 1 Alternative Learning Environment was added as a service site

## 2. ACADEMIC YEAR ACT ACADEMY

### Program Purpose:

- Increase ACT scores of students in the participating counties
- Reduce the remediation rates for students in the participating counties
- Assist students, who score below a 19 in English, reading, and/or math on the ACT exam
- 20 hours of ACT instruction (based on Sylvan Learning Method)
  - 10 hours of math/science instruction
  - 10 hours of English/reading instruction

**Increasing ACT Score:** 74 percent of participants increased their ACT Score by at least one point.

**Reducing Need for Remediation:** 52 percent of participants increased at least one subject score to 19 or higher and tested out of remediation.

## 3. ARKANSAS COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING SYSTEM (POWERED BY KUDER™)

- New Users Average: 19,851
- Returning Users Average: 26,704
- Total Logins Average: 96,263
- Average Time per User: 32 minutes
- Time Range per Login: 0 hours 0 minutes to 4 hours 3 minutes

## 4. CAREER CLUSTER CAMPS AND COLLEGE VISITS

- Provides Hands-on Career Exploration Opportunities
- Exposes students to professionals in their desired career fields
- Assists students with their postsecondary education selection process

## AR WORKS RESULTS TO DATE (AY 2010 - AY 2013)

When evaluating the data from prior to the presence of the Career Coach (2009) to present (2013), the AR Works Career Coach program has made an average impact in 21 served counties on the following performance measures:

- **15.36 percent** average increase in Smart Core enrollment (79.97% to 95.33%)
- **19.82 percent** average increase in the college-going rate (33.10% to 52.92%)
- **.55 percent** average increase in ACT scores (19.53% to 20.08%)
- **-6.41 percent** average decrease in the remediation rate (63.58% to 57.17%)
- **32.3 percent** average increase in the number of students enrolled in the senior class applying for financial aid (40.2% to 72.5%)

52%



# PERSPECTIVE

When the Arkansas Works initiative began, our rally cry was this:

## **YOU CANNOT BE WHAT YOU CANNOT SEE.**

It has been our goal to help students discover the many career options available and realize what they can achieve through deliberate career exploration and planning for college and career success beyond high school. With early data now available, Arkansas can be proud of what we've accomplished in such a short time. Enrollment in the Common Core curriculum is up; ACT scores are improving; and enrollment in postsecondary education programs is at an all-time high, especially in the 21 counties where the Arkansas Works college and career coaches are in place. Whether they pursue a two- or four-year degree, a career certification program, or a vocational apprenticeship, students are realizing new opportunities that help them plan for their future success.

The immediate success of Arkansas Works has not gone unnoticed. School administrators are delighted with the outcomes realized since college and career coaches began working with their high school students. Business and economic development leaders are optimistic about what a better-educated, better-trained workforce will bring to their communities. And school districts, parents and state lawmakers living in counties not being served by this initiative are trying to find out how the program can be expanded to benefit all Arkansas students. All of these results give us confidence that the Arkansas Works pilot program has promising potential. The results already demonstrate that we can increase Arkansas's prosperity by empowering students and workers to complete additional training and education beyond high school.



- Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr.  
Arkansas Department of Career Education