



Bridges to Healthcare is a nationally-recognized, long-term public/private partnership between Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), Hawthorne Adult Education Center, Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC), United Way of Olmsted County (UWOC), and Mayo Clinic. The foundation of this successful program has been built on dedicated collaboration among these partners. The partners collaborate on program design, implementation, expansion, and financial/navigational support. They work together to recruit, prepare, and support diverse, well-trained, certified and compassionate students and transition them to employment for Rochester healthcare providers through what has become a very well-developed process.

Students entering the Bridges to Healthcare program work closely with a Career Navigator to review and address any potential barriers to the student's success. They take prep courses at Hawthorne (college-prep reading, writing, math, and technology courses, as well as career-specific prep classes). Students who plan careers as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Patient Care Assistant (PCA), Phlebotomist, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Registered Nurse (RN) or Hemodialysis Tech take CNA prep and certification classes, earning five college credits which are awarded upon the students' admission to RCTC. Bridges students continuing with coursework at RCTC work with a Transition Specialist, who assists them with applications, registration, financial aid, etc. Bridges students pursuing Phlebotomy or Hemodialysis work with their Career Navigator to help them apply to the Mayo School of Health Sciences for those programs.

The number of healthcare credentials/certifications earned by Bridges to Healthcare students is the most significant outcome of programming and measure of its success. Since the 2013 – 2014 school year, Bridges students have earned over 300 credentials, in areas including Certified Nursing Assistant, Advanced Hospital Certified Nursing Assistant, Health Unit Coordinator, Phlebotomy, Certified Hemodialysis Technician (CHT), and more. 56 credentials were earned by Bridges students during the past year. Of special note during the past year: we had 15 Bridges students accepted into the Mayo School of Health Science (MSHS) Phlebotomy program, with 13 completing and one scheduled to complete this spring, along with 13 students entering the Hemodialysis program. Of those 13, ten have completed and three are soon completing the program. These students are filling demand positions across our region, earning living wages and contributing to the community at large.

The highly diverse population of Bridges to Healthcare students allows employers to hire well-trained professionals who represent the diverse healthcare customer base, which employers see as a great value.