# Bridge to Finish
# Outcome Study Snapshot

Food insecurity, housing insecurity, and other basic needs insecurities are prevalent among community and technical college students in Washington. These competing priorities can interfere with students' ability to concentrate on their coursework, build social connections, maintain mental and physical health, and feel a sense of belonging. In the long run, basic needs insecurities can inhibit students' likelihood of persisting and earning a credential, and for students with low incomes, completing a postsecondary credential is a longer-term strategy to increase economic mobility and stability.
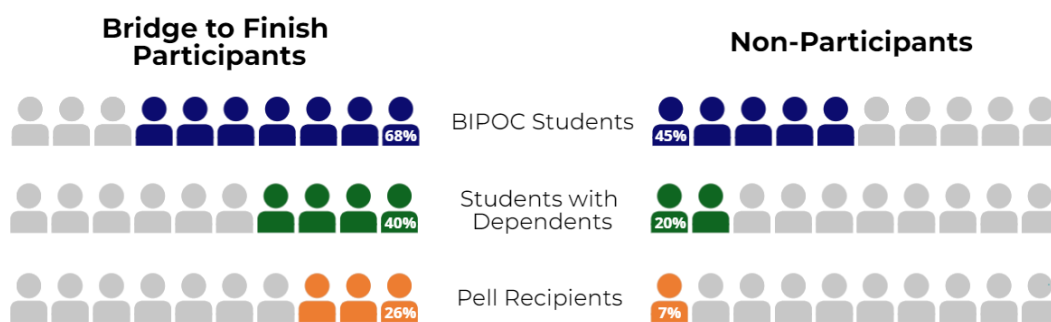
## What is Bridge to Finish?

In response to these needs, United Way of King County launched the Bridge to Finish Campaign. Campus-based **Benefits Hubs** across 10 participating institutions provide a coordinated access point for basic needs support services, and Bridge to Finish staff conduct targeted outreach and recruitment to reach key populations. Services offered at Benefits Hubs range from tangible goods like food access to monetary support and coaching to increase persistence and completion rates and ultimately improve students' postsecondary credential attainment and economic opportunities for the future.

## What outcomes have been observed?

### Bridge to Finish is reaching its target population.

Bridge to Finish seeks to cultivate a culture of care on community college campuses and disrupt current prohibitive and oppressive systems that disproportionately disadvantage students of color, parenting students, and low-income students. BIPOC students, students with dependents, and Pell Grant recipients made up a higher share of Bridge to Finish participants than non-participants at the same institutions, indicating that the program is successfully reaching its target population.



**Bridge to Finish Participants** vs **Non-Participants**

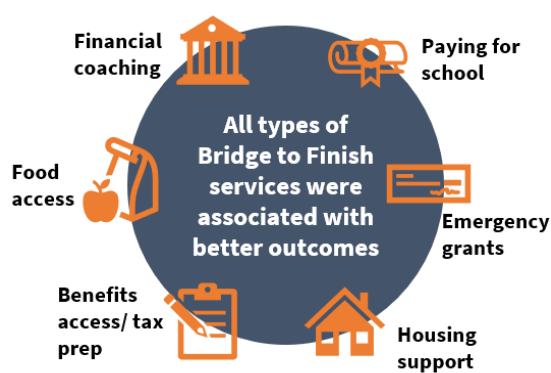| | Participants | Non-Participants |
|---|---|---|
| BIPOC Students | 68% | 45% |
| Students with Dependents | 40% | 20% |
| Pell Recipients | 26% | 7% |

## Bridge to Finish participants were more likely to persist or complete a credential than non-participants.

After adjusting for student characteristics in the data, the probability of Bridge to Finish participants completing a credential and/or persisting to the next academic term was **25 percentage points greater** than the probability among non-participants.

## Bridge to Finish participation was associated with better outcomes regardless of the type of service students received.



Financial coaching · Paying for school · Food access · Emergency grants · Benefits access/ tax prep · Housing support

**All types of Bridge to Finish services were associated with better outcomes**

The extent to which Bridge to Finish participants had a greater probability of persistence or completion varied by service type—with the greatest differences among students who received financial coaching or food access. However, these analyses do not have sufficient data to compare level of need for Bridge to Finish participants and non-participants. Nor do the data indicate what supports non-participants may be able to access. Isolating the impact of Bridge to Finish services would require more research that explores which students access services and how these students might be different from those who do not.

## What are the takeaways from Bridge to Finish?

Bridge to Finish participants represent a diverse group of students, from a variety of backgrounds and with different life experiences. In addition to the value Bridge to Finish provides by meeting an obvious need for wraparound supports among community and technical college students, there is preliminary evidence that the program could help some students achieve better academic outcomes. Because participants can differ from non-participants in a number of ways, these results cannot speak to causality nor the *impact* of participation on academic outcomes. However, they do provide promising evidence of the value of Bridge to Finish and other similar programs in supporting students in their academic journeys. This outcome study yields insights about strong program recruitment and engagement practices that can both pave the way for conducting a more rigorous evaluation of the program and offer valuable lessons for the field.

**Bridge to Finish Program Strengths**
- ❖ Links participation data to academic outcome data
- ❖ Assesses student need
- ❖ Implements a formalized recruitment strategy
- ❖ Uses a case management system
- ❖ Engages participants in program improvement

See the full Bridge to Finish Outcome Study report.