

THE EVOLUTION OF Student Success Centers



A Student Success Center is a statewide organization that supports community colleges' efforts to develop guided pathways and increase student completion rates. Sixteen Student Success Centers are part of the national Student Success Center Network.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTERS emerged at a time when community colleges were involved in a growing number of student success initiatives. These efforts had similar goals, but their implementation was disjointed, and they were not leading to results at scale.

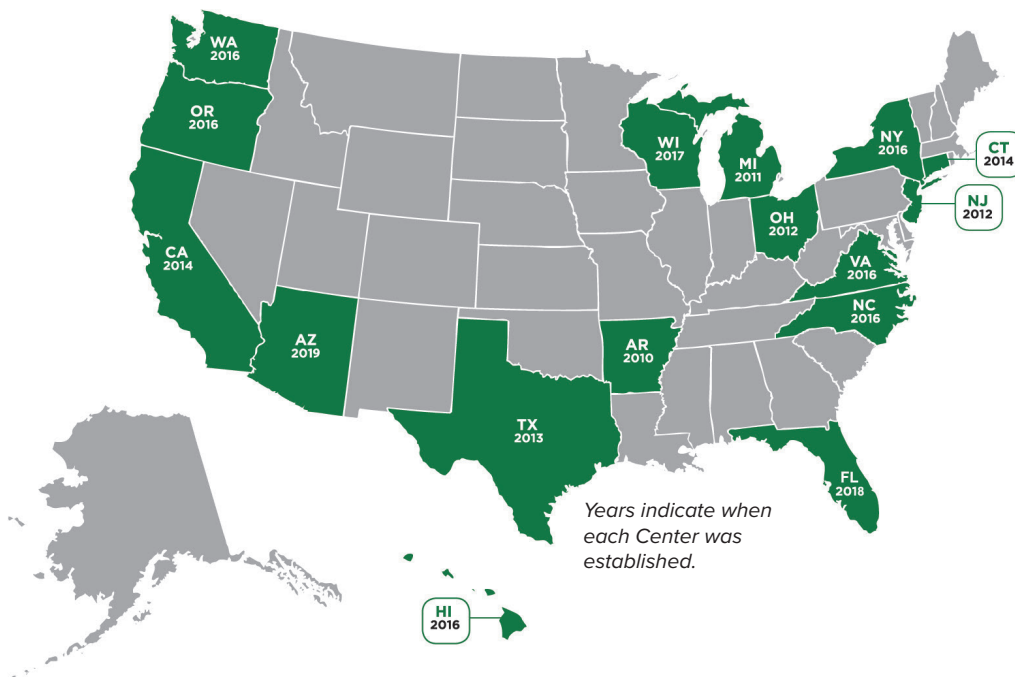
Between 2010 and 2013, five states—Arkansas, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas—created Student Success Centers. In each state, the Center worked to bring its colleges' efforts together in a coherent way.

The early Centers, while developing separately, took on similar roles. Each Center created a statewide framework of action, or a lens through which the state's colleges could focus and integrate their various student success efforts. Centers refer to this framing as providing coherence to the colleges' work. With coherence, colleges can choose the initiatives that are best aligned with their overall strategy.

The result is a unified approach to improving completion and the ability to scale effective practices statewide.

The five early Centers were housed in their states' community college associations but had their own dedicated budgets. The Kresge Foundation, an early supporter of the Centers, found them to be an effective way to support a great number of colleges.

Today there are 16 Centers, with growth primarily driven through two RFP processes, the first funded by Kresge and the second by Kresge and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The four most recent Centers have been launched with the support of local or regional funders. The role of Centers is more formalized. They continue to be housed in existing structures—typically the community college association or the state system office.



HOST ORGANIZATIONS

- Arizona Community College Coordinating Council
- Arkansas Community Colleges
- Foundation for California Community Colleges
- Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education
- Florida College System
- University of Hawai'i Community Colleges
- Michigan Community College Association
- New Jersey Council of County Colleges
- State University of New York
- North Carolina Community College System
- Ohio Association of Community Colleges
- Oregon Community College Association
- Texas Association of Community Colleges
- Virginia Community College System
- Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Wisconsin Technical College System