



Passport to College

Designated Support Staff Role Description

The Passport to College program establishes that the institution must designate support staff and deliver specialized support services for Passport-eligible students as part of an institution's Viable Plan.

This **Designated Support Staff (DSS)** must be a knowledgeable "home base" person who can direct youth in the areas of financial aid, academic guidance, personal issues, and career counseling/advising. The DSS will also be responsible for preparing campus personnel in these areas to assist referred Passport students.

Please use the following role description to assess who on your campus would be an ideal DSS for your college's Passport students.

Necessary Knowledge:

An ideal choice for DSS would possess, or have the capacity to develop, knowledge of the following:

- Campus resources, including departmental contacts in financial aid, housing, admissions, advising, counseling, student support services, TRIO, center for disability, and appropriate academic personnel and faculty
- Community resources available for students, including food banks, health departments, emergency housing, SETuP and Independent Living (IL) providers, and any other community-based organization with services and missions that align with supporting Passport students in higher education
- Funding opportunities for academic, institutional, service, and resource costs for Passport students
- The needs and experiences of first-generation college students; youth from state, federal, and tribal foster care; refugee and undocumented students; and other historically underserved populations, and the corresponding intersectionality of their multiple identities
- Student development theory
- The social, structural, and individual implications of:
 - [Family privilege: the mostly invisible benefits that come from membership in a stable family](#)
 - [Trauma informed practice](#): an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives on the college campus.



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Necessary Skills & Abilities:

An ideal choice for DSS would possess **most, if not all**, of the institutional support and individual capacity to employ the following skills and abilities:

- Work with, and on behalf of, students who have experienced foster care and homelessness
- Develop an impactful, supportive culture for foster and homeless youth within the campus community
- Work as an advocate and help Passport students foster their abilities and develop strategies to increase postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion
- Advocate for the principles of trauma informed practice (see above)
- Meet one-on-one with students, both scheduled and drop-in, as applicable
- Develop a positive rapport with Passport students
- Deliver enthusiastic service to Passport students and community partners
- Relate to and communicate with diverse populations represented within the Passport student communities
- Effectively and meaningfully coordinate support and resources offered by the campus and community-based organizations
- Deliver flexible and creative problem-solving, especially surrounding identification and access of resources
- Gather support and buy-in from upper administration
- Promote a campus culture to support homeless youth and youth from foster care
- Ensure confidentiality beyond FERPA regulations to accommodate the unique privacy needs of Passport students
- Identify Passport students on campus
- Collect, manage, and interpret data
- Maintain accurate records for reporting purposes
- Creatively manage, distribute, and protect Passport Student Support Funds—money generated through the Passport program solely to support career and academic success for Passport-eligible students
- Manage the human resources in a peer mentoring program or within work study positions as appropriate and relevant on a given campus
- Engage with community partners to develop resources and foster interagency learning
- Participate in training offered by the Washington Student Achievement Council or its contracted partner

Important Tasks:

An ideal choice for a campus DSS would have a high aptitude toward the following tasks that are most important for delivering meaningful support to Passport students and the Passport program:

- Schedule and conduct regular meetings with all Passport students during each term to check in about academic and personal needs
- Provide individual coaching
- Provide internal and external service referral
- Assist youth in accessing all benefits to which they are entitled
- Coordinate and, as appropriate, meet with each Passport student's individualized college and community support team for effective collaboration
- Develop and maintain appropriate Releases of Information
- Provide outreach to community partners and K-12 foster care liaisons for identification and recruitment of Passport students into higher education
- Schedule and conduct meetings with prospective Passport eligible students to provide quality access to higher education based on the individual's strengths, needs, and personal goals
- Provide personalized college navigation and college knowledge education to Passport students
- Identify and reach out to all Passport eligible students on and off campus
- Develop a mentoring and or peer support system as appropriate on campus
- Assist with the development and revisions, and implementation of the Viable Plan
- Access and distribute Passport Student Support dollars
- Assist in the reporting to Washington Student Achievement Council
- Assess and support access to safe affordable housing for all Passport students
- Navigation through Financial Aid Processes
- Develop and maintain relationships with on campus partners