

## **HPOG Promising Practices: “Early Warning” Case Management Pensacola State College**

When asked what the strongest element of their program is, Pensacola State College’s HPOG staff agreed that it was the intensive case management provided to all students. According to the staff, this case management is the reason many of the program’s participants have successfully completed their trainings.

Pensacola’s case management services are provided by program partner Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida. Catholic Charities is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), charitable organization that aims to effect social change by helping individuals and families remove barriers to self-sufficiency, unlock potential, and build up personal dignity. The Northwest Florida branch is one of hundreds across the county and serves residents of Florida’s 18 most northwest counties.

Catholic Charities’ case managers initially meet with every HPOG participant to complete an assessment, identify barriers, and review the HPOG success plan. Following this initial meeting, students meet with case managers at least twice a month to identify barriers, identify emergent needs, monitor academic progress, and promote job readiness skills. For students who need support services, case managers provide quick and easy referrals which are recorded in the student’s file. In addition, case managers refer students to other community service providers to assist with additional resources.

Project director Inger Barnes attributes the success of Pensacola’s case management to the program’s “early warning” strategy. With this approach, case managers take note of any potential barriers a student might face—through discussions during their twice monthly meetings, through tracking of academic performance, or through conversations with other program staff—and attempt to preemptively eliminate them. This task is made easier by weekly meetings where Catholic’s case managers and Pensacola’s HPOG staff share information on a student’s progress and challenges. This ongoing communication keeps both parties aware of students’ needs and ways they can be addressed, and it helps students receive truly “wraparound” support.

Ms. Barnes also credits the dedication of the case managers, as well as their willingness to be flexible and available to students. Furthermore, the case managers’ passion and ability to establish rapport with the students leads the latter to feel a sense of accountability to their case managers, which helps them accomplish the goals set by both parties. By partnership with an organization that is well versed in case management, the Pensacola HPOG program can focus on other program elements, all while students receive high quality services.