

Workforce and Employability Skills Program (WESP)
Grant Project Abstracts
FY 2019 Awards

Johns Hopkins University

Project Title: Kingdom

Project Director: Dr. Anita Young

Award: \$80,000.00

Project Abstract: The disparity in the school performance of African American males has been attributed to many factors; yet, remains an ongoing concern for schools and communities. The known entity is that persistent gaps in academic performance, attendance rates, and disciplinary referrals can increase drop-out rates and lesson viable post-secondary options for African American males. The purpose of the Kingdom Initiative is to expand educational planning and career exploration options that lead to college access and employability skills after high school graduation. The Johns Hopkins University School of Education, in partnership with Carver Vocational Technical High School promotes the district's vision to provide a rigorous educational program that prepares students for optimal college and career opportunities. The purpose of the Kingdom Initiative is to expand educational planning and career exploration options that lead to college access and employability skills after high school graduation. The Kingdom Initiative also proposes to increase 11th grade African American male students' abilities to make essential life skills decisions that result in positive post-secondary opportunities. The initiative includes four components. They are: (1) Verbal and non-verbal Communication Strategies, (2) Apprenticeship and Career Exploration, (3) Enrichment Field Trips, and (4) Academic/Experiential Learning. The anticipated objectives and outcomes will help participants increase their leadership capacity, self-efficacy and increase access to college.

Workforce and Employability Skills Program (WESP)
Grant Project Abstracts
FY 2019 Awards

Wor-Wic Community College

Project Title: Wicomico Workforce and Employability Skills Program

Project Director: Ms. Lori Smoot

Award: \$28,372.25

Project Abstract: The Wicomico Workforce and Employability Skills Program aims to expose students to career pathways, introduce students to a college campus and the credit and non-credit programs available, inform students of post-secondary admissions and financial aid processes, provide students with soft skills and employability skills, and offer a summer employment experience for a subset of students who demonstrate interest and an ability to benefit from work experience. The project will serve Wicomico County's GEAR UP cohort of more than 850 students, many of whom are low-income, potential first-generation college students. GEAR UP students will have the opportunity to interact with college instructors to engage in activities exploring career fields such as healthcare, criminal justice, hospitality, welding and others. In addition to broadening students' understanding of a multitude of career pathways, the activity supports the connection between STEM subjects and real-world issues. Campus visits familiarize students with a college campus, admissions and financial aid processes, and the college's support services. Soft skills and employability skills classes will improve students' skills in communication, job readiness, critical thinking, teamwork and problem-solving, helping them to prepare for postsecondary education and future career opportunities. Lastly, a summer employment opportunity, offered to up to 10 students who meet participation requirements, whose Naviance career assessment results indicate interests in industries with available summer positions among local employers, and who stand to benefit from work experience, will enable students to further hone their soft skills and employability skills through work experience coupled with a Career Research and Development class.