

# The Students of the Future Are Not Who You Think



## About Accelerating Opportunity

Accelerating Opportunity is managed by the national Jobs for the Future campaign and is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Kresge Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The program was developed in the spring of 2011 as an initial 4-year initiative. Eleven states were selected to receive \$200,000 in funding. Over the next three years, five of these states will receive a bonus of \$1.6 million. Currently, the states involved include Wisconsin, Oregon, North Carolina, New Mexico, Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, Kansas, Illinois, Georgia and Alabama.

## Program Makes It Easier for Adults to Earn an Education

In order for students to successfully complete this series, they may need logistical assistance. Consequently, courses have been designed around the needs of adult students, who are often bogged down with familial or existing employment obligations. For starters, classes are offered in convenient online as well as campus-based formats. In addition, participants are eligible to receive support services, including child care assistance, tutoring and transportation. What's more, while in the program, students may be able to secure subsidized positions with partnering employers.

## Accelerating Opportunity Educational Outcomes

The goal of the series is to provide non-native English speakers and minimally educated adults with basic reading, writing and math skills and, where needed, help them earn a GED. In addition, the program goes on to provide participants with the equivalent of a 1-year college-level certificate, which can be built upon should the student choose to continue his or her education. Through Accelerating Opportunity, participants can pursue vocational training in such areas as health care, computers or labor trades.

## **What This Training Means to Participants**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)) noted that as of July 2011, the national unemployment rate was just above nine percent. According to the Bureau, vocations projected to grow throughout the 2008-2018 decade are, among others, in areas of construction labor, carpentry and health care, including nursing aide and medical assisting professions. All of these positions can be sought after completion of minimal training, often one year. Compare this to more traditional bachelor's degree programs, which typically require at least four years of coursework. By providing participants with practical skills and industry-recognized credentials, Accelerating Opportunity is hoping to help the working situations of nearly 20,000 individuals by 2014.

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