The CHALLENGE

The disconnected youth and young adults in the Gulf Coast Region total 111,000. These individuals, who neither work nor attend school or college, are ages 16-24. Of the area’s young people are represented by this group.

Lock of college and career opportunity costs the Gulf Coast Region approximately $30B. 78% of these youth have a high school credential, but few resources exist to connect them to employment. Meanwhile, businesses in the region invest millions to import workers for middle-skill jobs across a range of industries.

GRADCAFÉ ON THE GO and COLLEGE “STOP-OUTS”

Most students don’t drop out of college for academic reasons. Instead, it’s often obstacles like family problems, medical issues or a lack of clarity around educational goals that gets in the way. These “stop-outs” are a priority population for Project GRAD and Houston Community College. GRADcafè on the Go, a mobile college and career advising center, meets these students where they are and helps them get their educational goals across the finish line.

Educate Texas awarded Project GRAD funding to implement “GRADcafè on the Go” as part of the Bridge to College and Career Success initiative that launched in 2017. Funders include JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Trellis Foundation.

For more information, visit edtx.org or contact BCCS@cftexas.org
WHY GRADCAFÉ ON THE GO?

Project GRAD provides free, accessible college and career services to help individuals in low-income communities achieve their educational aspirations. Its GRADcafé advisors help students choose a career, apply to college, and find financial aid. Project GRAD partnered with Houston Community College (HCC), the City of Houston, Harris County Public Library and Workforce Solutions to develop GRADcafè on the Go, a van that enables advisors to conduct a mobile version of its existing Aspiring Young Adults college advising model.

GRADcafè on the Go expands Project GRAD’s service area and allows advisors to meet with opportunity youth and young adults and college stop-outs in their own communities. The collaboration leverages existing resources to provide intensive support and ongoing case management. Project GRAD and HCC plan to cross-train and co-locate to learn about one another’s services and advising models, while collaborating on specific needs and interventions for participants.

AREAS SERVED

- Acres Homes
- Gulfton
- Northside
- City of Houston
- Multiservice Centers

HOW it WORKS

RECRUITMENT
- Walk-ins to cafés
- Outreach to high-need communities via mobile unit
- Outreach to HCC stopouts within 18 hours of earning a degree or certificate

ONBOARDING & INTAKE
- Case manager assigned
- Assessment and contract signing
- Action plan completion and career pathway selection
- Postsecondary pre-testing

PREPARATION & BRIDGING
- Career Institutes at HCC Centers of Excellence
- Individual Action Plans: financial aid assistance, academic preparation, employability skills
- Connection to social services
- GRAD and HCC advising

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT & COMPLETION
- Ongoing social services support
- College enrollment
- Student progress check-in
- Career advising and readiness support

EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT
- Match local employers to participants’ skills and needs
- Paid internships through the City of Houston’s Hire Houston Youth program
- Access to free HCC job training programs

Learn more about BCCS
Visit: edtx.org/bccs

Learn more about GRADcafè on the Go
Email Adriana Estrada at: aestrada@projectgradhouston.org

To donate, mentor participants, or share work-based learning and employment opportunities
Email: BCCS@cftexas.org