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# Student Support Services Program

Project and Program Measures for Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

Reporting Period: 2020-21

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## Introduction

This document presents the program performance and efficiency for the Student Support Services (SSS) program in the 2020–21 reporting year. For *Government Performance and Results Act* (GPRA) reporting, SSS program performance is measured by two student achievement outcomes: persistence and completion. The efficiency measure is calculated based on the amount of funding that grantees received, the number of participants served, and the number of participants who experienced a successful persistence or completion outcome during the reporting year. The persistence and completion measures differ for participants who received SSS program services at four-year institutions and participants who received services at two-year institutions. The 2020–21 performance and efficiency measures for the SSS program are therefore described separately for four-year and two-year grantee institutions. The following section provides more detailed descriptions of these measures and the student populations from which they are derived.

The accompanying Excel workbook contains grantee- and program-levels data describing freshmen persistence (Table 1), bachelor’s degree completion (Table 2), associate’s degree completion and/or transfer (Table 3), and program efficiency (Table 4). The program-level estimates of program performance and efficiency within this document were calculated by aggregating participant-level data from the *Annual Performance Reports* (APRs) submitted by individual grantees from the 2015–16 reporting year, 2018–19 reporting year, and the 2020–21 reporting year. Data should be interpreted with caution given the considerations described in the section below on data constraints.

## Program Performance

Persistence and completion are the two academic achievements measured within cohorts of full-time, first-time freshman SSS participants while they are enrolled in grantee institutions.[[1]](#footnote-1) The performance measures are calculated using different cohorts of full-time, first-time freshmen, with cohorts selected to allow for the passage of a sufficient number of years to observe outcomes for each of the measures. Next, we describe each SSS performance measure for the 2020–21 reporting year.

### Persistence

For both four-year and two-year grantee institutions, participants were classified as persisting if they were still enrolled at the same institution at the beginning of the subsequent year of college. In two-year institutions, participants who obtained an associate’s degree and/or transferred to a four-year institution within the first year of college also were classified as persisting. Persistence rates for the 2020–21 reporting year were measured among participants who were full-time, first-time freshmen in 2020–21.

### Completion

For four-year grantee institutions, the completion rate was calculated as the percentage of participants who obtained a bachelor’s degree from the grantee institution within six years of college entry. Bachelor’s degree completion rates for the 2020–21 reporting year were measured among participants who were full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16.

For participants at two-year grantee institutions, three different completion outcomes are possible: (1) receiving an associate’s degree and transferring to a four-year institution, (2) receiving an associate’s degree without transferring to a four-year institution, and (3) transferring to a four-year institution without receiving an associate’s degree. Participants who experienced any of these three outcomes within the first three years of college were classified as “completing.” For the 2020–21 reporting year, completion rates at two-year grantee institutions were measured among participants who were full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19.

These rates were computed by including and excluding new summer participants,[[2]](#footnote-2) respectively.

### Program Efficiency

Program efficiency was measured as the gap (or difference) between the cost per active participant who experienced a successful persistence or completion outcome and the cost per active participant who received program services during the 2020–21 reporting year. In contrast to the program performance measures—which are based on cohorts of full-time, first-time freshmen—program efficiency was measured among all participants served within the 2020–21 reporting year (that is, new, continuing, and summer session participants). A reduction in the efficiency gap between reporting years may be interpreted as improved program efficiency.

For additional information regarding how the persistence, completion, and efficiency measure results were calculated, please refer to the calculation rules in the appendix.

## Grantee-level Data

The accompanying Excel workbook contains grantee-level data describing full-time, first-time freshmen persistence, degree completion, and program efficiency for all grantees included in these results. The data in all the tables are organized alphabetically by state and grantee name for all SSS grantees funded in 2020–21 (1,155 grantees).

Table 1 (Persistence) contains a note column to identify those grantees that were first funded in 2020–21, did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen, reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen, as well as grantees that served less than 90 percent of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 (see the summary in Exhibit 1 below).

**Exhibit 1 Number of Grantees by the Content of Note in the Persistence Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note | Number of Grantees |
| First funded in 2020–21 and the project reported serving at least four full-time, first-time freshmen in 2020–21 | 21 |
| First funded in 2020–21; the project reported serving at least four full-time, first-time freshmen and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 73 |
| First funded in 2020–21; the project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 29 |
| First funded in 2020–21; the project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2020–21 | 4 |
| First funded in 2020–21; the project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 34 |
| First funded in 2020–21; the project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2020–21 | 3 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 35 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2020–21 | 25 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 62 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2020–21 | 62 |
| The project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 180 |
| None of above | 627 |
| Total | 1,155 |

Table 2 (Completion 4-year) contains a note column to identify those grantees that were first funded in 2020–21(so no full-time, first-time freshman were reported as being served in 2015–16); received funding prior to 2020–21 and did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16; reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16;as well as grantees that served less than 90 percent of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 (see the summary in Exhibits 2 and 3 below). Table 2 also includes a column to indicate which grantees’ statistics are impacted by excluding or including new summer participants.

**Exhibit 2 Number of Grantees by the Content of Note in the Bachelor’s Degree Completion Table if Excluding New Summer Participants**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note | Number of Grantees |
| First funded in 2020–21 and no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2015–16 | 20 |
| First funded in 2020–21 and no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2015–16; the project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 68 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 | 19 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 4 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 | 29 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 3 |
| The project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 65 |
| None of above | 341 |
| Total | 549 |

*Note*. One grantee (SUNY/ College of Technology/ Canton: P042A201330) was excluded because it was not a four-year institution until 2020–21.

**Exhibit 3 Number of Grantees by the Content of Note in the Bachelor’s Degree Completion Table if Including New Summer Participants**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note | Number of Grantees |
| First funded in 2020–21 and no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2015–16 | 20 |
| First funded in 2020–21 and no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2015–16. The project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 68 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 | 18 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 4 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 | 25 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2015–16 and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 3 |
| The project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 65 |
| None of above | 346 |
| Total | 549 |

*Note*. One grantee (SUNY/ College of Technology/ Canton: P042A201330) was excluded because it was not a four-year institution until 2020–21.

Table 3 (Completion 2-year) contains a note column to identify those grantees that were first funded in 2020–21(so no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2018–19); did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19; reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19;as well as grantees that served less than 90 percent of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 (see the summary in Exhibit 4 below).

**Exhibit 4 Number of Grantees by the Content of Note in the Associate’s Degree Completion Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note | Number of Grantees |
| First funded in 2020–21 and no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2018–19 | 8 |
| First funded in 2020–21 and no full-time, first-time freshman reported in 2018–19; the project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 68 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19 | 6 |
| The project did not report serving any full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19 and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 5 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19 | 19 |
| The project reported serving no more than three full-time, first-time freshmen in 2018–19 and served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 16 |
| The project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 184 |
| None of above | 300 |
| Total | 606 |

*Note*. One grantee (SUNY/ College of Technology/ Canton: P042A201330) was added because it was not a four-year institution until 2020–21.

Table 4 (Efficiency) contains a note column to identify those grantees that were first funded in 2020–21,as well as grantees that served less than 90 percent of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 (see the summary in Exhibit 5 below).

**Exhibit 5 Number of Grantees by the Content of Note in the Efficiency Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note | Number of Grantees |
| First funded in 2020–21 | 28 |
| First funded in 2020–21 and the project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 136 |
| The project served < 90% of participants funded to serve in 2020–21 | 277 |
| None of above | 714 |
| Total | 1,155 |

## Selected Findings

### Persistence

* Of the 1,155 grantees that were funded and submitted APR data in 2020–21, 1,062 were included in the calculation of the program-level persistence rate because they served new participants who were full-time, first-time freshmen in the 2020–21 reporting year. The remaining 93 grantees did not serve any full-time, first-time freshmen in the 2020–21 reporting year.
* The overall persistence rate in 2020–21 was 88.8 percent (GPRA Table 1). A comparison of persistence rates between 2020–21 (88.8 percent) and 2019–20 (88.1 percent) shows a slight increase between the two reporting years.
* The rate of persistence at four-year institutions (90.8 percent) was higher than the rate at two-year institutions (85.8 percent). Between 2019–20 and 2020–21, persistence rates did not change at four-year institutions and increased at two-year institutions (from 84.4 percent to 85.8 percent).

### Completion at Four-Year Grantee Institutions

* Of the 549 grantees at four-year institutions that were funded and submitted APR data in 2020–21, if excluding new summer participants, 506 provided data that were used to calculate the six-year bachelor’s degree completion rate. The remaining 43 grantees did not serve full-time, first-time freshmen during the 2015–16 reporting year.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* The six-year bachelor’s degree completion rate for the 2020–21 reporting year was 60.7 percent if excluding the new summer participants and 60.6 percent if including them (GPRA Table 2), which exceeded the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED’s) target of 54.0 percent.
* The six-year bachelor’s degree completion rate in 2020–21 (60.7 percent) was slightly higher than the 2019–20 rate (59.1 percent).

### Completion at Two-Year Grantee Institutions

* Of the 606 grantees at two-year institutions that were funded in 2020–21 and submitted APR data, 519 provided data that were used to calculate the completion rate. The remaining 87 grantees did not serve full-time, first-time freshmen during the 2018–19 reporting year.
* The overall three-year completion rate at two-year institutions was 47.5 percent (GPRA Table 3),[[4]](#footnote-4) which exceeded ED’s target of 41.5 percent.
* The three-year completion rate in 2020–21 (47.5 percent) was lower than the 2019–20 completion rate (48.2 percent).

### Efficiency Measures

* When a certificate was not included as a successful outcome, the overall efficiency gap in 2020–21 was $309 (GPRA Table 4), which was almost the same as the 2019–20 efficiency gap ($308).
* The efficiency gap at four-year institutions increased from $162 to $184 between the 2019–20 and 2020–21 reporting years.
* When a certificate was not included as a successful outcome, the efficiency gap at two-year institutions decreased from $489 to $465 between the 2019–20 and 2020–21 reporting years.
* The efficiency gap at two-year institutions ($465) was more than twice as large as the efficiency gap at four-year institutions ($184) in 2020–21.

## Limitations of Data and Findings

Please note that the findings presented in this document are descriptive in nature and do not represent the impact of the SSS program. The calculations for the SSS performance measures require participant-level longitudinal data covering a window of time up to six years after first-time enrollment in the college, depending on the measure. Program year 2020–21 was the first year in the 2020–25 grant cycle, and 164 projects were newly funded; therefore, some 2020–21 performance measures are not calculated for projects that were first funded in the 2020–25 grant competition.[[5]](#footnote-5) It is also worth noting that many students at risk who participate in the SSS program are not enrolled as full-time students and that students may enter the SSS program after their freshman year. The performance measures in this report and the accompanying GPRA tables do not capture the outcomes of these participants. In addition, the outcomes presented in the GPRA tables were calculated based on grantees’ reports of student outcomes in the APR data; any participant outcomes that occurred after participants transferred from the grantee institution are not captured in the GPRA tables. Finally, the entire duration of the performance period under review occurred during the national emergency concerning the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as declared by Proclamation 9994.

## Appendix: Calculation Rules

### Persistence Rate Calculation

Persistence rates were calculated separately for participants at two-year and four-year institutions.

* The **numerator** is the number of full-time, first-time freshman participants in the 2020–21 reporting year who were enrolled in the fall of the 2021–22 academic year at both two-year and four-year grantee institutions. For two-year grantee institutions, the numerator includes participants who had completed an associate’s degree and/or transferred from a two-year to a four-year institution by the beginning of the 2021–22 academic year. The data fields used to determine the numerator are as follows:
  + Four-year institutions
* #34 (CurPerstStatus) option 1
  + Two-year institutions
* #34 (CurPerstStatus) option 1, 2, or 3 OR
* #30 (Transfers) option 2 OR
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 10, 11, or 12
* The **denominator** is the number of full-time, first-time freshman participants served by the SSS grantee in 2020–21. The data fields used to determine the denominator are as follows:
  + Not a full-time, first-time freshman participant served by the SSS grantee in previous years (prior to 2020–21) AND
  + #22 (PartCD) option 1 (or 2 if PartCD from the previous year is option 8 or 9) AND
  + #23 (EnrollCD) option 1 AND
  + #19 (EnterGradeLV) option 1 AND
  + #31 (DegreeCD) does not equal option 4 or 6 AND
  + #34 (CurPerstStatus) does not equal option 5

### Calculation of Completion for Four-Year Grantee Institutions

* The **numerator** is the number of full-time, first-time freshman participants in 2015–16 who graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the grantee institution before or during the 2020–21 reporting year.
  + Received a bachelor’s degree or an equivalent degree in either reporting year between 2016–17 and 2020–21
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 4 or 6
* The **denominator** is the number of full-time, first-time freshman participants served by the SSS grantee in 2015–16. The data fields used to determine the denominator are as follows:
  + Not a full-time, first-time freshman participant served by the SSS grantee in previous years (prior to 2015–16) AND
  + #22 (PartCD) option 1 AND[[6]](#footnote-6)
  + #23 (EnrollCD) option 1 AND
  + #19 (EnterGradeLV) option 1 AND
  + #31 (DegreeCD) does not equal option 4, 5, or 6 AND
  + #34 (CurPerstStatus) does not equal option 5

### Calculation of Completion for Two-Year Grantee Institutions

* The **numerator** is the number of full-time, first-time freshman participants in 2018–19 who graduated with an associate’s degree and/or transferred from the two-year grantee institution to a four-year institution before or during the 2020–21 academic year.
  + Received an associate’s degree and transferred to a four-year institution in either reporting year between 2018–19 and 2020–21
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 11
  + Received an associate’s degree without transfer to a four-year institution in either reporting year between 2018–19 and 2020–21
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 10
  + Transferred to a four-year institution without receiving an associate’s degree in either reporting year between 2018–19 and 2020–21
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 0 or 9 AND #30 (Transfers) option 2 OR
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 12
* The **denominator** is the number of full-time, first-time freshman participants served by the SSS grantee in 2018–19. The data fields used to determine the denominator are as follows:
  + Not a full-time, first-time freshman participant served by the SSS grantee in previous years (prior to 2018–19) AND
  + #22 (PartCD) option 1 AND[[7]](#footnote-7)
  + #23 (EnrollCD) option 1 AND
  + #19 (EnterGradeLV) option 1 AND
  + #31 (DegreeCD) does not equal option 4, 5, or 6 AND
  + #34 (CurPerstStatus) does not equal option 5

### Efficiency Measures

The efficiency measure, or efficiency gap, is the difference between the cost per successful persistence or completion outcome that occurred during the reporting year and the cost per participant served during the reporting year (that is, new, continuing, and summer session participants). Successful participant outcomes were calculated separately for participants at two-year and four-year institutions.

Cost per active participant in the SSS program during the reporting year:

* The **numerator** is the amount of funding received by SSS grantee institutions that submitted APR data in the 2020–21 reporting year. The **denominator** is the number of active participants served by the SSS program in 2020–21.
  + #22 (PartCD) option 1, 2, 8, or 9

Cost per successful participant outcome during the reporting year:

* The **numerator** is the amount of funding received by SSS grantee institutions that submitted APR data in the 2020–21 reporting year.
* The **denominator** is the number of active participants served by the SSS program in 2020–21 who experienced a successful persistence or completion outcome. The data fields used to determine the denominator are as follows:
  + #22 (PartCD) option 1, 2, 8, or 9 AND
  + Two-year institutions
* #34 (CurPerstStatus) option 1, 2, or 3 OR
* #30 (Transfers) option 2 OR
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 10, 11, or 12
  + Four-year institutions
* #34 (CurPerstStatus) option 1 or 5 OR
* #31 (DegreeCD) option 4 or 6

The efficiency gap is then calculated as the cost per successful participant outcome minus the cost per active participant in the 2020–21 reporting year. An alternative measure of program efficiency includes certificate completion without transferring to a four-year institution as a successful outcome among participants at two-year grantee institutions (#31 [DegreeCD] option 1 or 2 OR #34 [CurPerstStatus] option 4).

1. Students who received a bachelor’s degree during their first year of participation in the SSS program were omitted from cohorts of full-time, first-time freshmen when calculating rates of persistence and completion. In previous years’ GPRA reports, the new summer participants from the year before the cohort year were excluded from the cohorts in computing the completion rates but were included in computing the persistence rates. In this year, we computed the completion rates in two ways: one included the new summer participants in 2015 for four-year institutions (in 2018 for two-year institutions) and the other excluded them. However, this only involved 412 summer participants in 2015 and affected the completion rate in 29 four-year institutions and none in two-year institutions. Please see more details in the subsequent sections. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A new summer participant is an individual served by the SSS project for the first time during the summer session preceding the participant’s first academic year at the grantee institution (e.g., served during summer 2015 prior to the 2015–16 academic year). See more details in the appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If including new summer participants, the numbers are 507 and 42, respectively. One of these grantees, SUNY/ College of Technology/ Canton (P042A201330), was funded as a two-year grantee in the 2015–20 grant cycle and as a four-year grantee in the 2020–25 grant cycle. This grantee was not included in the calculation of rates of completion at four-year grantee institutions but included in the calculation of rates of completion at two-year grantee institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The completion rate remained the same in two-year institutions regardless of whether the new summer participants were included or not. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Grantees that were first funded in the 2020―25 grant competition would not have served any members of the 2015–16 full-time and first-time freshmen in four-year intuitions (the basis for the bachelor’s degree completion measure), and would not have served any members of the 2018–19 full-time and first-time freshmen in two-year intuitions (the basis for the associate’s degree completion measure); therefore, these performance measures are not applicable for these grantees (see also Table 2 and Table 3 in the accompanying EXCEL workbook). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The new summer participants (total 412) in 2015 are excluded here. Add “(or 2 if PartCD from the previous year is option 8 or 9) AND” to include them. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The new summer participants in 2018 are excluded here. Add “(or 2 if PartCD from the previous year is option 8 or 9) AND” to include them. But there were no such cases for two-year institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)