CLIMB 2.0
Career Ladders in Mental & Behavioral Health

An Educational & Career Pathway Program for High Schoolers

CLIMB 2.0 and the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health initiative offering high school students in Eastern Kentucky a head start in behavioral and community health careers through dual enrollment, real certifications, and hands-on mentorship.

Who Is CLIMBing with us?

CLIMB 2.0 is for high school juniors who are motivated to complete college-level coursework and have an interest in behavioral and community health. Students attend participating schools in Eastern Kentucky through partnerships with local KCTCS colleges.

Big Sandy Community & Technical College

- Floyd County Central High School
- Prestonsburg High School
- Betsy Lane High School

Hazard Community & Technical College

- Perry County Central High School
- Hazard High School
- Buckhorn High School

Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College

- Harlan Independent High School

Program Timeline

Spring 2026 (Semester 1)

CHW 101 & CHW 102: two 8-week courses

Fall 2026 (Semester 2)

CHW 103 & CHW 104: two 8-week courses

Spring 2027 (Semester 3)

CHW 105 & CHW 106: two 8-week courses + eligibility for CHW & DSP course

Summer 2027

40-hour hands-on mentorship experience in community/behavioral health settings.

Program Completion

Receive $600 KCTCS scholarship and dual CHW/DSP certifications. DSP training is completed through Direct Course Online.

This structured timeline guides students through academic and practical experiences, culminating in certifications and a scholarship for continued education.

CHALLENGES	OUTCOMES/SOLUTIONS
Dual Credit vs. Dual Enrollment	• Research & communication with KDE, DBHDID, and secondary education partners
RBT Certifications & Connections	• BACB board regulations • Lack of available employers
Adjusting Certification Plans	• Switch to DSP • Collaborate with Partners
Student Retention	• Class ranking concerns without dual credit • Mult-faceted benefits for students

Students' Benefits

1	**6 KCTCS-Accredited Courses** Six Community Health Worker courses completed across three semesters, fully accredited through KCTCS.
2	**6 College Credit Hours** Earn real, transferable KCTCS college credit while still enrolled in high school, a true head start.
3	**Dual CHW / DSP Certificate** Eligibility become a Certified Community Health Worker and Direct Support Professional (DSP). DSP training is completed through Direct Course Online.
4	**Summer 2027 Mentorship** A 40-hour hands-on mentorship program providing real-world experience in community and behavioral health settings.
5	**$600 KCTCS Scholarship** A scholarship awarded upon successful completion of the program to support continued education at KCTCS.

Career Pathways, Option 1

Community Health Pathway



1

CHW Certification

Foundational understanding of community health principles and practices.

2

Associate's Degree

In Health Sciences, building a stronger academic base.

3

Bachelor's Degree

In Public Health or Social Work for advanced roles.

4

Career Opportunities

Community Health Program Manager, Health Educator, Outreach Coordinator.

What Is a Community Health Worker?

Connect to Care

Link people to doctors, clinics, and assistance programs in their community.

Educate

Teach healthy habits, nutrition, and how to understand medical information and navigate health systems.

Remove Barriers

Find practical solutions to transportation, housing, food access, and other social determinants of health.

Advocate

Listen, encourage, and stand up for the needs and rights of individuals and the broader community.

Career Pathways, Option 2

Direct Support Professional Pathway

1. **DSP Certification**
   Specialized skills in direct support practices completed through Direct Course Online.
2. **Bachelor's Degree**
   In Psychology or Education for deeper insights.
3. **Advanced Credentials**
   Pursue additional certifications for leadership roles in direct support and disability services.
4. **Career Opportunities**
   Clinical Director, Behavioral Health Specialist, Direct Support Professional.





What Is a Direct Support Professional?

Build Skills

Support individuals in developing communication, social interaction, and daily living skills that promote independence.

Document Progress

Record detailed notes on individual progress and share updates with supervisors to adjust support plans and goals.

Encourage Growth

Help individuals reach personal goals and overcome challenges using strengths-based, person-centered strategies.

Support Families

Follow each individual's personalized support plan and actively collaborate with families, caregivers, and other providers.

SPECIAL EVENTS

College Days!



Explore Campuses
Students toured college campuses and got a real feel for what college life looks like.

Meet Staff
Connected with college staff who are passionate about supporting student success.

Talk with Instructors & Students
Had real conversations with instructors and current students about courses, careers, and what to expect in college.

Connect with Colleges & Universities
Learned about college & university pathways and how CLIMB 2.0 credits can take them further.

Hazard Community & Technical College







Big Sandy Community & Technical College







MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT



Teen Mental Health First Aid Certification

Congratulations to Hazard High School students on completing this required certification milestone!

STUDENT VOICES

Hear From Our Students

CHW 101 & 102 Student

"In CHW 101 and 102 I have learned many things. I really enjoy this course because it helped me to learn how to be patient with people and how to talk to them through their point of view. It's taught me about how community health workers can help our community in so many great ways. CHWs can help to get people housing, food, their bills paid, and more. I really liked how CHWs help people with their doctor's appointments. I've always struggled seeing older people struggle to make appointments, and to learn exactly how to help them set those up is just amazing.

I've also learned how to keep people's religion and culture in mind when talking to them during appointments, and how CHWs can get the right accommodations for people such as a language translator or sign language interpreter. This is really great especially in Kentucky, where we have so many people coming into our state from all over the world!

This class has really helped me a lot with communication skills, listening skills, and how to build a close, family-like relationship with a stranger. I really do believe that I could help someone get the right resources they need from just the information I have learned so far!"

Program Success at a Glance

CLIMB 2.0 students are showing strong academic performance in their dual-credit KCTCS coursework. The data below reflects course completion and success rates across our current cohort — a testament to the dedication of our students and the strength of our instruction.

Students Currently Enrolled

24

Total Students

Across all participating high schools in the CLIMB 2.0 cohort.

Course Success Rates

100%

CHW 101 Pass Rate

Students earning a passing grade in Introduction to Community Health Work.

100%

CHW 102 Pass Rate

Students earning a passing grade in the second-semester CHW course.

What Questions Do You Have?



Get in Touch

CLIMB 2.0 is coordinated through a partnership with the Council on Postsecondary Education and the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health. Reach out to our program team for information about enrollment, eligibility, or partnership opportunities.

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