

# Illinois community college used Title V grant to better support Latinx and adult learners



**WAUBONSEE**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**INSTITUTION:** Waubonsee Community College

**TYPE:** Hispanic Serving Institution and one of the largest community colleges in Illinois

**STUDENT BASE:** Mostly part-time, 31% Latinx

## THE OPPORTUNITY

With a Hispanic student population of just over 31%, Waubonsee Community College in northeast Illinois is invested in meeting the needs of these students and providing streamlined pathways to degrees and credentials. To do so, they have focused on creating sustainable ways to increase enrollment, persistence and completion for their Latinx and adult learners. For their students, the goal is to provide holistic support to help close achievement gaps. For their organization, the goal is to effectively manage the transition to a support approach that would better address the needs of these learner populations.

As a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), the school applied for and received three consecutive Title V Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions Grants to be able to address these goals. Using grant funding, they have implemented cross-institutional support systems for their Latinx students, including the creation of a Latinx Resource Center and a Latinx Summer Institute.

With their latest Title V grant, Waubonsee mapped out funding to partner with InsideTrack. The goal? To implement holistic coaching programs and build capacity for their student support staff, providing training on incorporating coaching methodology that would build long-term support for current and future student communities.

## THE PARTNERSHIP

In 2021, Waubonsee partnered with InsideTrack to embark on a three-year capacity building initiative. By shifting their advising approach to integrate InsideTrack's evidence-based, holistic coaching methodology, the goal was to increase not only Latinx and adult learner enrollment and retention, but also enrollment and retention for all Waubonsee students. According to Dinah Zeiss, Strategic Partnership Director at InsideTrack, "Weaving coaching throughout their advising department and the community as a whole creates a rising tide that lifts all boats."

Through change support and campus-wide buy-in, Waubonsee staff who complete the full training will be thoroughly prepared to meet students where they are — including those who may need extra care or assessment. Capacity building at an institutional level fuels full commitment to the best possible student experience — and outcomes. The full program includes:

- A full-scale diagnostic to identify student support practice strengths and opportunities
- Training for the entire advising team to weave InsideTrack's coaching methodology throughout different student-facing departments
  - Foundational Coach Training for case managers and admissions staff, completed in two cohorts
  - Coaching quality observations and debriefs
  - Manager training and mentoring
  - Training for selected staff to become certified Observers
  - "Train-the-Trainer" certification to enable the program to scale

**"I learned how to have the student take the lead when solving a student problem."**

— WAUBONSEE ADVISOR

## THE IMPACT

Through training and long-term capacity building, Waubonsee staff is in the process of creating institutional transformation, using InsideTrack's coaching methodology to completely reshape the way student-facing staff members work and interact with learners. Over the course of this three-year partnership, Waubonsee staff will take part in a variety of training, mentoring and observation sessions. This includes:

- 18 training sessions between the staff's two cohorts
- 12 manager training sessions for 15 managers
- 15 individual manager mentoring sessions
- 300+ quality observations

By the end of this extensive capacity building program, Waubonsee will have created a comprehensive, scalable in-house coaching program. This includes:

**30** 30 Waubonsee case managers and admissions staff certified as coaches

**3** 3 of these certified coaches will be further trained as certified observers who will monitor quality in all coaching interactions

**5** 5 of these certified coaches will also be trained as certified trainers who can continue to train Waubonsee staff to become coaches after the partnership has ended

**“The advisors, managers and front-line student support staff at Waubonsee are fully committed to serving the specialized needs of our Latinx student population — and the coaching training we’re receiving from InsideTrack is a big part of that. Ultimately, by having our staff go through a three-year capacity building program, we will be better able to support all students for years to come.”**

**— DR. STACEY RANDALL**

*Executive Dean for Institutional Effectiveness & Title V  
Project Director, Waubonsee Community College*

