



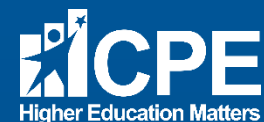
# **CLIMB**

**Career Ladders in  
Mental & Behavioral Health**

## **Career Ladders in Mental and Behavioral Healthcare CLIMB-Health**

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# **CLIMB-Health**

**Reinvesting in Human Capital  
within a Marginalized Workforce**

# Kentucky's Marginalized Workforce

## A Strategic Initiative by the Council on Postsecondary Education

In Kentucky, marginalized workforce populations, including individuals recovering from substance use disorders, former inmates, and underrepresented minority groups, face significant barriers to employment; they are on the boundaries of our workforce.

These barriers often stem from systemic issues like discrimination, lack of access to education, and insufficient career support. As a result, these groups experience higher unemployment rates and economic instability. Addressing these challenges is critical not only for the individuals affected but also for the broader economy.

Initiatives focusing on education, skill development, and inclusive hiring practices are essential to integrate these populations into the workforce, enhancing their economic opportunities and contributing to the state's overall prosperity.

# Leveraging Education as a Transformational Force

## **Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE)**

CPE is committed to advancing Kentucky's educational and economic prospects through innovative and inclusive workforce initiatives. Directing the CLIMB-Health program is a strategic move aligned with our mission to enhance access to postsecondary education and promote sustainable career development, particularly in high-demand sectors like mental and behavioral health.

By fostering career ladders that begin with entry-level positions and extend into professional certifications and degrees, CLIMB aims to fill critical gaps in our healthcare system and revitalize communities by reinvesting in the human capital of those often marginalized.

This initiative reflects CPE's commitment to leveraging education as a transformative economic mobility and social stability tool.

# **CLIMB-Health**

## **Overview of CLIMB-Health**

# The Need for Institutional Responses

## **Sustaining Community in Community Colleges**

The Community College plays a pivotal role in addressing the substance use disorder (SUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD) epidemic in Kentucky. These institutions are ideally positioned to offer accessible, tailored education and training programs that can equip individuals with the skills needed for healthcare careers, particularly addiction and recovery services.

Community colleges can fill critical gaps in the local healthcare workforce by integrating specialized curricula focusing on SUD/OUD treatment and prevention. Linking community colleges with comprehensive colleges is crucial for serving SUD/OUD students by creating seamless pathways for advanced education and specialized training.

## **CLIMB Goals**

The CLIMB initiative is strategically designed to address critical workforce shortages in Kentucky's mental and behavioral health sectors while supporting marginalized communities, including those impacted by SUD/ODU.

By partnering with educational institutions like community and comprehensive colleges, CLIMB facilitates tailored education and training pathways that lead to certification and employment in high-demand healthcare roles.

This initiative fills urgent gaps in the healthcare system and fosters long-term economic stability and social inclusivity.



# Changing Mental and Behavioral Healthcare

## **Changing the Landscape of Mental and Behavioral Healthcare**

The CLIMB initiative is poised to significantly transform Kentucky's mental and behavioral healthcare landscape by addressing the dual challenges of employment and healthcare service provision by focusing on education and workforce development, particularly among marginalized populations.

Through structured career pathways, CLIMB empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter and excel in healthcare, increasing the availability of skilled professionals dedicated to mental and behavioral health.

The infusion of passionate individuals with diverse lived experiences, coupled with their rigorous training, will elevate the quality and accessibility of mental and behavioral healthcare in Kentucky.



# **CLIMB-Health**

## **Key Components of CLIMB**

# Certifications as a Foundation

## **DBHDID Non-Credit Certification Training**

Non-credit certifications offered by the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID) are foundational for building robust mental and behavioral healthcare career pathways.

These certifications, accessible and tailored to immediate workforce needs, enable individuals to gain specialized knowledge and skills crucial in the field quickly. They facilitate entry-level employment in healthcare settings as stepping stones for further education and advanced qualifications.

This approach rapidly equips participants with the competencies needed for immediate service provision and encourages continual professional development and upward mobility within the healthcare sector.

## **CLIMBs Use of Academic Certifications and Degrees**

Implementing career pathways from non-credit certifications is a strategic method to enhance mental and behavioral healthcare workforce readiness; they begin at non-credit certifications, emphasizing accessible and focused training that quickly imparts essential skills to participants.

As participants advance through KCTCS's comprehensive career pathways, they can accrue five college-level certifications with the Human Services degree program for immediate credits and attain higher qualifications.

This style of career progression ensures a steady pipeline of skilled professionals in the healthcare sector.

# Articulation to Comprehensive Education

## **Seamless Transition to Advanced Degrees**

Articulated degree pathways between KCTCS and comprehensive Kentucky colleges are essential for facilitating a smooth transition for students from two-year to four-year degree programs.

These pathways are carefully designed to ensure that credits earned at KCTCS are fully transferable and applicable toward advanced degrees, eliminating unnecessary; this alignment saves time and resources and encourages continuous learning.

CPE is working with the KCTCS Systems Office under CLIMB to survey and communicate existing articulation agreements within mental and behavioral healthcare programs to CLIMB students.

## **Integrated Community Partners**

Creating and expanding community partnerships, CLIMB integrates KCTCS colleges into local, regional, and state mental and behavioral healthcare partners.

By developing scalable community models, these partnerships aim to align KCTCS initiatives with local healthcare demands tightly, producing graduates who are immediately prepared to address specific health challenges.

Success stories from regional collaborations by CLIMB colleges highlight the potential for expanding these networks statewide, creating a robust, community-focused healthcare workforce across Kentucky.

## **CLIMBs Innovation Role**

CLIMB colleges act as innovators, centralizing resources, training, and opportunities to streamline and enhance mental and behavioral healthcare education delivery.

This role involves creating diverse educational tools, community partnerships, and workforce needs into a cohesive framework that efficiently serves students and the healthcare sector.

This strategic consolidation is a game-changer. It significantly enhances program effectiveness, facilitating smoother transitions for students into healthcare careers and ensuring that community needs are met precisely. It's a testament to our commitment to excellence.

**CLIMB-Health  
Collaboratives**



## **CLIMB Collaboratives**

- Collaboratives act as vital hubs for resource sharing, expertise exchange, and community engagement, ensuring that educational programs are closely aligned with the needs of local and state healthcare systems by integrating these diverse stakeholders.
- Collaboratives enrich the curriculum with practical insights and expand training facilities by enhancing educational offerings' relevance and bridging gaps between education and employment.
- The impact is profound; graduates are well-prepared to meet specific local healthcare challenges, increasing their employability and effectiveness within the community and reinforcing KCTCS's role in advancing Kentucky's mental and behavioral health services.

# CLIMBs Influence and Momentum

## The CLIMB Effect

- By strategically aligning educational programs with the needs of the healthcare sector, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities, CLIMB has established a robust framework for creating sustainable employment and improving healthcare delivery.
- This initiative leverages the extensive network of KCTCS colleges, integrating tailored educational pathways with community and state agency partnerships to address critical workforce shortages effectively.
- As a result, CLIMB is filling essential roles within the healthcare system and empowering individuals with the skills and opportunities needed for long-term career success.

**CLIMB-Health**

**Conclusions**

## How CLIMB Measures Success

The investment in the CLIMB initiative is poised to yield substantial returns. CLIMB directly addresses critical shortages in mental and behavioral health professionals by focusing on training and integrating marginalized populations into the healthcare workforce.

Furthermore, as CLIMB graduates enter the workforce, their contribution to the healthcare system helps reduce long-term public health expenditures by improving population health outcomes.

By fostering a more inclusive workforce, CLIMB enhances community well-being and resilience, reducing societal costs associated with unemployment and healthcare inefficiencies. The ripple effects are poised to improve Kentucky's overall economic growth and social health, making CLIMB a wise and impactful investment.

# Vision for Transformative and Inclusive Community Revitalization

CLIMB's vision for transformative and inclusive community revitalization is anchored in empowering individuals from marginalized groups through education and workforce development.

This vision seeks to elevate the entire community by equipping people with the tools for economic mobility and fostering a workforce adept at addressing the specialized needs of mental and behavioral healthcare.

CLIMB's objectives are to create a self-sustaining cycle where education leads to employment, and employment stimulates community health and prosperity.

This holistic approach to revitalization promises to not just mend but transform communities' social and economic fabric, making them inclusive, healthy, and vibrant—a true embodiment of Kentucky's commitment to growth and equality for all its citizens.

# Questions? Contact Us

## Healthcare Workforce Initiative

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