plus 50 Community Colleges

How to Manual

Designing and Delivering Education and Training Opportunities for Plus 50 Students

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the Plus 50 Program Manual

In 2008, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) launched the Plus 50 Initiative with the goal of changing the way programming and services are developed and implemented at community colleges for students ages 50 and above. Since the beginning of the initiative, Plus 50 has made grants to 138 colleges, which collectively have enrolled 46,016 students ages 50 and above in workforce development programs.

Join the Plus 50 Movement

If you are reading this manual, chances are you recognize the importance of tailoring program offerings to students ages 50 and above. A Plus 50 program can help you do that: Attract plus 50 students to your college, make sure they get the support they need, and help them to obtain a credential and advance their careers.

Read on for a Roadmap to designing, implementing, and continuously improving a Plus 50 program at your college.

Why Plus 50? There are 78 million Americans in the baby boom generation, born between 1946 and 1964. In 2011, the first of the baby boomers turned 65, and they can expect to live, on average, to age 83.[1] At an age when we are usually expected to retire, typical baby boomers have more than one quarter of their lives left.

This remarkable longevity means great opportunities, but it also means serious challenges, for each of us individually and for society as a whole. Can we afford to leave work at age 65? Do we *want* to? And can our economy afford for us to leave the workforce at a "typical" retirement age? If baby boomers continue to retire at current rates, the United States could see a labor shortage by 2018.[2] The health of our economy depends partly on the ability of older workers to keep their skills current and to stay in the labor force.

As a society, we must collectively respond to these challenges—and one institution at the vanguard is our system of community colleges. In a 2008 national survey, AACC found that community colleges were indeed responding to this challenge: Colleges perceived demand for programming for older students, and 86% of surveyed institutions had begun offering programs to those ages 50 and above.[3]

However, the same study also revealed a programming gap: Most of the offerings focused on enrichment and lifelong learning, and almost half of the colleges reported that they did not offer workforce development programs geared to students in the plus 50 age cohort. Of the colleges that did offer these programs, "offering programs" usually meant that they simply marketed their standard programs to this age group; they did not develop programs addressing the particular needs and challenges that plus 50 students face. **This is why offerings to students ages 50 and above needed reinvention, and Plus 50 offers a program model to fill this gap.**

This manual brings together much of what the Plus 50 Initiative has learned since 2008 about how to design and deliver Plus 50 programs. The manual provides a road map, as well as multiple tools, tips, and links to additional online resources. By following the steps in this manual, you will have the information and guidance you need to develop a Plus 50 program on your campus.

While the manual provides detailed guidance, it is not meant to be prescriptive. Since 2008, the initiative has seen college after college take the model and run, tailoring it to their local context. From the beginning, the initiative has been about tailoring: tailoring offerings to the plus 50

[1] Center for Health Communications, Harvard School of Public Health. (2004). Reinventing Aging: Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement. Boston, MA: Harvard School of Public Health.

[2] Bluestone, B. & Melnik, M. (2010). After the recovery: Help needed: The coming labor shortage and how people in Encore careers can help solve it. Boston, MA: Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, Northeastern University.

[3] LFA Group. 2009. Educating Plus 50 Learners: Opportunities for Community Colleges: State of Community College Plus 50 Programs Nationwide. Washington, DC: The American Association of Community Colleges.

student (seeing them as having interests and perspectives that are distinct from those of the students who are of "typical" college age), and tailoring the design to a college's local community needs. Plus 50 colleges have risen to the challenge; one thing they have in common is their resourcefulness and inventiveness. Over the years, they have added to a warehouse of ideas and promising practices. Plus 50 welcomes the continuing innovation, and as the model continues to evolve and replicate around the country, we know that new colleges will continue to enrich the knowledge base.

Here is what you will find in the manual:

The manual includes several tools. They are displayed in the body of the document, and are also contained in a "toolbox" in an appendix. For tools that are too lengthy to include in the appendix, the manual includes an online link. For easy access to the tools, look for two icons and click on them to find what you need:

Jump to the Tool in the Toolbox Appendix

Find the Tool Online

In addition to a few select tools you can jump to directly, within each chapter you will also find a link to a warehouse of resources for each phase of work. A comprehensive list of all of the publication's resources will live on the Plus 50 website. We look forward to welcoming your college to the Plus 50 family.

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Chapter 2

Readiness: Build Your Teams, Mobilize Support, Identify Resources, and Begin Planning

Laying the Foundation for Your Program

This chapter is about laying the groundwork for your Plus 50 program: people, resources, and plans. These steps are written as if they need to happen in a certain order, but in practice you will no doubt be pushing forward on multiple fronts at once. The only thing we advise you to do first is to build your *core* Plus 50 Program Team. This is the team of people who will be laying all of the groundwork, so it is best to have this group around the table before you dive into the rest of the readiness tasks.

Visit AACC's planning Web page for links to team rosters, meeting invitations, event schedules, and more, developed by Plus 50 colleges in the readiness phase.

Developing any new program on campus takes the time and commitment of individuals and departments. This chapter helps you think about how to build the two teams that focus specifically on the Plus 50 program: **the Plus 50 Program Team** and **the Plus 50 Advisory Committee**. But you need to think beyond these two teams; you also need to consider how to build a constituency for the Plus 50 program throughout the institution—and in the local community. It takes a village to build a Plus 50 program. The program has an interdepartmental scope: It crosses departments and divisions throughout the campus. That's why this chapter also provides guidance for mobilizing support among **internal and external stakeholders**—community partners who can help make the program more sustainable and successful.

After addressing how to build teams and mobilize support, the chapter next focuses on how to identify **resources** for the Plus 50 program. In fact, the task of marshalling the *people* leads organically into the task of marshalling the *resources*. Building Plus 50 programs begins with identifying existing college resources that can be leveraged—and to access those resources, the Plus 50 Program Team must work with internal stakeholders (e.g., the college's advising and counseling department might be able to allocate some staff time to working with plus 50 students). Plus 50 programs may also look beyond the campus to identify resources to leverage, working with a community partner to use its space, mailing list, staff members' time, etc. Finally, to supplement resources made available by the college or an external partner, Plus 50 programs may also seek out direct funding. The manual provides guidance on this method for accessing resources as well.

The final readiness step addressed in this chapter is initial **action planning**. You may want to start this as soon as you have your Plus 50 Program Team in place. For now you don't need to worry about having a fully fleshed-out action plan in place, but you will want to begin developing it. In Chapter 5 we will return to action planning, and show you how to update it based on all the intervening program development steps you have undertaken.

Build Your Teams: The Program Team and Advisory Committee

This section discusses how to build your two core teams: the Plus 50 Program Team and Advisory Committee. It addresses these questions:

- How should you identify potential members?
- How can you recruit members?
- How can you get your teams up and running?

The Plus 50 Teams

Plus 50 Program Team: A core group of champions to undertake the work of program development.

Plus 50 Advisory Committee: A group that advises, assists, supports, and advocates for the Plus 50 program. Members review materials developed by the Program Team and offer suggestions for improvements that will help the program grow and expand.

The Plus 50 Program Team

To develop a Plus 50 program, the first thing you need is a Plus 50 Program Team: a core group of champions to undertake the work of program development. The good news: Since you are reading this manual, you are most likely a Plus 50 trailblazer, and thus you have the nucleus of the Plus 50 Program Team. Hopefully you also have a few other innovators trailblazing with you. But if not, don't worry. This chapter will tell you how to find your kindred spirits.

Identify Potential Members of the Plus 50 Program Team

Whether you are one person with a great idea, or part of a small group of like-minded people, you should sit down to make a list of the people you should invite to join a Plus 50 Program Team. You can begin with a *stakeholder analysis*: a structured brainstorm of the list of people you believe are important to the success of a Plus 50 program. You can use this stakeholder analysis to identify not only potential Program Team members, but also potential Advisory Committee members and individuals that you may want to cultivate as internal stakeholders.

Before diving into the tool, review this reference information that describes how to identify the three different *categories* of stakeholders below.

The Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Do you think this person can best support Plus 50 through …	Then:
… participating in directly managing or implementing the program?	Invite that person to join the **Plus 50 Program Team**.
… providing advice and thought partnership?	Invite that person to join the **Plus 50 Advisory Committee**.
… approving requests for resource-leveraging and through sharing information with others at the college?	Cultivate that person as an **internal stakeholder**.

Now, using the criteria in the table, use the Stakeholder Analysis Tool on the next page to brainstorm ideas. And remember: If someone is unable to join the Program Team, you may want to invite them to join the Advisory Committee. Likewise, if someone is unable to join the Advisory Committee, you may want to cultivate them as an internal stakeholder.

Stakeholder Analysis Tool					
Institutional Position Within the College	**Types of Contributions to Your Plus 50 Program**	**Write Potential Stakeholder Names Here**	**Check the Appropriate Box**		
			Program Team	**Advisory Committee**	**Internal Stakeholder**
Workforce Development Department	• Identify the workforce programs that have the best fit with the Plus 50 program. • Support the development of accelerated training programs, based on existing programs. • Support the development of stackable credentials, based on existing credentialing programs. • Conduct outreach to employer partners to galvanize their interest in workforce development for the local plus 50 population.				
Continuing Education Department	• Identify the certificate programs that have the best fit with the Plus 50 program. • Support flexible scheduling of certificate training programs. • Identify employers. • Reach out to employers that are looking to hire certificate program completers.				
Career Center	• Develop career development workshops that are geared specifically to the plus 50 population (e.g., online job search, resume development). • Identify staff who can build their skills to be career counselors for plus 50 students.				
Advising and Counseling; Student Services	• Identify advisors who can become full-time or part-time Plus 50 program coaches or advisors. • Develop specialized student services that focus on the needs of plus 50 students.				
Institutional Research	• Using the college's databases, help identify the workforce programs that attract current students ages 50 and above. • Collect data that the Plus 50 Program Team can use to track progress against targets (e.g., number of students completing workforce program courses; number attaining certificates and degrees).				

Stakeholder Analysis Tool					
Institutional Position Within the College	Types of Contributions to Your Plus 50 Program	Write Potential Stakeholder Names Here	Check the Appropriate Box		
			Program Team	Advisory Committee	Internal Stakeholder
Teaching Resource Center	• Develop professional development trainings for instructors that build instructor capacity to work with the learning styles of older adults.				
Academic Affairs	• Identify degree programs that can build on certificate programs (for stackable credentials). • Provide input into the types of professional development that could help faculty to work more effectively with plus 50 students.				
Admissions/ Registration	• Provide input into how admissions and registration can become more user-friendly for plus 50 students.				
Financial Aid	• Identify sources of financial aid that is accessible to plus 50 students.				
Public Information Office/Marketing/ Community Relations	• Design marketing strategies that focus on the plus 50 population. • Support publicity for your program.				

Invite People to Join the Plus 50 Program Team

Once you have identified the highest-priority candidates for joining the team, send them a personalized letter of invitation, such as the following:

Dear ________________,

I am a member of a group of people championing a workforce development program to meet the specific needs of students at our college who are ages 50 and above—and to attract more of these "plus 50" students to the college. My colleagues and I are putting together a **Plus 50 Program Team**, and we invite you to join our trailblazing team.

The Plus 50 program will aim to increase the number of students ages 50 and above who complete workforce training programs and obtain credentials from our college, including degrees and either credit or noncredit certificates. These programs will help plus 50 students return to the workforce, advance in their current positions, or begin a career in a new field. The Plus 50 program will also contribute to the college completion goals that are a focus of higher education and aligned with President Obama's 2009 call for an increase in the number of U.S. citizens with postsecondary education.

We plan for the **Plus 50 program** at _________ Community College to include the following program components:

- Targeted outreach strategies to attract plus 50 students to the program.
- Workforce training programs that are a good fit for plus 50 students.
- Support services, including:
  - Plus 50 coaching/advising.
  - Services designed to help students obtain credits for prior learning.
  - Career development workshops and counseling targeted to plus 50 students.

- Computer refresher courses.
- Refreshers in math and English specifically designed to help plus 50 students avoid remedial courses.

We are inviting you because *[personalize the letter here by writing about the unique contribution that you expect this person to make to the team; this contribution will be similar to what is listed the in table on pages 8-9 under "Types of Contributions to Your Plus 50 Team"].*

The roles and responsibilities of the Plus 50 Program Team members will evolve over time. During this launch phase, we expect that the team will need to meet *[insert the expected number of meetings and frequency, e.g., weekly]* so that our team can design the program and mobilize support.

We look forward to your response, and hope that you can find the time to contribute to this important enterprise. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
Plus 50 Program Coordinator

Design Operations for Your Plus 50 Program Team

You will need to set up operations for your Plus 50 Program Team so that you are ready to go once you have your team members on board. Designing operations includes:

- Establishing meeting frequency for the full team.
- Identifying workstreams.
- Defining team roles.

Establish Full Team Meeting Frequency

Full team meetings will be invaluable for coordinating the work of launching and then implementing the Plus 50 program. Establish a meeting frequency, and put standing meetings on the calendar. You may want to meet weekly during the launch phase, and then less frequently once you are in an implementation phase. Keep in mind that you will most likely have subteams with their own meetings as well, so during the implementation phase you may need to meet as a full team only about once a month. There is no exact formula; you will need to decide what works best for your program. The only key here is to make sure you hold regular meetings.

Identify Workstreams

Program implementation will entail several different workstreams. A workstream is a coherent set of tasks that one person will champion and lead to organize the work conducted by Plus 50 Program Team members (and perhaps other internal stakeholders as well)—people who are often distributed across campus in different departments. You should identify the workstreams in whatever way makes sense at your college. You may want to think of your workstreams in two ways: (1) aspects of program implementation; and (2) program components. Using this typology, workstreams might be structured around:

Program Implementation	Program Components
• Needs Assessment • Program Development • Marketing • Budgeting • Continuous Improvement • Advisory Committee Convening	• Outreach • Workforce Training Programs • Math and English Refreshers • Computer Courses • Professional Development for Instructors • Coaching/Advising • Financial Aid • Credit for Prior Learning • Career Development Services

In theory, each item in the lists on the previous page could be a workstream, but you will most likely want to combine them. For example, some combined workstreams might be: Marketing and Outreach; Needs Assessment and Continuous Improvement; Workforce Training Programs and Professional Development for Instructors; Coaching/Advising, Financial Aid, and Credit for Prior Learning; and Math/English Refreshers and Computer Skill-building Courses.

Define Team Roles

On your team you will have one main lead: the **Plus 50 Coordinator**. In acting as team lead, the coordinator will

- Convene Plus 50 Program Team meetings, including developing meeting agendas.
- Convene the Advisory Committee.
- Act as the main point of contact for Plus 50 program information, including serving as spokesperson for the program and working with the public information officer.
- Work across departments to secure support from college leader (dean and vice presidents) as well as faculty and staff (department chairs, marketing staff, advising/counseling, student services, and financial aid).
- Coordinate and leverage resources (time/facilities/support/expertise) across departments, including finance, institutional research, workforce development, continuing education, student services, financial aid, and marketing.
- Plan and manage program budgets, including monitoring expenditures and preparing financial reports.

Other team members will champion and manage various workstreams. You will no doubt have more workstreams than team members, so each team member will need to take on multiple roles. Examples of team roles are:

- **Workstream Lead for Program Development.** One person should coordinate the work of the full team as it takes on program design and development. This may be the Plus 50 Coordinator, or the coordinator may ask another person on the team to take on this work (see Chapter 4).
- **Lead for Marketing and Outreach.** Since marketing and outreach are so closely related, one person can act as the lead for these two areas. Since the Plus 50 Coordinator is responsible for working with the public information officer, the coordinator may act as the lead here—*or* the coordinator may delegate this role to another team member (especially if marketing or outreach is a special area of expertise for another team member).
- **Training/Instruction Lead.** You might want to have one person take on the work related to all training and instruction. This includes conducting joint planning with the workforce programs that are part of the Plus 50 program; organizing the computer courses and math and English refreshers; and working with the teaching resource center to organize professional development for instructors.
- **Student Support Services Lead (or Plus 50 Coach).** It may be efficient for one person to take on all of the support services workstreams (excluding career services), including: coaching/advising, financial aid, and credit for prior learning. If your Plus 50 Support Services Lead/Coach is a member of the team, it may make sense for that person to take on these other support roles as well.
- **Career Services Lead (or Career Advisor).** This team member will plan and coordinate all of the career services and related work: career counseling, career workshops, job fairs, and outreach to the business community. If a person actually *providing* the services (e.g., a career advisor) is on the Plus 50 Program Team, this person can be the career services lead as well.
- **Data Lead.** This person can coordinate data collection, as well as the work needed to ensure that the Program Team and the Advisory Committee reflect on the data. The Data Lead will champion the needs assessment and continuous improvement.

Establish an Advisory Committee

Plus 50 Advisory Committees have been a vital aspect of the Plus 50 programs since they were first established in 2008. They typically include about seven to ten members, and they provide the Plus 50 Program Teams with thought partnership, guidance, new ideas, additional connections within their own spheres of influence, and access to resources.

Identify Advisory Committee Members

The composition of your Advisory Committee will in some ways be similar to the composition of your Program Team. To identify people to invite, return to your stakeholder analysis worksheet. Remember that if you identified someone as a potential recruit to the Program Team but that person was not able to join, you may consider recruiting them for the Advisory Committee. For example, it is ideal if you have a representative from institutional research (IR) on your Program Team, but if no one from that office has sufficient time to devote to this most direct role, do your best to ensure that someone from IR can join the Advisory Committee. In addition, because this committee is important for obtaining access to resources, be sure to include people who may be important to the sustainability of your program. For example, if your program design requires a partnership with academic affairs, ensure that your Advisory Committee includes an academic affairs representative.

Unlike the Program Team, your Advisory Committee membership will extend beyond internal college staff and will include community partners and students. The number of community partners and students you recruit will depend on your college's particular context, but try to have two to four community partners and one or two plus 50 students. Plus 50 students will, of course, provide critical information from the consumer's perspective. And community partners will be able to provide valuable insights from a "beyond the campus" perspective, and can connect the team with additional resources to supplement the on-campus resources you are able to leverage. The following table shows the types of community partners you should consider recruiting, and the types of contributions they can make.

Type of External Organization	Examples	Types of Contributions to Your Plus 50 Advisory Committee
Public Sector Workforce Development Organizations	• Workforce Investment Board (WIB) or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Workforce Development Board and staff • One-stop/American Job Center managers • City/county government agencies	• Workforce expertise • Labor market data • Access to job listings • Access to public funding streams
Local Nonprofits That Focus on the Plus 50 Population	• AARP • Area Agency on Aging	• Valuable perspectives regarding how to best serve this population (based on their experience) • Access to the plus 50 population in the local community (for purposes of outreach)
Business/Industry Organizations	• Chambers of Commerce • Employers and employer associations • SCORE chapters	• Input for program development (so that students with credentials from that program will have the skills to meet employer needs) • Business advice, mentoring, and workshops
Philanthropic Organizations	• Foundations in your area that have a program area in workforce development, adult education, and/or older adult services	• Input for program development • Access to foundation grants • Connections to foundation funding • Understanding of benchmarks, data, and how to use evaluation to market your program
Nonprofits and Public Sector Organizations Serving Older Adults	• Libraries • Parks and Recreation Departments • Museums • Community Centers • Housing Authorities	• Physical space for off-campus programs • Staff time • Access to the plus 50 population in the local community (for purposes of outreach)

Invite People to Join the Plus 50 Advisory Committee

Just as you did for the Plus 50 Program Team, invite potential Advisory Committee members to join by sending a personalized letter, such as the following:

Dear ________________,

[College name] is creating a workforce development program to meet the specific needs of students who are ages 50 and above—and to attract more of these "plus 50" students to the college. As we develop our Plus 50 program, one of our key tasks is to assemble an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is a vital part of the program, providing valuable counsel, review, and feedback to the Plus 50 Program Team as they launch, implement, and work to continuously improve the Plus 50 program.

Key to the success of any Advisory Committee is commitment and understanding that its work will produce positive results. The Advisory Committee will advise, assist, support, and advocate for our Plus 50 program. Members will meet quarterly to offer suggestions for improvements that will help the program grow and expand. They also will review materials developed by the Program Team, such as action plans, vision and mission statements, a logic model, a data collection plan, and a marketing strategy.

We hope that you will be able to join the Plus 50 Advisory Committee and take on this important role in the development of a vital new program at [college name].

We look forward to your response and hope that you can find the time to contribute to this important enterprise. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
Plus 50 Program Coordinator

Engage Internal and External Stakeholders

By cultivating support for the Plus 50 program beyond your Program Team and Advisory Committee, you will systematically build a constituency that can bolster sustainability and success. The wider stakeholder group will provide a larger pool of people who can offer expertise, thought partnership, advocacy for your program, and access to resources.

Cultivating Internal Stakeholders

You can first identify the people you should cultivate as internal stakeholders by going back to your stakeholder analysis. You should also be sure to include the following people in this group:

- Your college's president.
- Vice presidents/deans/college trustees/foundation and alumni association members.
- Faculty senate members.

The involvement of the people on this list is critical for sustainability. The president, vice presidents, and deans make decisions about whether the college's budget (or a division's budget) should include line items for the Plus 50 program. In addition, support from your college's leaders will help you to garner assistance from other campus colleagues. Trustees are often prominent community members who can point you to potential community partners and resources. For everyone on your internal stakeholders list, you need to

- Introduce them to the Plus 50 program and generate enthusiasm.
- Sustain their interest in the program by sharing how the program has evolved and how students have benefited.

Introduce the Program and Generate Enthusiasm

As you are starting out, you want to engage stakeholders by introducing them to the Plus 50 program. To do this, you can:

- **Develop a Plus 50 brochure or handout, and/or a PowerPoint presentation that you can share with individuals and groups.** You will want something formal to present to potential internal stakeholders. These materials will be the basis of your "Plus 50 roadshow":
  - Initial design of the program (for this, you may want to include your program logic model, described in Chapter 4).
  - Results of your needs assessment (see Chapter 3).
  - What the college can expect in terms of positive outcomes for plus 50 students.
  - A high-level timeline for next steps in establishing the program.
- **When preparing for meetings, consider the perspective of the people whose support you are asking for; they will be more likely to support you when they understand how the Plus 50 program can benefit *them*.** For example, common goals among college stakeholders are to increase enrollment and completion. For those focusing on these goals, you can emphasize the fact that a Plus 50 program will attract new students to campus, and will support them in completing workforce training and earning a credential.
- **To get the word out about your Plus 50 program, take advantage of standing meetings of college executives and department staff.** Identify regular meetings of department chairs or provosts, or the president and cabinet members, and request some time on the agenda. You can do the same for department staff meetings. You can bring your roadshow to these meetings to introduce important college stakeholders to the Plus 50 program and to explain how it can help meet a variety of goals that are important to the people in the room.
- **When making presentations at staff meetings, create openings for other departments to support the Plus 50 program.** It may become apparent to staff from other departments, as they listen to your presentations, how they might leverage work in their own departments to provide services for your program. For example, staff in student services or advising may see how they can use their advisors to become a point of contact at the college for plus 50 students—and they will also see how your team's expertise will help *them* better serve this student population. When presenting to staff, discuss ways to create partnerships.
- **Listen to input.** When you bring your roadshow to potential stakeholders, they will have a lot of helpful input to share. This is free advice. In addition, stakeholders are more likely to be invested in the program if they see the ways that you incorporated their suggestions.

Sustain Interest in the Plus 50 Program Over Time

After you have built institutional support for your program across the college, you will want to ensure that your stakeholders continue to know how the Plus 50 program is making a difference for students and the college. Make sure that you update key stakeholder groups regularly, such as every quarter. You can do this in a variety of ways:

Example of a Plus 50 Presentation to Stakeholders: Plus 50 Initiative: Team Report to Executive Leaders

- **Continue the work of having agenda time at standing meetings.** Just as you used standing meetings to get the word out, you can also ask for time on these agendas to provide updates every three to six months. At these meetings you can provide information on how many students you are serving and the positive change that your program is making in their lives. Make sure that the people at these meetings leave with concrete information about the progress that your program is making.
- **Task Advisory Committee members with sharing information with others in their own departments.** Most of your Advisory Committee members will have key positions within the college, and they can be advocates for the program in their departments. You might ask them to request time on their department meeting agendas to provide short updates.

- **Use opportunities for informal discussions to bring your colleagues up to date on the Plus 50 program.** As you run into your colleagues around campus, catch them up on what is happening with your program. Through these informal conversations, you can help them keep the Plus 50 program in mind as one of the innovative and effective programs on campus that serves an important population.
- **For colleges developing or updating a strategic plan, work with the college's leader (often the president's office) to include the Plus 50 program.** Demonstrate to those who are developing or revising the strategic plan how your Plus 50 program aligns with the college's strategic goals, and therefore should be included in action steps toward achieving those goals. You will also greatly increase the odds of including the Plus 50 program in the strategic plan if you share facts about the program's impact on students.
- **Arrange to have internal stakeholders hear directly from students.** It can be very persuasive for people to hear from program beneficiaries themselves. If you receive great letters about the program from your participants, compile them and add them to a stakeholder presentation or fact sheets. Arrange for a plus 50 student to speak at a campus event or trustees' board meeting. Students can describe their appreciation of the training received and the assistance the college provided, and can describe the difference that the program has made in their lives. Consider videotaping the students as they share their experiences; that way you can embed student voices in future presentations, or share their stories on the Web.
- **Use newsletters to promote your program.** Place information about the program in newsletters that are disseminated among college staff and faculty, so that they buy into the program too.

Identify Resources

To help you structure and develop a budget (see Chapter 5), you will need to first identify resources and get a "lay of the resource land." You will be able to leverage internal college resources, and even community partner resources, for your program, which will mean you don't need an actual dollar allocation for those program components. And while existing resources will constitute your most important assets, you will also want to locate funding sources. Here are some ways to identify potential resources.

Leverage Internal College Resources

You will be able to use a range of existing resources at your college to put together your Plus 50 program. A primary way that the Plus 50 program can leverage resources is to identify college space and facilities for workshops, one-on-one support, advising, and places for the program participants to gather. One of the first tasks on your list, then, might be to inventory college space and facilities. You can reserve times in classrooms and computer labs, and schedule equipment use. You also may find a space (or time-share a space) that you can use as a formal or informal Plus 50 Student Center.

The following table shows ways to leverage internal college resources, organized by program component.

Program Component	Possibilities for Leveraging Internal College Resources
Outreach	• Work with staff within the public information office and/or marketing department on news releases, advertisements, signage, etc. • List the Plus 50 program in the course catalogue. • Highlight the program on the college website.
Workforce Training Programs	• Work with the workforce development department to identify workforce programs that might be a good fit for students ages 50 and above. (These programs might be those that attract older students or were identified in your needs assessment.) • Collaborate with faculty in workforce programs who have an interest in attracting and retaining plus 50 students.
Professional Development for Instructors	• Work with staff in the teaching resource center to get support in designing professional development trainings for instructors that build instructor capacity to work with the learning styles of older adults.
Computer Refresher Courses	• Work with the computer science department to design courses that can be tailored to plus 50 students.
Refreshers in Math and English	• Find others at your college who are focused on ways to help students (of all ages) avoid getting “stuck” in remedial courses, and find ways to tailor some of their methods to plus 50 students or make these methods “plus 50-friendly.” • Consider arranging for tutors to work with your program participants.
Plus 50 Coaching/Advising	• Ask staff in advising/counseling to allocate some of their staff time toward working with plus 50 students. • Determine if advising/counseling can dedicate one staff member exclusively to acting as a Plus 50 coach or advisor. • Work with advising/counseling to develop training for counselors who want to work with the plus 50 population.
Financial Aid Services	• Determine if staff in the financial aid office can allocate some of their staff time toward working with plus 50 students. • Have the Plus 50 coach/advisor work with staff in the financial aid office to identify sources of financial aid that are a good fit for plus 50 students.
Services to Help Students Obtain Credits for Prior Learning	• Work with staff who help students capture credits for prior learning (e.g., the staff at the registrar who review transcripts from other schools or in the workforce development division who do portfolio review) to design ways to make these services especially plus 50-friendly.
Career Development Workshops and Individual Career Counseling	• Collaborate with the career center to design workshops specifically tailored to plus 50 students. • Work with the career center to identify career counselors who might want to specialize in working with the plus 50 population.

The preceding table organizes the possibilities for leveraging resources by program component. But you also want to think about other services that you can leverage at your college that could be useful to your program participants. Here are a few examples:

- Consider partnering with library staff to provide special instruction sessions to plus 50 students on library skills and tips on how to conduct research.
- Ask advising staff to offer special sessions with plus 50 students to assess their skills and knowledge, to identify courses for successful degree or certificate completion, and to develop a transition plan to a new career with clear career pathways.
- Work with IR to identify currently enrolled plus 50 students who may also benefit from Plus 50 program services. This will give you a list of students to reach out to.

Leverage Community Resources

Revisit the table that laid out the types of external organizations that can make contributions to your Plus 50 Advisory Committee (p. 13). Even if you do not tap people from these organizations to serve on your Advisory Committee, you should consider this list for its partnership potential. You can find organizations that serve community members ages 50 and above and work with them to achieve common goals. Your college and these organizations can collaborate to support this population, and—in practice—this will probably bring resources to your Plus 50 program. For example, you may identify a local church, a housing authority, or a nonprofit that offers computer training classes, or a local library or community center that can provide computer lab time and space for a computer refresher course that you envision as part of your Plus 50 program.

Raise Additional Funds

You probably cannot do everything only by working with what you have at the college and in your community; you most likely need funding. This is especially true if you need to pay for staff dedicated to the Plus 50 program. You may also have expenses for program components such as scholarships, program-specific marketing materials, the development of special curricula, or adaptive technology and equipment. You can seek out the following sources of funding.

- **The inclusion of Plus 50 program components in college department budgets.** Work with your internal stakeholders to have Plus 50 program funding added to college budget line items, including budget lines for particular departments.
- **College foundation grants.** Community colleges often have their own foundations. You can take your Plus 50 roadshow to a board meeting and make a funding request for a specific program component that you have not been able to leverage from internal college or community partner resources, such as scholarships to support financial aid for plus 50 students.
- **Public sector funding.** Sources of program funding are U.S. Department of Labor programs, local Workforce Investment Boards/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Boards, the U.S. Department of Education, and your state's education department.
- **Philanthropy.** Some foundations will be interested in funding your program. Look for foundations that have program areas in workforce development, postsecondary education, community colleges, and/or older adults. Large firms often have a corporate philanthropy department to consider as well. You can work with your college's development office to identify potential new sources of funding.

Begin Developing Your Action Plan

An important readiness step is to start developing your action plan. Don't worry about completing it at this stage; it will be a work in progress, and you will revisit the action plan in Chapter 5. Right now, simply fill out as much as you can, or as much as you feel is necessary. The following table shows how you can structure your action plan, but feel free to tailor it to your needs. The action steps in this template contain the major steps of program implementation that are discussed in this manual. You may want to include additional steps, or remove some that you decide are not necessary for your college. You may also want to break down some of the action steps listed here, so that all the individual tasks you need to accomplish are explained in greater detail.

Action Plan Template

Action Steps	Task Owner(s)	Timeline	Resources	Benchmarks
What will be done?	*Who will do it?*	*When will it be completed?*	*What do we need to complete this step?*	*How will we know when this step is complete?*
Recruit people to join the Program Team				
Establish Advisory Committee				
Identify people to cultivate as internal stakeholders				
Meet with potential internal stakeholders				
Identify and recruit community partners				
Identify internal resources and how they will be leveraged				
Identify external resources of your community partners to leverage				
Identify sources of funding				
Conduct needs assessment				
Share needs assessment results with key stakeholders				
Develop vision and mission statements				
Identify student outcomes				
Design program components				
Develop a logic model				
Develop a marketing strategy				
Develop the program budget				

Conclusion

Congratulations, you have put in a lot of work to lay the foundation for a strong Plus 50 program. You now have a Plus 50 Program Team to carry the work forward, and an Advisory Committee that will provide advice and counsel and connect you with additional resources. You are developing internal and external stakeholders, and you have identified resources to leverage. It's time to turn to another key task that will strengthen your foundation: conducting a needs assessment. The assessment results will set you up for designing a Plus 50 program that best meets the needs of your future program participants.

Chapter 3

Needs Assessment

Introduction: The Importance of a Needs Assessment

Successfully starting a Plus 50 program at your community college requires assessing the needs of your plus 50 population, your community, and local employers. Without understanding the needs, interests, and objectives of your local plus 50 population and employer community you will not be able to provide offerings that effectively meet the needs and promote the success of plus 50 students. You will find that the information collected through a needs assessment will inform and drive your decisions about program design and development.

Use the Plus 50 Needs Assessment Toolkit for step-by-step assistance with data analysis, survey administration, focus groups, and reporting.

AACC's planning Web page features research materials and reports developed in Plus 50 colleges' needs assessments.

Armed with the results of the needs assessment, you will be able to answer these questions:

- What are the major career interests of the local plus 50 population?
- What skills do they need to learn?
- What type of instructional delivery works best for them?
- What obstacles do they see to enrolling in community college classes?
- What services would support them in completing their training program and obtaining their credentials?
- What services might help them to complete their workforce training program and earn their credential as quickly as possible?
- What services are most important in supporting this population in making choices about careers and finding employment?

A needs assessment is also valuable because it can help you to **make the case** for these programs to internal college stakeholders, community partners, and funders. You can use your findings to demonstrate the need for and relevance of programs for the plus 50 population. Conclusions and recommendations from your needs assessment can be parlayed into marketing materials and your Plus 50 roadshow. Needs assessments are also very impressive to funders; you can include your findings in funding applications.

Collect Data for Your Needs Assessment

Clearly, the needs of your plus 50 population are the centerpiece of your needs assessment, so the most important data you collect will be the information you gather from potential program participants. Your needs assessment should also provide important contextual information:

- Local employer and industry needs.
- Estimated market size (the number of potential program participants).
- Information about potential competitors and partners.

All the information you collect as part of the needs assessment adds up to the ultimate payoff: **recommendations for program design**. This section of the manual provides brief guidance on collecting data from potential program participants and the contextual information. For more detailed guidance, please consult the Plus 50 Needs Assessment Toolkit available online.

Needs and Interests of Potential Program Participants

This is the heart of the matter: **the needs, interests, constraints, and preferences of your local plus 50 population.** These include their needs regarding training programs as well as a range of support services, including advising, so that students can know how to best choose courses and perhaps certificate programs in a way that will fulfill their career objectives; career counseling (other advising services that support students identifying new career options that build on their experience and abilities); and career workshops on topics such as resume writing, performing an online job search, and how to conduct a successful job interview. Assessing needs includes understanding which of these services will be most useful for this group, and how to tailor services appropriately to effectively meet the interests and career objectives of the local plus 50 population.

There are two main methods you can use to collect data from prospective program participants: surveys and focus groups. Each type of data collection has its own advantages:

- **Surveys.** Surveys are a highly efficient way to collect data because, without too much effort, you can collect a lot of data from large numbers of people. Today most surveys are done online, which makes hearing from many people easier than ever before. You can consider finding e-mail lists of your college's current plus 50 students, or lists from community partners that serve similar populations. You may want to brainstorm with your Advisory Committee about how you might best compile a survey list. The Plus 50 Needs Assessment Toolkit has guidance for setting up an online survey using free software, as well as a survey template that you can tailor to get exactly the information you need. The most commonly used online survey software is SurveyMonkey, which allows you to generate simple reports on your data (including averages and percentages).
- **Focus Groups.** While surveys are invaluable for collecting a great deal of information efficiently, they do not allow you to ask follow-up questions to dig deeper. By conducting focus groups, you can hear the stories of prospective program participants—stories that will give you greater perspective on what participants might need, and a more nuanced and detailed understanding of how you can remove any obstacles that students might face to enrolling in and completing your workforce training, obtaining a credential, and attaining career goals.

Local Employer and Industry Needs

You will want to include an analysis of the local employer and industry needs in your area, especially with an eye toward identifying growth occupations. Understanding the employer needs and growth occupations in your area is very important to making choices about what types of training courses and programs to offer. To collect these data, it will be important to leverage the work already done by your college's workforce development division—and this will be easier to do if you have a representative of that division on your Plus 50 Program Team or your Advisory Committee. Using labor market research, you will be able to line up the demand side (the needs and interests of the plus 50 individuals in your area) with the supply side (the jobs likely to be available to this population). There is additional guidance in the Needs Assessment Toolkit on how to collect these data.

Market Size

Your estimated market size is an estimate of how many plus 50 individuals in the college's service area need workforce training and career development services. This number is primarily a function of: (1) the number of people ages 50 and above and (2) the labor force participation rate of those in this age group, including employed people and people looking for work. To estimate the market size, you would assume that nearly all those who are looking for work can make use of skill upgrades and job search supports, and you would use an estimated percentage of employed people who have an interest in changing jobs. A market-sizing tool in Excel is available online as part of the Plus 50 Needs Assessment Toolkit.

Information About Potential Competitors and Collaborators

You may also want to take into account some basic information about which other organizations in your area provide similar services—and could either compete for your customers or provide opportunities for partnership. Information on competitors and collaborators (sometimes called an asset map) is designed to show what offerings already exist in the community. This information will be useful in program planning for two reasons: (1) you may not want to offer something that is already available in the community and (2) if something is already available, you may want to pursue a partnership with the organization that offers that service rather than initiate the service yourself. This information can most likely be collected relatively easily through meetings and conversations with your college's workforce development division. In addition, you can use the work you already did in considering options for community partners who might join the Advisory Committee.

Summarize the Learnings From Your Data Collection, and Write Up Recommendations for Program Design

The payoff of your needs assessment is the set of evidence-based recommendations that you can make for how to design your Plus 50 program. There is a great deal of guidance in the Plus 50 Needs Assessment Toolkit about how to analyze your data and write up recommendations, including a sample report outline that you can tailor to your community. No matter what approach you take to data analysis and recommendations, be sure that you set up opportunities for stakeholders to reflect on the data together. It is through such collective reflection sessions that you will be able to unearth the most important lessons and identify what the results mean for program design.

You may want to organize a special meeting of the Plus 50 Program Team and invite selected members of your Advisory Committee to participate if their expertise would be especially useful for this work. To structure the discussion of the data and what it means for program design, consider beginning with the following list of data reflection questions *(tailor this list of reflection questions based on what you know your team will want to get out of the session):*

- What does the feedback from prospective program participants tell us about the types of workforce training programs they are most interested in?
- Looking at local employer and industry needs together with the interests among the local plus 50 population, what do we know about options for the workforce programs to include in our Plus 50 program?
- Considering what prospective program participants say about what they want from support services, and the obstacles they perceive to entering college, completing a training program, and obtaining a credential, what does that tell us about how best to structure our support services?
- What does the market size estimate tell us about how many students we should plan to serve?
- Given who our competitors are and how many people in our prospective market they serve, what does that mean for our estimate of the number of students we plan to serve?
- What does our planned program size mean for how we staff and structure our support services?
- What does the competitor and collaborator information tell us about additional partners we might want to bring on board?

So that you are set up for success in developing recommendations for program design, designate one person at the reflection meeting (or at multiple reflection meetings) to take notes. You should also plan to have someone record notes on a whiteboard or flip chart during the reflection meeting(s) for your note-taker to put together with her/his notes. These notes will be the basis of your recommendations for program design. Once you write them up they will become the culmination of your needs assessment report.

Share Results With Key Stakeholders

Once you have recommendations for program design based on the needs assessment data you collected, you can share the results with key stakeholders. This means

- **Sharing the results and recommendations with your Advisory Committee.** Your Advisory Committee members should read the Plus 50 needs assessment report and reflect on its contents at a committee meeting. Once the Advisory Committee has a good sense of what is contained in the needs assessment recommendations, the members will be well-positioned to know exactly what type of counsel and support to provide as you develop the program.
- **Incorporating the results and recommendations into the Plus 50 roadshow.** The findings from the needs assessment can help you create powerful arguments about what the plus 50 population needs. These arguments will help you to generate commitment, enthusiasm, and resources for the program.

Conclusion

With the results of your needs assessment in hand, you are ready to design your Plus 50 program. The next chapter will lead you through the steps of developing vision and mission statements and planning your program components.

Chapter 4

Program Development: Design Plus 50 Programming

Introduction: Steps for Developing Your Plus 50 Program

By this time you are no doubt bursting with program design ideas. Because you are at the vanguard of Plus 50 programming at your college, you already have a great deal of knowledge about the program model—and probably some general ideas for your own college's version. In addition, your needs assessment report contains more specific recommendations for meeting the needs of your local plus 50 population. This chapter will help you parlay those ideas and recommendations into a program design. After you take some preparatory steps laid out in the next section, you will undertake the following key activities:

- Develop vision and mission statements.
- Articulate intended student outcomes.
- Identify and design program components.
- Develop the Plus 50 program logic model.

Visit AACC's program development page for examples of community colleges' goals, plans, courses, and workshops.

The vision and mission statements will become your touchstones for the work. Once these are in place, you can really dive into program design. Next you will articulate your intended student outcomes and identify your program components. Your outcomes and program components are the building blocks of your logic model, which will be the culmination of your program design. It will provide a concise statement of what the Plus 50 program will do, lay out all the program elements, and demonstrate *how* your program will achieve the intended outcomes for participants.

Prepare for Program Development

Your Plus 50 Program Team and Advisory Committee are in place to do program planning, and your needs assessment has shown what your local plus 50 population is looking for. Before you dive into program development, here are three key preparation steps:

- **Identify a Program Development Lead for the program development workstream.** You likely have done this as you identified the roles for each of your Program Team members (see Chapter 2). As discussed in that section, this person may be the Plus 50 Coordinator of the Program Team, or the coordinator may deputize another team member to do this work. Ideally this team member will be someone with considerable project management experience and a passion for helping plus 50 learners.
- **Develop a work plan and timeline.** The Program Development Lead should develop a program design work plan and timeline that identifies all of the key activities entailed in program development and establishes deadlines for each one. The amount of time allotted to complete each activity will depend largely on the time constraints of Plus 50 Program Team members, who typically have other job responsibilities as well. The table below provides a general outline of the key activities of program design and timeline guidance.

Key Activity	Timeline Guidance
Develop Vision and Mission Statements	~1 month
Identify Intended Student Outcomes	~1 week
Identify and Design Program Components	~3 weeks
Develop Logic Model	~2 weeks

- **Engage your Advisory Committee.** The Plus 50 Program Team will design the Plus 50 program, but the Advisory Committee will provide critical support and feedback.
  - Engage the Advisory Committee at key junctures. For example: (1) set up a meeting with the committee to get their initial input; (2) ask them to review and provide feedback on some foundational documents, such as the vision and mission statements and the logic model; and (3) get their final review and approval on your Plus 50 program plan.
  - You may also invite select Advisory Committee members to join your Program Team during the program planning phase. This could be a particularly good option if you have some expertise gaps on your Program Team; if this is the case, you should consider reaching out to any Advisory Committee members who can fill those gaps. Whether your invited Advisory Committee members can join will, of course, depend on their availability to make the additional time commitment. If they do not have the time, ask them if they would be willing to engage in ad hoc consultation on specific topics, beyond general Advisory Committee review.
- **Complete all the necessary background reading.** As your team gears up for program design, everyone should take advantage of all the available background materials. By the time your team convenes to develop your mission and vision statements, make sure that everyone has thoroughly reviewed the following:
  - Your college's Plus 50 needs assessment report
  - *The Plus 50 Initiative: Standards of Excellence* (Appendix A)
  - Plus 50 Program Component Definitions (Appendix B)

Plus 50 Standards of Excellence

Plus 50 Program Component Definitions

Develop Vision and Mission Statements

Dedicate some time in two or three meetings to drafting and refining your vision and mission statements. Here are some options for who might facilitate these meetings:

- Plus 50 Program Coordinator
- Another Plus 50 program member designated by the Program Coordinator
- An Advisory Committee member who has experience developing vision and mission statement

Task	Who	What Gets Done
Team Meeting 1	Facilitator	Orient the team to the functions of vision and mission statements and how they differ.
	Full Team	Develop first drafts of both statements.
Revisions	Program Development Lead	Send draft statements to the Advisory Committee for feedback.
		Incorporate feedback.
Team Meeting 2	Facilitator	Share revised versions of statements with the Program Team.
	Full Team	Make any needed additional revisions together.
Advisory Committee Meeting	Program Development Lead, Plus 50 Program Coordinator, and other team members who want to join	Share final versions at a meeting of the Advisory Committee for approval.
		Make final edits.

The next few sections offer guidance for drafting your vision and mission statements.

Draft Your Vision Statement

A vision statement is meant to capture a desired future state in a way that motivates your team and mobilizes other potential stakeholders to get involved. It should also motivate funders and stakeholders to provide funding and other resources.

Your Vision Statement:

- Provides a compelling image of the world as you want it to be in the future (in 5, 10, or 20 years) *as a result* of the work of your organization and program.
- Answers the question: "What will success look like?"
- Expresses the ultimate impact that you aspire to achieve in the long term if your Plus 50 programming is successful.

You might begin the first meeting with a brainstorm of everything that people want to include in the vision. Then the facilitator will help the group narrow the list—for example, by grouping the vision elements by theme—so that the group can clearly see what's *on* the list. You may end up including everything, or through facilitation you may discover that you want to focus in on just a few areas. Also remember that some of the brainstorming done for visioning can be reused during the mission statement session, so just because you take something off the table for the vision statement doesn't necessarily mean you will leave it on the cutting room floor.

Questions to Consider as You Draft and Revise Your Vision Statement

- What key words and concepts do we want to include in the vision statement?
- What did we learn from the needs assessment that should inform the vision statement?
- How would the statement have to change to become more meaningful to you?
- Have we missed anything?

For inspiration about your Plus 50 program's vision statement, take a look at the following vision statements of other programs around the country.

"This community college will be committed to providing higher education and leadership for area citizens that are 50 years or older. The community college will provide assistance to overcome barriers that include personal issues of self-confidence, basic skills for success, and career exploration. Plus 50 students at our college will successfully complete degrees or certificates.

This community college will provide a world-class education to the diverse plus 50 student population as they pursue their academic and workforce goals. The plus 50 student will be an integral and valued member of the college community.

The plus 50 student will have access to a quality learning environment as well as the supportive services that they need to achieve their educational goals and increase their labor market competitiveness."

Draft Your Mission Statement

While a vision statement says, "This is our vision of the world if we make the impact that we want to have," a mission statement explains what you must *do* to realize your vision. The mission statement essentially completes the sentence that begins: "We exist to ..."

Your Mission Statement:

- Conveys the purpose of your organization or program—its reason for existence.
- Concisely expresses what you do to address the problem that your program seeks to solve.
- Includes a description of your target population—precisely whom you are serving.

Just as you began the visioning session by brainstorming, begin this session by brainstorming about what everyone wants to include in the mission statement. Then group the mission components into themes, and narrow the list again as needed. Here is some guidance for what makes a good mission statement:

- Articulate it in a way that is easy to grasp and remember.
- Use active voice.
- Use lively, evocative verbs.
- Avoid jargon.

Questions to Consider as You Draft and Revise Your Mission Statement

- How would we complete the sentence that begins: "We exist to ..."?
- What is the precise problem we seek to solve?
- How will our Plus 50 program solve it?
- What unique purpose will we serve that no one else at the college or in the community does?

For inspiration about your Plus 50 program's mission statement, take a look at the following mission statements of other programs around the country.

The Plus 50 Completion initiative exists to serve the learning needs of adults ages 50 and above by ensuring that they are equipped with the tools and resources they need to complete a workforce credential.

To support the 50 and older population in workforce training.

The mission of the Plus 50 initiative at this community college is to assist the plus 50 student in meeting their academic and employment goals by providing world-class training and tailored student services.

Through the Plus 50 Completion program, the college prepares adults ages 50 and above for fulfilling careers that give back to the community.

This technical college provides technical education and training support for the evolving workforce development needs of the plus 50 students in the region.

The mission of the ____________ Community College Plus 50 Program is to serve the plus 50 student by raising awareness and aspirations, inviting participation, creating educational opportunities, and facilitating college completion toward a successful career.

Identify Intended Student Outcomes

The **intended outcomes** of your Plus 50 program are **credential completion** and **employment**—the fundamental goals of the program model. However, your team will most likely want to identify additional intended outcomes for your student participants, such as a sense of belonging or increased computer literacy. There are several payoffs to clearly articulating intended student outcomes:

- **Program Design.** By detailing your intended outcomes, you will be able to get more specific about what you want out of each program component. How will each component contribute to the outcomes? This will, in turn, help you to clearly articulate how your program can *most effectively* support students to achieve the outcomes. (You will delve further into the program components in the next section of this chapter.)
- **Ongoing Program Improvement.** What all high-quality programs have in common is *engagement in ongoing improvement efforts*. Your program will improve over time as you collect data on how your students are doing, and you find out how you can help them to even more effectively reach their goals. Program improvement is a discipline, requiring you to set targets for each outcome type, collect data on that outcome, and make plans for how to get closer to the target or to set a new target. Identifying intended outcomes is the first step to articulating clear targets that are the basis of your continuous improvement efforts. (You will learn more about continuous improvement efforts in Chapter 6.)

The tool below will help you to identify intended student outcomes beyond credential completion and employment. As you complete the tool, be sure to refer to your vision and mission statements to make sure that your student outcomes align with your vision and mission. You may be tempted to designate every single outcome from the menu as "high priority." But see if you can settle on a more limited set of intended student outcomes. Your vision and mission statements can help you to keep the list narrower, since perhaps not every outcome aligns with those statements.

Student Outcomes Identification Tool

Student Outcomes Identification Tool										
Menu of Student Outcomes	Program Component Linked to the Outcome							To what extent do we see achievement of this outcome as a *critical ingredient* of achieving one of the ultimate outcomes (credential completion and employment)? The level of importance of this outcome is:		
	Math and English Refreshers	Computer Courses	Professional Development for Instructors	Plus 50 Coaching/ Advising	Financial Aid	Credit for Prior Learning	Career Services	Low	Medium	High
Core subject preparation for college-level courses	✓									
Computer literacy		✓								
Sense of competency, mastery in courses	✓	✓	✓							
Learning engagement			✓							
Sense of belonging at college		✓	✓	✓						
Optimism and resourcefulness to pursue goals				✓						
Completion	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Employment		✓					✓			

After you have designated a set of outcomes as high priority, you will be able to do the following:

- **Use your decisions about high-priority outcomes to help you design your program components.** As you make decisions about your program components, it will be helpful to keep in mind what is needed to ensure that each component helps students to achieve the outcomes you have identified.
- **Include the high-priority outcomes in your logic model.** More detailed instructions on this task are included in the logic model section in this chapter.
- **Set targets for each outcome.** Your Plus 50 Program Team should devote at least one full working session to setting targets for your outcomes. A representative from IR will be especially important at these meetings to lend knowledge about credential completion rates at your college. An IR representative will also likely be apprised of other efforts at the college to measure outcomes that are aligned with those that you have identified as high-priority, and may be able to provide information about the rates at which students typically achieve them. As you set targets, you will want to think about the sweet spot: a goal that is attainable but drives the program to stretch, rather than a likely unattainable goal that will be demoralizing rather than motivating. Use the table below to list your program's intended student outcomes. The sample tool below shows a few outcome examples.

Performance Targets Identification Tool

Intended Student Outcomes	Performance Targets for:		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Percentage of participants who obtain a credential			
Percentage of participants who are employed within six months of obtaining the credential			
Percentage of program participants who feel engaged in their coursework			
Percentage of program participants who feel they truly belong at the college			

Identify and Design Program Components

No two Plus 50 programs look exactly alike, since they are always tailored to their local college contexts. However, there are some basic program components that every program should include. (See Appendix B for a list of the basic Plus 50 Program Component Definitions.) These program components fall into three categories

- Outreach to bring participants to your college.
- Workforce training programs and associated training supports.
- Student support services.

At a minimum, Plus 50 programs need workforce training programs, support services, and some form of outreach so that program participants can learn that the program is available and understand how it can benefit them. Beyond this, colleges may layer on different *types* of support services, configure their services in different ways, and, of course, include additional types of services beyond those listed in this manual, such as a career workshop designed for adults who have a lifetime of experience. This part of the manual walks you through the process of making design decisions about each program component. You will notice that your needs assessment will come in handy all along the way.

A tool that will help your Program Team organize its thinking about program components is found in Appendix C. That tool compiles all of the reflection questions listed in this chapter that you should take into account as you design your program components.

Program Component Design Tool

Outreach

Outreach is an indispensable component for *any* program; without outreach it will be difficult to recruit your target population. You will need to find the best type of outreach that works for *your* prospective program participants. Examples of outreach approaches include

- Networking with current plus 50 students by working with other departments and services at the college, such as student services and academic advisors.
- Hosting Plus 50 program information sessions/open houses.
- Direct contact with community partners and local businesses to raise Plus 50 program awareness and to connect with potential plus 50 students.
- Attending meetings of local organizations that serve plus 50 populations.

Pages 40-42 have a longer list of suggested outreach approaches that you may wish to consider. As you decide on your outreach components, you should:

- Use the findings from your needs assessment to understand the best ways to reach your local plus 50 population.
- Brainstorm with your college's public information office or marketing department to find approaches that will work for your college.

Workforce Training Programs and Associated Training Supports

The heart of the Plus 50 program is, of course, one or more workforce training programs that you decide are an excellent fit for your local plus 50 population. The *training supports* are program components that will help ensure that your program participants successfully complete training and obtain the workforce training credentials offered as part of your program. These supports are:

- Math and English refreshers.
- Tailored computer courses/workshops.
- Professional development for instructors.

Workforce Training Programs

The advantage of building Plus 50 programs within the institutional framework of the community college is, of course, the ability to leverage the workforce training programs it already offers. To identify the *right* workforce training programs to include, use the following two-part tool. The first part of the tool is designed to facilitate your team's initial brainstorming and assessment of program options. You can use the second part of the tool to compare your options for workforce programs on a variety of dimensions.

Workforce Program Selection Tool

Workforce Program Selection Tool, Part I			
Factors to Take Into Account and Questions to Ask	**People and Documents to Consult**	**Workforce Programs to Consider, Based on These Factors**	**Notes**
Labor Market Trends: • Which occupations are growing? • Which growing occupations pay a living wage? • Which workforce programs offer a credential for these occupations?	• Staff in your college's workforce development division • Plus 50 needs assessment		
Plus 50 Interests: • What occupations are of greatest interest to your local plus 50 population?	• Plus 50 needs assessment		
Types of Occupations That Work for Your Target Population: • What occupations can effectively capitalize on the accumulated wisdom and expertise of people ages 50 and above? • What occupations might *not* work for the target group (e.g., because they are too physically demanding)?	• Advisory Committee • Plus 50 needs assessment		
Program Delivery Format: • Is the program delivered (or can it be) in a condensed or an accelerated format? • Is flexible scheduling offered?	• Course catalogues • Course instructors, workforce development division staff, or staff in advising/counseling who know the delivery format of different workforce programs		

Workforce Program Selection Tool, Part II							
Workforce Programs Under Consideration	**Does the program prepare students for an occupation that ...**					**Is the program ...**	
	Is likely to have robust job openings in the coming years?	Pays a living wage?	Matches the interests and abilities of the local plus 50 population?	Can capitalize well on the accumulated wisdom and expertise of plus 50 individuals?	Is not too physically demanding?	Offered in an accelerated format (or a program that can be)?	Able to offer courses with flexible scheduling?

Math and English Refreshers

One way to support plus 50 students in obtaining workforce training credentials is to ensure that core course requirements do not become a stumbling block to completion. A certain minimum level of preparation for college-level coursework is required for most credentialing programs. Students take placement tests when they enroll, and these placement tests may signal that they need to complete remedial or developmental math and English courses without helping them progress toward a credential. These remedial courses are a well-known barrier to community college completion for students of *all* ages. However, they are likely to be a particularly onerous barrier for students ages 50 and above who have not been to school in a long time.

The goal, then, of math and English refreshers is to help plus 50 students quickly qualify for the courses that will count toward their credential. Good examples of refreshers that you might consider for this program component are

- Tailored math or English refresher short courses or workshops that help plus 50 students to place out of developmental or remedial courses.
- For-credit math or English courses in which one section is specifically tailored to the workforce training program and/or is tailored specifically for plus 50 students.
- Tutoring designed for plus 50 students that is provided concurrently with a developmental or remedial course to make sure they don't get "stuck" at this level.

In determining the type of math and English refresher approach that is best for your college, think about what resources you might be able to leverage, or whether you want to build this particular component from the ground up.

- Does your college already have a curriculum for short courses that helps students pass the placement tests? Does the curriculum need tailoring for older students, or can you use it as-is?
- Should the program offer existing refreshers to plus 50 students along with younger students, or should the refreshers be for plus 50 students only?
- Can you partner with math and English professors in academic departments?
- Are tutoring resources available to dedicate to supporting plus 50 students as they work on their math and English skills?

Computer Courses

Computer courses are another important training support, because often getting through a college program depends on the student's computer literacy. While it is not necessarily true that students ages 50 and above will not be as computer-literate as younger students, familiarity with all the computer applications and systems used at college is less *likely* among people in this age cohort. Computer courses are a way to ensure that students can register for college and engage effectively with any class assignments that involve computer applications such as Word, Excel, or PowerPoint.

There are multiple ways that your college can offer computer courses as part of its Plus 50 program. Some options are the following.

- Basic and intermediate computer courses tailored specifically to plus 50 students.
- A section of a standard computer course that is open only to plus 50 students.
- Computer tutoring for plus 50 students in small groups.
- Individual tutoring tailored to plus 50 students as they attend standard computer courses.
- An orientation session on using the college's system effectively.

In deciding on what type of computer courses are best for your college, again think about what resources you might be able to leverage, or whether you want to build this particular component from the ground up.

- Does your college have an existing basic computer applications curriculum available? Does the curriculum need tailoring for older students, or can it be used as-is?
- Should you offer basic computer courses to plus 50 students along with younger students, or should the refreshers to be for plus 50 students only?
- Can you partner with computer science professors in academic departments?
- Are tutoring resources available to dedicate to supporting plus 50 students as they work on their computer skills? Can college students serve as tutors?

- Could you refer plus 50 students to a community partner (e.g., library, community center, church, housing authority) or use a partner's computer lab space while providing the instructor?

Professional Development for Instructors

It is important to consider the types of program approaches that will work well for plus 50 students. The workforce development programs leveraged for your Plus 50 program will be composed of courses taught to students in a broad age range—it's unusual for a course to include only plus 50 students. But given that plus 50 students will be in these courses, it is helpful for the course instructors to be skilled in working with older students.

What Plus 50 Students Want From Their Instructors

Feedback from plus 50 students has shown that certain qualities of the learning environment are especially appreciated:

- Clear presentation of the relevance of course content to real-world and work situations.
- Acknowledgement of the wealth of experience and wisdom plus 50 students bring to classroom.
- Clarity on how this course supports the achievement of students' goals.
- The ability to bridge new learning with past learning and experience.
- Instructors who welcome many questions.
- A large amount of student-teacher interaction.
- The ability to proceed at one's own pace.
- Recognition that plus 50 students may expect more from the courses than younger students do.

To make the workforce programs as effective as possible for students ages 50 and above, consider including as one of your program components some professional development offerings for instructors. These workshops or other professional development opportunities are designed to build faculty skills and knowledge about the appropriate pedagogical strategies to address the needs, interests, and learning styles of plus 50 learners. Professional development opportunities also help instructors capitalize on the skills and capacities that plus 50 students bring into a classroom—in particular, how their work and life experience provide them with knowledge and perspectives that can be shared with other students to enrich the learning experience for all.

To design professional development opportunities for faculty, work with the staff at your college's teaching resource center who select, design, and/or deliver professional development. If these staff do not have experience with professional development that is designed *specifically* for working with older students, organize one or more meetings that allows for cross-pollination between those who design instructor professional development and those who are knowledgeable about pedagogy for older students.

Student Support Services

There is a set of Plus 50 program components that are all related to the wraparound supports that set students up for success in completing their workforce development programs, and in finding employment after they have been awarded a credential. These are

- Plus 50 coaching/advising.
- Tailored financial aid services.
- Services that help students get credit for prior learning.
- Career development services.

Plus 50 Coaching/Advising

Every student at any age benefits from working with someone who offers guidance and encouragement, and who can help navigate the college landscape. When students have not been in a school environment recently—sometimes for decades—they need individualized and supportive attention from someone who can help them find their initial footing. This may include deciding what workforce program to enter, knowing where to find resources, and setting goals. Recognizing this need, the Plus 50 program model includes a Plus 50 Coach or Advisor who delivers advising services that address the needs, interests, and learning styles of plus 50 students. There is a long list of functions you should consider in designing this program component. The Plus 50 Advisor can

- Act as a single point of contact and system navigator.
- Make referrals to additional services.
- Provide one-on-one coaching/advising.
- Coordinate Plus 50 coaching groups.
- Provide academic advising.
- Work with career services to provide career counseling.
- Collect data on students and track their progress.
- Support the program staff working on outreach.
- Be a cheerleader.

There are several considerations to keep in mind as you determine how to incorporate this coaching/advising component into your program. Questions you should consider are:

- What did you learn in the needs assessment that can shape how you envision this role?
- What should you include in the job description for the Plus 50 Coach/Advisor?
- Should you designate one person who works *only* with plus 50 students, or should this person divide her/his time between work with students of different age groups?
- Does it make sense to work with advisors already in advising/counseling, or to allocate some of the program budget to hire a new Plus 50 Coach/ Advisor?
- What type of training should be provided to the Plus 50 Coach/Advisor if this person does not come to the position experienced working with students in this age group?

Tailored Financial Aid Services

Financial aid is available to all eligible students, but the sources of financial aid often tend to be more limited for plus 50 students. The experience of Plus 50 programs has shown that we cannot limit our thinking to standard sources of federal financial aid, such as Pell Grants, and plus 50 students are rarely willing to take out loans. So your program must expand its view beyond the sources of financial aid that are offered to younger students. Consider exploring scholarships, the college's foundation, corporate foundations, private grants for tuition scholarships, funding through WIOA, and financial aid for veterans, and ensuring that your program participants know about the American Opportunity Tax Credit (a tax credit for qualified education expense).

Sources of financial aid that can be particularly helpful to this age group tend to be less well-known than other funding sources. Including some type of financial aid information and/or service as part of your Plus 50 program will support your students' access to workforce training, and will often help them to complete the program more quickly.

In designing a financial aid component as part of your program, consider the following questions:

- What are the financial aid resources available at your college or in your community that are an especially good fit for plus 50 students?
- Should you leverage mainstream financial aid services or design your own Plus 50 financial services that focus only on students over 50? Should you focus on students who do not attend college full time?
- If you leverage mainstream financial services, what steps will you take to ensure that financial counselors who serve the students are able to direct plus 50 students to the resources that fit their needs?
- If you design customized services for financial aid, what should be included in the job description of the financial aid counselor?
- Should your financial counselor focus on providing one-on-one counseling, delivering financial aid workshops, or both?

Credit for Prior Learning

Another way to help plus 50 students complete their programs quickly is to help them get credit for prior learning. This tends to be a particularly fruitful strategy with plus 50 students, because they are very likely to have work or life experience that they can parlay into college credits. Methods that Plus 50 programs use for awarding credits for prior learning include

- Reviewing transcripts from other schools to identify transferable credits.
- Using standardized testing for skills.

- Evaluating portfolios of students' work using published guides, such as the American Council on Education's guide for industrial and corporate training programs.

If no one on your Plus 50 Program Team or your Advisory Committee has extensive knowledge of the methods that your college uses to award credit for prior learning, make sure you identify a staff person at your college who *does* have this knowledge. Consider inviting that person to a Plus 50 Program Team meeting to discuss what would work best for your target population. In designing a credit for prior learning component as part of your program, consider the following questions:

- What methods might you want to use to support plus 50 students in earning credits for prior learning?
- Do you want to guide your students to mainstream services or design services tailored to the plus 50 population?
- Are there ways to integrate this service with the work of the Plus 50 Coach/Advisor?

Career Development Services

While the central Plus 50 program goals are completion of a workforce training program and earning a degree or certificate, the credential is also meant to support the downstream goals of landing a job or advancing in a career. For this reason, career development services are another important component of Plus 50 programs. Career services include workshops or individual career counseling that help students to define career interests, identify job possibilities, learn online job search skills, use networking approaches, develop their resumes, and enhance their interviewing skills.

In designing a career development services component as part of your program, consider the following questions:

- What did you hear from the needs assessment about the types of topics that would be useful to your prospective program participants (e.g., clarifying job interests, identifying job openings, resume-writing, networking, interviewing skills, entrepreneurship)?
- Which services should be delivered via one-on-one counseling, and which should be delivered via workshops?
- What are the skills needed by the staff delivering these services to job seekers over 50?
- Do you envision leveraging the mainstream career services at the college or building services tailored to plus 50 students?
- If you leverage mainstream career services, what type of training or other resources will be provided to the staff to ensure that they can effectively serve plus 50 students?

Develop a Logic Model

You now have everything you need to complete your logic model. You have a vision, intended student outcomes, program components, and details about how your program components will be implemented on the ground. You can use all of these as logic model inputs to tell the story of your program and how program components will result in intended outcomes for the students who participate.

If someone on your team has graphics skills, enlist that person to make the logic model more attractive. This can be done quite easily in Word or PowerPoint. You may also be able to get support from your public information office or marketing department. Although graphic design is optional, an eye-catching version of your logic model will be helpful as you apply for foundation or public sector funding. A nicely laid-out logic model will also make a persuasive slide in your Plus 50 roadshow presentation.

Logic Model Template

Program Components *(Which program components are included in your program?)*	**Program Activities** *(What are the specifics for implementing your program components?)*	**Intended Student Outcomes** *(What are the intended outcomes for students?)*		**Ultimate Impact** *(Relate to your vision statement)*
		Short- and Medium-Term	Long-Term	
Outreach				
Workforce Training Programs				
Math and English Refreshers				
Computer Courses				
Professional Development for Faculty				
Plus 50 Coaching/ Advising				
Financial Aid Services				
Credit for Prior Learning				
Career Development Services				

Conclusion

Once you have completed all the planning activities in this chapter, you will have come a very long way. You have a robust program design, with extensive detail about what is included in the program, how each component will be implemented, how engagement with the program will lead to specific outcomes for students, and how it all aligns with your vision, mission, and what you learned from your needs assessment. The logic model, and all the thoughtful work that went into it, will impress your internal stakeholders, your community partners, and potential funders. Now it is time to take all this design work, and move into implementation planning.

Chapter 5 Implementation Planning

Introduction

At this point, you have done a great deal of preparation and planning. You also initiated your implementation planning when you began to develop your action plan (see Chapter 2). This chapter supports you as you continue implementation planning. You will develop a marketing strategy, build your program budget, and update your action plan to include marketing and budgeting.

AACC's implementation planning page features Plus 50 colleges' action plans, recruitment ads, print materials, websites, and guides for enrolled students and faculty.

If You Build It: Promoting Your Program for Adult Learners

Develop Your Marketing Strategy

There are several steps to developing and executing a marketing strategy:

- **Get the right expertise on board.** You will want to seek support from your college's marketing department and/or office of public information for assistance in planning for branding, marketing, and outreach. If you don't have people from the marketing office or the office of public information on your Plus 50 Program Team or the Advisory Committee, reach out to one of these offices to meet with a staff person who is willing to provide support.
- **Learn about the strategies that have been successfully used at your college, as well as at other colleges.** The next section provides a list of marketing ideas and strategies from other Plus 50 colleges that may provide some inspiration for your team.
- **Develop tailored marketing strategies.** Bring together the expertise of the staff person from your college's marketing office and/or office of public information with members of your Program Team who have knowledge of this population. You can brainstorm ideas, listen to the input of your marketing expert, and consider what is feasible given available resources and the other marketing opportunities at your college that your team can leverage. You can come up with a set of strategies that have been successful at other colleges and make sense for your own community.
- **Build out a marketing plan.** To put your ideas into action, get organized to undertake your marketing plans. You can use an action plan template to spell out how you will market your program. Action steps can include an overarching strategy idea, with concrete, doable tactics supporting it. Make sure you include how you will measure success for your marketing strategies. Will you count the number of inquiries from potential students, number of people enrolling in an introductory workshop, or something else? It will be helpful to document your plan as part of a marketing action plan.
- **Share your proposed marketing plan to solicit feedback.** Once you put your marketing ideas into a formal plan, it will be helpful to ask others to review and provide feedback. Share your plan with your Advisory Committee members and others, such as internal stakeholders who have taken a special interest in the Plus 50 program and are willing to review your marketing plan.
- **Determine how you will measure the success of your marketing plan.** Just as you want to know how successful your program is in supporting the progress of plus 50 students (see Chapter 6 on continuous improvement), you also want to create a feedback loop so that you know which outreach approaches are most effectively marketing your program. Work with your Program Team and Advisory Committee to identify some success indicators (e.g., the number of visits to your website, the number of people coming to information sessions, or the number of people signing up for a newsletter). Use the data to identify which efforts are most effective, and then shift your budget so that your resources are allocated to the top-performing strategies and tactics.

- **Ask for help from community partners.** Your external stakeholders may offer to disseminate information on your program through their newsletters, e-blasts, announcements, and other communications channels.

The next sections provide general principles to follow as you develop your marketing plan, as well as some marketing ideas that other Plus 50 colleges have used.

General Principles of Plus 50 Marketing

- **Remember to use age-appropriate pictures in all of your marketing.** People want and need to see images in marketing materials that they can identify with.
- **Identify the locations where you are most likely to reach potential plus 50 students.** You want to market in the spaces where your prospective participants are, including both physical *and* virtual spaces. For example, if you buy radio ads, you will want to buy them from a radio station that plus 50 audiences are likely to listen to. As you develop your marketing plan, create a list of the locations you want to target.
- **Be sure you are targeting the right audience.** Your job is not simply to market to people who are ages 50 or above. Many people in this age group, such as nursing home residents, will not be prospective participants. Focus on those who are most likely to continue their careers.
- **Develop a communications profile for each audience you are trying to reach.** Another way to narrow your target audiences is to consider particular audiences segments you are trying to recruit. For example, if your program includes workforce training programs in the field of health care, develop a profile of the type of plus 50 individual who is most likely to need and benefit from training for a health care career.
- **Include media relations as part of your marketing plan.** Many plus 50 programs find that reaching plus 50 adults through the news media is highly effective, because many people in that age cohort rely on traditional media (e.g., newspapers, radio, and television) for information. Talk with your college public information officer to coordinate your efforts, and reach out to reporters in your community. Often your public information officer will have built long-term relationships with reporters who cover the college, and will be able to assist you. Outreach may be as simple as issuing a news release about an upcoming event or writing a one-paragraph media pitch that attracts a reporter's interest. When approaching a reporter, it's important to identify a specific news angle, tied to your community or current events, rather than make a generic request for coverage of the Plus 50 program. Talk about how your program is helping people in your community and the fact that your program is part of larger stories about baby boomers and employment trends.

Marketing Ideas

Many Plus 50 colleges have developed innovative and effective marketing ideas. You can leverage their efforts when determining how to market the Plus 50 program at your college. This section provides examples from other Plus 50 colleges, organized by marketing type.

Plus 50 Website

See if you can get your college to feature a Plus 50 program photo, logo, or link on its home page or on a prominent page within the college website. Plus 50 websites can function as "all things Plus 50" online, with

- Information about the services that are included in the program.
- Guidance for how to enroll in the program.
- A schedule of classes and services.
- A portal that people can use to self-enroll.
- The opportunity for prospective students to request further information by providing contact information that goes directly into a database so that staff can follow up with them.
- A showcase of credentials students can obtain to advance their careers.
- Links to sources of more information.
- A virtual learning center with tips on being successful in the classroom, video tutorials on using social media, and links to additional instructional sites such as Khan Academy.
- Stories of plus 50 students and their successful college experiences.

Social Marketing

A real plus of social media marketing is that it provides built-in metrics and analytics, such as counts of page views and post sharing, to measure audience engagement. You can use these analytics to help evaluate and continually improve the effectiveness of your messages and marketing tactics.

- Plan and schedule regular social media outreach, including LinkedIn and Facebook posts and sending out tweets.
- See if the college can include your Plus 50 program in its social media outreach.
- Place videos about the Plus 50 program on a special YouTube channel for the program or on the college's YouTube channel.
- Use e-blasts or regular e-mails to deliver announcements or special information as an inexpensive form of direct mail. If you have a good list, use it at least once a month. By regularly providing timely and useful information, you will raise interest and encourage contacts to click through to your program resources online.

Brochures, Posters, Fliers, Rack Cards, Mailers, and Postcards

Colleges have found that print marketing materials with Plus 50 branding can be an effective way to get the word out. They typically feature the college's logo along with the Plus 50 program logo, and provide types of information similar to what is available on the website. These materials should also include the URL for the college's Plus 50 Web page. Trifold brochures can easily accommodate an insert that can be updated each semester with the new program schedule. Brochures, fliers, posters, and rack cards can be distributed at the college in locations where new students can see them, and also through your community partners such as libraries. Postcards can be mailed to homes, and are cheaper and more eye-catching than a letter. The types of print materials that Plus 50 colleges have produced include:

- Invitations to Plus 50 program information/orientation sessions, open houses, and workshops.
- Listings of upcoming Plus 50 course offerings, including campus locations, days and times, and registration information.
- Descriptions of Plus 50 support services.
- Contacts for additional information and the program's Web page address.

E-Newsletter

Plus 50 colleges can distribute an e-newsletter regularly (e.g., every two weeks, monthly, or quarterly), at no cost beyond the time it takes to write it. You will need a team member who can work with an online newsletter service, such as Squarespace, which can help you attractively organize your graphics, logos, and information, while providing click-through statistics and e-mail list management services. These services are also usually very easy to use. Among the many types of elements that colleges might consider including in an e-newsletter are

- Upcoming workshops.
- Upcoming Plus 50 social events.
- Links to useful resources.
- Staff profiles.
- Student stories (either written or in video format).
- Links to news coverage of the Plus 50 program.
- Data on students in the program receiving their credentials and finding employment.
- Success tips for staying organized, study methods, and test-taking.

One college provides some advice for producing an e-newsletter: Be concise; think of what your readers most want to know; make sure you stick to a regular dissemination schedule (e.g., monthly, quarterly); allow users to easily unsubscribe; and select a service that provides you with click-through statistics so that you know which online content is of interest and being viewed.

Radio and TV

Radio can be a powerful tool to market your Plus 50 program and raise awareness for your college in the community, and many colleges run radio ad campaigns. One Plus 50 college signed a contract for 360 ads over five months at a cost of less than $4,000. The station conducted on-air interviews of staff and faculty from the college each week to talk about Plus 50 programs and services. The station also provided links to the college on its website and a digital copy of all of the interviews and advertising spots. Another college used a radio advertising blitz to promote its upcoming open house. The radio advertising had the greatest reach for the college and the greatest impact in terms of drawing prospective participants to the event. For a Plus 50 program at another college, the Program Team found that an effective strategy was running radio ads *and* conducting on-air interviews about the program during commuting hours.

If your program does not have the dollars in its budget to pay for TV advertising, consider this solution used by one college: partnering with a local bank to provide the colleges assistance in marketing, and having the bank pay for the TV advertisement costs of the college's Plus 50 program.

In addition to advertising, you can approach a local radio station that has reporters and reports real news (e.g., a news station or a public radio affiliate with a news desk) about doing a news story on the Plus 50 program. Colleges also can invite TV reporters to attend open houses or orientation sessions. Colleges that use this strategy have found that the TV coverage of the event resulted in additional follow-up inquiries from others who did not attend the event.

Information Sessions/Open Houses

Open houses are a good way to recruit students by bringing people together to meet the Plus 50 program staff, and personally hear what the program is all about. You can use these informational sessions to showcase your Plus 50 offerings.

If there are students who have gone through your program already, consider having them speak on a plus 50 student panel. Student panels may be especially effective if the former program participants speak about a new job and increased income following completion of their degree or certificate program.

Open houses can also serve as orientation sessions by including opportunities for faculty and staff to speak about the Plus 50 program offerings. This can include:

- Hearing from faculty who teach the courses.
- A description of financial aid options.
- Review and help with resumes.
- Evaluation of transcripts to assess the possibilities of earning credits for prior learning.
- Explanation of the college registration process.
- Tours of the campus or the facilities in which classes will be taught.

Media Presentations Featuring the Voices of Students (and Other Stakeholders)

Prospective students often want to hear from their peers about their experience. Getting a sense that "they did it and found it rewarding; I can do it, too" will often draw people in. These presentations can be slide shows using pictures and quotes, short videos, print stories, or social media posts. Colleges often produce recruitment videos that are made available on the college's website or YouTube channel. There are many options for what to include:

- Interviews with plus 50 students about their experience coming back to college or completing their credentialing program.
- Plus 50 students touring the facilities and hearing from course instructors as they showcase the variety of workforce training options available.
- Program coordinators and college presidents discussing the program and services available at the college for plus 50 students.

Other Creative Marketing Ideas

Additional marketing venues used by colleges to get the word out include posters and electronic message boards on campus, light pole banners, billboards, yard signs, and booth space at home shows or health fairs. Colleges also use job fairs featuring "plus 50-friendly" employers to draw plus 50 learners to campus.

When your marketing includes events, consider having a drawing for a door prize. To register for the door prize, attendees will be asked to complete a sign-up form that collects contact information and asks whether the participant is interested in additional information on the college's Plus 50 program.

Marketing Plan Template

Develop the Plus 50 Program Budget

To develop your program budget, you will want to think in terms of cost categories. For each cost category, you can identify: (1) the internal resources you can leverage to build the program that don't require a cash outlay; (2) additional resources that are needed; and (3) the cost for these additional resources. You may want to structure the program budget this way:

Budget Development Tool

Cost Category	Internal Resources That Have Been Leveraged	Additional Funds That Are Needed
Personnel		
Staff Support		
Program Development		
Office Supplies		
Marketing/Communications/ Public Relations		
Evaluation		

What Do Plus 50 Programs Cost?

Plus 50 program costs will vary greatly by college, depending on the in-kind resources your college can leverage and the components the program includes. To give you an idea of potential budget outlays your team might expect, the table below shows cost ranges for several program categories based on the budgets of 100 colleges that participated in the Plus 50 Initiative in 2013 and 2014. (The figures include only the colleges that spent more than zero dollars on each cost category.)

Cost Category	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum
Personnel	$163	$3,914	$6,510	$32,849
Staff Support	$130	$934	$1,549	$11,149
Program Development	$236	$1,007	$1,337	$4,390
Office Supplies	$21	$229	$284	$754
Marketing/ Communications/ Public Relations	$50	$877	$1,277	$6,483
Evaluation	$352	$473	$596	$1,049

You may also want to break down your program development costs by program component if it is helpful to get to this level of detail. For example, you can develop a supplemental table that looks like this:

Program Component Cost Category	Internal Resources That Have Been Leveraged	Additional Funds That Are Needed
Workforce Programming		
Computer Refreshers		
Math and English Refreshers		
Professional Development for Instructors		
Plus 50 Coach/Advisor		
Credit for Prior Learning		
Career Development Services		
Financial Aid Services		

Bring this budget together with the work you did in Chapter 2: identifying internal and external resources to leverage as well as additional funding sources that can provide the dollars needed to pay for what you cannot leverage.

Action Plan Template

Refine/Update Your Action Plan

A lot has happened since you worked on your action plan in the readiness phase; it is time to take a fresh look at that plan. You can refine what is already there, add new steps that reflect your new stage of development, and add new steps inspired by your marketing strategy or budget work.

You will especially want to align your action plan with the program you have designed. You have specific plans for what each component will entail, and so at this point it is necessary to lay out how you will approach their implementation. This will mean adding more detailed steps tailored to your college's program design. Examples of some action steps for a sample program are listed below.

- Coordinate with the nursing and allied health department to incorporate allied health, diagnostic medical imaging, nursing, and radiologic technology programs into the Plus 50 program.
- Design and deliver professional development to instructors.
- Partner with the computer science department to design a computer refresher course for plus 50 students.
- Partner with the advising and counseling department to identify a staff member who can dedicate half-time to working on the Plus 50 program as the Plus 50 Coach.
- Partner with the financial aid office to train staff to work with plus 50 students.
- Design career workshops.

Once your Program Team has updated the action plan, share it with the Advisory Committee for their review. Once you receive their feedback, you may complete additional revisions to finalize your plan.

Conclusion

You now have a Plus 50 program underway, and it's time to pause and celebrate all the work you have done to serve plus 50 students on your campus. It's possible that not *everything* you want is in place right now—and that's fine. Any dissatisfaction you feel is simply a sign that you have high standards and are on a relentless quest for excellence. The next chapter will help you put in place the processes for collecting data and feedback so that you are positioned to continually build on your foundation and improve your program.

Chapter 6

Continuous Improvement: Assess and Improve Your Program

The highest-quality programs are those that engage in continuous improvement. **Continuous improvement is based on the systematic collection of, and reflection on, data that provide insights into the extent to which a program is effectively supporting participants in achieving their intended outcomes.** This chapter provides an overview of what you should include in an evaluation to support continuous improvement.

- Identify intended student outcomes (addressed in Chapter 4).
- Establish program targets associated with the intended student outcomes (also addressed in Chapter 4).
- Identify additional data, beyond metrics on student outcomes, that you want to collect.
- Develop a data collection plan.
- Develop data collection tools and collect data.
- Analyze and reflect on data.
- Use the reflection on your data to inform program improvement.

Use the comprehensive Plus 50 Programs Formative Evaluation Toolkit to guide evaluation planning, data collection, and reporting on program outcomes.

Visit AACC's planning Web page for links to Plus 50 colleges' tracking, feedback, and reporting documents to support continuous improvement.

Identify Intended Student Outcomes and Performance Targets

As part of the program design work described in Chapter 4, you established your intended student outcomes and their associated performance targets. Now you can capitalize on that work to plan for your continuous improvement work. At this point, your Program Team should take the time to review the logic model (which should include the outcomes) and the performance targets you identified.

Identify Additional Data to Collect

To support continuous program improvement, it will be useful to go beyond collecting outcome data; you will want to collect data on participants' perceptions and use of the program offerings and services. Once you get this feedback, you will be able to know how to improve your program to better meet the needs of those you are serving. The Plus 50 Programs Formative Evaluation Toolkit provides guidance and templates for collecting data for continuous improvement.

Develop a Data Collection Plan

Data collection is a critical task, as is having someone to lead it. As part of your work to lay the groundwork for your program, you have already identified the Data Lead (see Chapter 2). The Data Lead will develop a data collection plan, which will be structured according to the intended outcomes and performance targets your team wants to measure. You can fill out this data collection template to develop a plan:

Data Collection Plan Template

Data Collection Plan			
Data Elements	**Data Source/ Data Collection Tool**	**Timing of Data Collection**	**Person Responsible for Collecting Data**
Student Outcome #1			
Student Outcome #2			
Etc.			
Student Feedback #1			
Student Feedback #2			
Etc.			

Follow these instructions to complete each column in the data collection template.

- **Data Elements.** To define student outcomes, simply transfer the outcomes you're measuring from your logic model. For other types of data elements, work with the Plus 50 Program Team to consider the topics on which you will want to collect student feedback. Don't feel that you have to do everything the first year. You can build up your data collection plan over time.
- **Data Source/Data Collection Tool.** Identify the data sources for data on student outcomes that are already collected by someone else. For example, degree and certificate completion rates, or students receiving credit for prior learning and experience, are most likely captured in a database managed by the institutional research department. There is likely to be some student feedback that you will want to measure using a student survey; for example, participants' evaluation of the usefulness of a workshop, whether the length of time for instruction was sufficient, or if the timing of delivery of a service was effective. For these types of feedback, enter "student survey" in this column. For student feedback, you will most likely use a survey, but you may also use a focus group. Consult Tool 8 and Tool 9 in the Evaluation Toolkit to make decisions about data collection tools.
- **Timing of Data Collection.** When you collect your data will depend on many factors: when the terms are over (e.g., you may not want to wait until the end of the year if your participants are engaged in courses that are over in less than nine months); the schedule of data collection that works for the institutional research department; and when you need to have the data for program improvement purposes. The Data Lead should work with the Program Team to assess when different types of data collection should happen.
- **Person Responsible for Collecting Data.** This person is most likely to be the Data Lead, but the Data Lead may want to designate others to collect certain types of data. For example, if an institutional research representative is on the Plus 50 Program Team, the Evaluation Lead may designate her/him to collect data from the college databases. You are likely to have other "designated trackers" in each of the various departments that students move through, such as registrar, testing, financial aid, and advising. As you review the Plus 50 Formative Evaluation Toolkit, you will find more guidance on how to assign data collection roles, and how to get support from the departments that the Program Team is working with.

Develop Data Collection Tools and Collect Data

Your data collection plan will tell you what types of data collection tools you need to develop and when you should collect the data. To develop the data collection tools, start with the Plus 50 Evaluation Toolkit. If there are outcomes and feedback you want to measure that are not included in the toolkit's survey templates, there are online survey libraries you can consult. An especially relevant one you may want to explore is a collection from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, which provides a portal to a large instrument inventory.

Analyze and Reflect on Data

Get Ready for Analysis: Develop Evaluation Questions

The first step in analyzing data is becoming very clear about the questions you want answered. Your evaluation questions should actually be quite straightforward, because they will all be variations on the following two questions:

- What have we achieved relative to our performance targets?
- What is the feedback from students on how we can improve our services?

To prepare to analyze your data, the Evaluation Lead should meet with the Program Team members and invite any Advisory Committee members who are especially interested in data and continuous improvement. At this meeting, use those two basic questions and your data collection plan to draft *specific* questions that you are asking. Always consider what you will do with the data, and how you will use them to inform program improvement. Then, as you analyze, you will be able keep your eye firmly on the prize: answers to your questions.

Analyze Your Data

Sometimes the term "data analysis" can sound intimidating, but it does not have to be. Simple and straightforward analyses provide important insights. Online survey tools give you the ability to create simple aggregations of your data, including averages and frequency distributions (the percentage of people answering in each answer category). These simple but powerful "canned reports" usually enable you to answer most of your questions.

If you have collected qualitative data through focus groups, data analysis will be more time-consuming. The Evaluation Lead should read through the transcripts and write bullet points for the themes that rose to the top. Again, in defining these themes, the Data Lead should focus on how the data can best answer your central questions.

Reflect on Your Data Analyses

This is the fun part. Bring your data analyses (charts, tables, bullet points) to data reflection meetings. It is smart to hold these meetings with *both* your Program Team and your Advisory Committee; each group will have helpful insights. The main purpose of these meetings is to answer the question: **What do our data tell us about program adjustments and improvements we might want to make?**

During these meetings, designate someone to take good notes—and you may want to record the meetings as a back-up. That way, you have a ready-made evaluation memo that can codify the insights of each group in terms of how the data can inform program improvement.

Plan for Program Improvement

At this point, the Plus 50 Program Team can take the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation memos and consider what the evaluation results mean for program changes. The Program Team should devote one to three planning meetings to deciding which recommendations to put into action, and how, exactly, to implement these changes. When making decisions about improving your program, use your action plan to capture concrete plans for how to move forward.

Conclusion

Remember that the work you do to improve your program will not only improve the experience of the students participating, but also mean better outcomes for those students. And as you improve outcomes, you will enhance sustainability. **A successful program will attract internal advocates, enthusiastic community partners, and external funding.** And you cannot attract these advocates, partners, and funders without *documenting your results*. The work you do to demonstrate and document your impact will pay off handsomely through better outcomes and an expanded constituency of committed stakeholders and supporters.

Chapter 7

Wrapping Up and Looking Forward

Congratulations are again in order. You have successfully moved through the five phases of program implementation.

By using this systematic five-phase process, you have increased the effectiveness and sustainability of your program. You have

- A program that meets the needs of your local plus 50 population.
- A committed internal constituency that will advocate for your program, provide thought leadership, and help you to leverage internal resources.
- External partners that can provide in-kind resources and expand your network to additional partners.
- A way to measure results that will inform the continuous improvement of your program and document impact for sharing with your constituencies and potential funders.

The Plus 50 program rests on a solid foundation, and you will only improve it over time with additional data and student feedback. You have been pioneers in developing a program that supports people ages 50 and above to advance their careers. With this age cohort playing an increasingly important role in the labor market, your services are vital.

Plus 50 Planning and Implementation Phases

Readiness	Needs Assessment	Program Development	Implementation Planning	Continuous Improvement
Build Teams, Mobilize Support, Identify Resources & Begin Planning	*Collect Data & Design Recommendations*	*Design Plus 50 Programming*	*Develop Marketing Strategy & Budget, Update Action Plan*	*Assess & Improve Program*
• Build Program Team & Advisory Committee • Identify Internal & External Stakeholders • Identify Resources • Begin Development of Action Plan	• Collect Needed Data • Summarize Learning & Write Recommendations for Program Design • Share Results with Stakeholders	• Prepare for Program Development • Develop Vision & Mission Statements • Identify Student Outcomes • Identify & Design Program Components • Develop Logic Model	• Develop Marketing Strategy • Develop Program Budget • Refine & Update Action Plan	• Identify Student Outcomes & Performance Targets • Identify Additional Data to Collect • Develop Data Collection Plan • Develop Tools and Collect Data • Analyze Data • Plan for Improvement

Appendix A

Plus 50 Standards of Excellence

Those involved in the Plus 50 Initiative are deeply committed to developing a knowledge base that community colleges across the country can use to design and to further develop their own programming for plus 50 learners. The Standards of Excellence contain the collective wisdom of the Plus 50 grantee colleges on the essential elements of a successful Plus 50 program: what community colleges should strive for in developing and implementing their own programming. The Standards of Excellence are the essential, core program elements that need to be in place to have the desired impact on Plus 50 learners. Below is a summary of the Standards of Excellence along with the foundational elements that support the implementation of each standard.

Needs Assessment and Ongoing Evaluation

- Decide at the onset to use data to inform decision-making.
- Build your assessment and evaluation capacity.
- Disseminate assessment and evaluation results.

Secure Broad-Based Organizational and Institutional Support

- Enlist the college president as an advocate.
- Make the case to key individuals and departments throughout the college.
- Establish an Advisory Committee.

Develop Community Partnerships

- Choose your partners well.
- Make the relationship mutually beneficial.
- Communicate regularly with stakeholders

Offer Learner-Centered Programming

- Tailor instructional delivery to meet the needs of plus 50 students.
- Take into account the learning styles of the plus 50 student.

Provide Learner Support Services

- Develop a resource directory.
- Utilize and train advisors or coaches who have extensive experience working with the plus 50 population.
- Provide plus 50 learners access to assessment and goal development resources.

Provide Accessible and Accommodating Materials and Environments

- Ensure physical comfort and accessibility by leveraging the technology at your college.
- Be mindful of transportation access and options.
- Make community college more affordable.

Offer Professional Development for Faculty

- Make a workshop or presentation on teaching plus 50 learners a standard part of your college's faculty professional development.
- Identify a high-quality curriculum for faculty professional development.
- Provide ongoing feedback to faculty.

Publicize Through Integrated and Targeted Marketing

- Integrate marketing across all college materials.
- Market plus 50 offerings in a way that does not label the student as a "senior."
- Work with the college marketing department or hire a professional advertising firm.

The Plus 50 Initiative Standards of Excellence: contain the collective wisdom of Plus 50 colleges on the essential elements of a successful Plus 50 program.

Appendix B

Plus 50 Program Component Definitions

Outreach

Marketing of the Plus 50 program and outreach to potential participants in the community or already enrolled at the college can use a wide range of approaches, including:

- Placing a link to information about the Plus 50 program on your college's home page.
- Exhibiting at college open house events.
- Hosting informational sessions/orientation sessions/open houses/job fairs/resource expos/campus tours to draw individuals to campus.
- Offering free transcript evaluations and other free introductory workshops.
- Networking and exhibiting at conferences (especially workforce-related conferences).
- Attending meetings of local organizations that serve the plus 50 population.
- Speaking at, or hosting booths at, community events (e.g., home shows, health fairs).
- Networking with current plus 50 students by working with other departments and services at the college, such as student services and academic advisors.
- Distributing fliers, brochures, and marketing cards with an overview of Plus 50 workforce training opportunities.
- Creating and distributing a DVD of plus 50 student profiles and success stories.
- Working with community partners and local businesses to raise Plus 50 program awareness and to connect with potential plus 50 students.
- Developing Plus 50 program blogs, newsletters, or a YouTube channel.
- Contacting plus 50 students by phone and e-mail.
- Disseminating news releases (and other outreach to journalists) to generate newspaper, radio, and TV stories.
- Buying ad space in the paper and on the radio and TV.
- Using social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- Giving out yard signs or advertising on billboards.

Workforce Training Programs and Associated Training Supports

Workforce Training Programs/Courses. The Plus 50 program offerings must include workforce training programs (either credit or noncredit) that lead to a credential that has workforce value. This training should be relevant to occupations that are in demand and/or growing in your local labor market. At the end of these programs, students are awarded a degree (AA, AS, or AAS), a certificate, or a noncredit certificate. It is important to distinguish between workforce training courses and general education courses. General education courses, such as a writing or history course, are often required to complete a workforce training program, but they do not "count" as a Plus 50 program component. Plus 50 program components are only those that teach the occupation-specific skills and knowledge required to complete the program. Examples of components include a course on medical coding for health care occupations or a course on counseling troubled youth for social services occupations.

Math and English Refreshers. These courses are tailored to helping plus 50 students avoid remedial English and math courses, and thus accelerate their progress toward obtaining a credential. Students may be required to take placement tests when they enroll, and plus 50 learners often place into remedial courses, which delays enrollment into the courses that will count toward a certificate or degree. To avoid this delay, refresher/review courses allow students to brush up on their skills to prepare for the placement tests. Examples of tailored math or English refresher courses might be a short course or workshop that helps the student to place out of the developmental or remedial courses; a for-credit math or English course in which one section is taught specifically for plus 50 students; or tutoring designed for plus 50 students that they can take concurrently with a developmental or remedial course to ensure that they don't get "stuck" at this level.

Computer Courses. These include basic and intermediate computer courses tailored to plus 50 students. Sometimes these courses are designed for students who have little or no familiarity with computers.

Support Services

Plus 50 Professional Development for Instructors. These are workshops or other professional development opportunities designed to build faculty skills for working with plus 50 students. As part of these professional development opportunities, instructors should learn about the appropriate pedagogical strategies to address the needs, interests, and learning styles of plus 50 learners.

Plus 50 Completion Coaches/Advisors. This service, provided as part of the Plus 50 program, should be tailored specifically to the needs and interests of plus 50 learners, and advisors should have the training, knowledge, and resources they need to provide advice to those in this age group. Plus 50 Advisors help plus 50 students to build on their life experiences, and they focus on supporting the student in completing a degree or certificate that will help them reach their goals. Advising services may be provided by one or more Plus 50 program staff members, but they may also be provided by staff in partner departments, such as registration and enrollment, student services, or advising and counseling. If the services are provided by staff in a partner department, the Advisors need to have received training or technical assistance that prepares them to provide these services to the plus 50 learner.

Financial Aid Supports for Plus 50 Learners. These services can include a range of financial aid supports. Plus 50 Advisors may counsel students on financial options specific to their situations and eligibility, or a program may have staff who dedicate part of their time to providing financial aid advice to plus 50 students. These services can also include Plus 50 financial aid workshops or handouts to assist plus 50 learners in accessing financial aid. As with Plus 50 advising, these services can be provided either by Plus 50 program staff or by staff in partner departments (usually the financial aid office). If staff members in a partner department are offering the service, they must be knowledgeable about sources of financial aid for which plus 50 learners are eligible.

Plus 50 Career Development Services. These are services that support plus 50 students in finding work and advancing their careers. They can include one-on-one services (such as career counseling), and group workshops for career development and/or job readiness that are tailored specifically to the needs and interests of plus 50 students looking to advance their careers. Examples of workshop topics are career assessment and planning, job search, resume-writing, interviewing skills, and networking.

Credit for Prior Learning. Colleges offer a range of services that help students capture credits, either for prior learning that students had gained through work or life experience, or for previous educational experiences. Students can accelerate their progress toward completion by capturing these credits. Methods of awarding credits for prior learning include standardized testing (e.g., CLEP), institutional, or "challenge" exams; evaluation of past work using published guides, such as the American Council on Education's guide for industrial and corporate training programs; and portfolio assessment.

Appendix C Toolkit

Tool 1: Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Tool 2: Action Plan Template

Tool 3: Student Outcomes Identification Tool

Tool 4: Performance Targets Identification Tool

Tool 5: Program Component Design Tool

Tool 6: Workforce Program Selection Tool

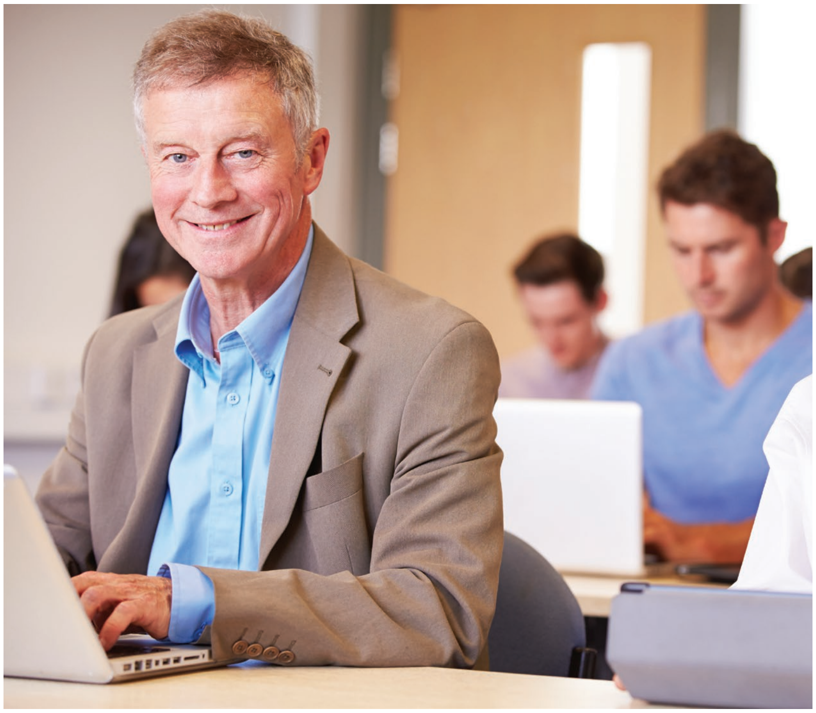
Tool 7: Logic Model Template

Tool 8: Marketing Action Plan Template

Tool 9: Budget Development Tool

Tool 10: Data Collection Plan Template

Click the links for each Tool's fillable PDF form.



Tool 1: Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Use this tool to identify people to invite to serve on your Plus 50 Program Team and your Advisory Committee, or to cultivate as an internal stakeholder. Before filling out the Stakeholder Analysis Tool, review this reference information that describes how to identify the three different *categories* of stakeholders:

Do you think this person can best support Plus 50 through…	Then:
… participating in directly managing or implementing the program?	Invite that person to join the **Plus 50 Program Team**.
… providing advice and thought partnership?	Invite that person to join the **Plus 50 Advisory Committee**.
… approving requests for resource-leveraging and through sharing information with others at the college?	Cultivate that person as an **Internal Stakeholder**.

Stakeholder Analysis Tool					
Institutional Position Within the College	Types of Contributions to Your Plus 50 Program	Write Potential Stakeholder Names Here	Check the Appropriate Box		
			Program Team	Advisory Committee	Internal Stakeholder
Workforce Development Department	• Identify the workforce programs that have the best fit with the Plus 50 program. • Support the development of accelerated training programs, based on existing programs. • Support the development of stackable credentials, based on existing credentialing programs. • Conduct outreach to employer partners to galvanize their interest in workforce development for the local plus 50 population.				
Continuing Education Department	• Identify the certificate programs that have the best fit with the Plus 50 program. • Support flexible scheduling of certificate training programs. • Identify employers. • Reach out to employers that are looking to hire certificate program completers.				
Career Center	• Develop career development workshops that are geared specifically to the plus 50 population (e.g., online job search, resume development). • Identify staff who can build their skills to be career counselors for plus 50 students.				
Advising and Counseling; Student Services	• Identify advisors who can become full-time or part-time Plus 50 program coaches or advisors. • Develop specialized student services that focus on the needs of plus 50 students.				

Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Institutional Position Within the College	Types of Contributions to Your Plus 50 Program	Write Potential Stakeholder Names Here	Check the Appropriate Box		
			Program Team	Advisory Committee	Internal Stakeholder
Institutional Research	• Using the college's databases, help identify the workforce programs that attract current students ages 50 and above. • Collect data that the Plus 50 Program Team can use to track progress against targets (e.g., number of students completing workforce program courses; number attaining certificates and degrees).				
Teaching Resource Center	• Develop professional development trainings for instructors that build instructor capacity to work with the learning styles of older adults.				
Academic Affairs	• Identify degree programs that can build on certificate programs (for stackable credentials). • Provide input into the types of professional development that could help faculty to work more effectively with plus 50 students.				
Admissions / Registration	• Provide input into how admissions and registration can become more user-friendly for plus 50 students.				
Financial Aid	• Identify sources of financial aid that is accessible to plus 50 students.				
Public Information Office/Marketing/ Community Relations	• Design marketing strategies that focus on the plus 50 population. • Support publicity for your program.				

Tool 2: Action Plan Template

This template provides one way of articulating the action steps described in this manual. Feel free to reorganize the steps, add some, or make the steps more specific. You don't need to complete it all at once; it will be a living document. It is a good idea to bring your action plan to the Plus 50 Program Team meetings, so you can check in on progress and see where you need to go next.

Action Steps	Task Owner(s)	Timeline	Resources	Benchmarks
What will be done?	Who will do it?	When will it be completed?	What do we need to complete this step?	How will we know when this step is complete?
Recruit people to join the Program Team				
Establish Advisory Committee				
Identify people to cultivate as internal stakeholders				
Meet with potential internal stakeholders				
Identify and recruit community partners				
Identify internal resources and how they will be leveraged				
Identify external resources of your community partners to leverage				
Identify sources of funding				
Conduct needs assessment				
Share needs assessment results with key stakeholders				
Develop vision and mission statements				
Identify student outcomes				
Design program components				
Develop a logic model				
Develop a marketing strategy				
Develop the program budget				

Tool 3: Student Outcomes Identification Tool

The tool below will help you identify student outcomes beyond credential completion and employment. Your Plus 50 Program Team should dedicate a meeting to identifying the highest-priority outcomes. Discuss each outcome, considering how program components contribute to each one. Then check the medium- and high-priority columns as appropriate.

Remember that the list contained in the tool below is a sample list. Do not feel that you need to keep every item, although certainly completion and employment should remain as high-priority outcomes. Use your vision and mission statements to help you narrow the list, and also feel free to add outcomes.

Student Outcomes Identification Tool										
Menu of Student Outcomes	Program Component Linked to the Outcome							To what extent do we see achievement of this outcome as a critical ingredient of achieving one of the ultimate outcomes (credential completion and employment)? The level of importance of this outcome is:		
	Math and English Refreshers	Computer Courses	Professional Development for Instructors	Plus 50 Coaching/ Advising	Financial Aid	Credit for Prior Learning	Career Services	Low	Medium	High
Core subject preparation for college-level courses	✓									
Computer literacy		✓								
Sense of competency, mastery in courses	✓	✓	✓							
Learning engagement			✓							
Sense of belonging at college		✓	✓	✓						
Optimism and resourcefulness to pursue goals				✓						
Completion	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Employment		✓					✓			

Tool 4: Performance Targets Identification Tool

Use one or two meetings of the Plus 50 Program Team to complete this tool. To use the tool, transfer the student outcomes from Tool 3 into the left column. Then, to define *indicators* for those outcomes, decide what you need to *measure* how you are doing in pursuing an outcome. Here are some examples for how to do this translation:

Student Outcomes	Sample Indicators
Core subject preparation for college-level courses	• Percentage of Plus 50 program participants who test out of remediation after participating in math and English refreshers
Learning engagement	• Percentage of Plus 50 program participants who provide positive answers to end-of-term survey items on learning engagement
Completion	• Number of students yearly who complete a degree or certificate program • Percentage of total Plus 50 program participants who complete a credential
Employment	• Percentage of participants who are employed within six months of obtaining the credential

After defining your indicators, determine your performance targets. For example, your target for completion in year one may be that 45% of participants obtain a credential; in year two it may be 55%, and then you might increase the target to be 70% in year three and thereafter. The target will depend largely on normative time for the workforce training degree and certificate programs you choose to include in your Plus 50 program, and how you have set up supports for the program participants to accelerate their own progress.

Student Outcomes *(List the outcomes that you intend your program to bring about)*	**Indicators** *(Translate your outcomes into what you will measure to collect data on the outcomes)*	**Performance Targets for:**		
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3

Tool 5: Program Component Design Tool

This tool will take several meetings of the Plus 50 Program Team to complete. Consider ways to involve your Advisory Committee as well. Before beginning, make sure all team members have read the needs assessment report, as well as Appendix A and B of this manual. When you meet, discuss what you want your components to look like, using the questions in the second column to guide your brainstorming sessions.

Program Component	Considerations/People and Documents to Consult	Component Design Ideas	Next Steps for Finalizing Our Decision
Outreach	• Use the findings from your needs assessment to understand the best ways to reach your local plus 50 population. • Brainstorm with your college's marketing department to find approaches that will work for your college.		
Workforce Training Programs	• Workforce Program Selection Tool (Parts I and II)		
Math and English Refreshers	• Does our college already have a curriculum for short courses that helps students pass the placement tests? Does the curriculum need tailoring for older students, or can we use it as-is? • Should we offer existing refreshers to plus 50 students along with younger students, or do we want the refreshers to be for plus 50 students only? • Can we partner with math and English professors in academic departments? • Do we have tutoring resources available to dedicate to supporting plus 50 students' work on their math and English skills?		
Computer Courses	• Do we have a basic computer applications curriculum already available? Does the curriculum need tailoring for older students, or can we use it as-is? • Should we offer basic computer courses to plus 50 students along with younger students, or do we want the refreshers to be for plus 50 students only? • Can we partner with computer science professors in academic departments? • Do we have tutoring resources available to dedicate to supporting plus 50 student's work on their computer skills? Can we use college students as tutors?		

Program Component	Considerations/People and Documents to Consult	Component Design Ideas	Next Steps for Finalizing Our Decision
Professional Development for Faculty	• Are there staff at the college experienced in developing faculty professional development with whom we can partner? • Do the staff who design professional development have experience specifically in building instructor skills for working with students 50 and older? • What are the opportunities for bringing together those who have professional development design skills with those who are knowledgeable about the learning needs, interests, and styles of plus 50 adults?		
Plus 50 Coaching/ Advising	• What did we learn in the needs assessment that can shape how we envision this role? • What should we include in the job description for our Plus 50 Coach/Advisor? • Should we designate one person who works only with plus 50 students, or should this person divide her/his time between students of different age groups? • Does it make sense to work with advisors who are already in advising/counseling, or should we allocate some of our program budget to hire a new Plus 50 Coach/Advisor? • What type of training should be provided to the Plus 50 Coach/Advisor, if this person does not come to the position experienced working with students in this age group?		
Financial Aid Services	• What are the financial aid resources available at our college that are an especially good fit for plus 50 students? • Should we leverage mainstream financial aid services, or should we design our own Plus 50 financial services that focus only on plus 50 students? • If we leverage mainstream financial services, what steps will we take to ensure that financial counselors who meet with the students are able to successfully direct plus 50 students to the resources that fit their needs? • If we design our own financial services, what should be included in the job description of our financial aid counselor? • Do we want our financial counselor to mostly do one-on-one counseling, provide financial aid workshops, or both?		

Program Component	Considerations/People and Documents to Consult	Component Design Ideas	Next Steps for Finalizing Our Decision
Credit for Prior Learning	• What methods might we want to use to support our plus 50 students to earn credits for prior learning? • Do we want to guide our students to mainstream services, or should we design services tailored to the plus 50 population? • Are there ways we might want to integrate this service with the work of the Plus 50 Coach/ Advisor?		
Career Development Services	• What did we hear from the needs assessment about the types of topics that would be useful to our prospective program participants (e.g., clarifying job interests, identifying job openings, resume-writing, networking, interviewing skills, entrepreneurship)? • Which services should be delivered via one-on-one counseling; which should be delivered via workshops? • What are the skills we need for the staff delivering these services to job-seekers ages 50 and above? • Do we envision leveraging the mainstream career services at the college, or should we build our own services tailored to plus 50 students? • If we leverage mainstream career services, what type of training or other resources will be provided to the staff to ensure that they can effectively serve plus 50 students?		

Tool 6: Workforce Program Selection Tool

The decision about which workforce programs to include as part of your Plus 50 program is of course a critical one. The tools in this section are designed to help you structure your conversation, and also to help you make sure that you are getting input from the right people and consulting documents that will support you in charting your course.

First, gather the documents listed in the second column of the table below. Second, you might call the people listed in the second column (and others who you believe can provide important input), and ask them to share their thoughts about the questions in the first column. You can also see if they would be willing to attend a brainstorming session in person. After you have completed Part I of the tool, transfer programs in the third column to the first column of Part II. There you can use the rating icons to see how the programs fare on various criteria.

Workforce Program Selection Tool, Part I			
Factors to Take Into Account and Questions to Ask	**People and Documents to Consult**	**Workforce Programs to Consider, Based on These Factors**	**Notes**
Labor Market Trends: • Which occupations are growing? • Which growing occupations pay a living wage? • Which workforce programs offer a credential for these occupations?	• Staff in your college's workforce development division • Plus 50 needs assessment		
Plus 50 Interests: • What occupations are of greatest interest to your local plus 50 population?	• Plus 50 needs assessment		
Types of Occupations That Work for Your Target Population: • What occupations can effectively capitalize on the accumulated wisdom and expertise of people ages 50 and above? • What occupations might *not* work for the target group (e.g., because they are too physically demanding)?	• Advisory Committee • Plus 50 needs assessment		
Program Delivery Format: • Is the program delivered (or can it be) in a condensed or an accelerated format? • Is flexible scheduling offered?	• Course catalogues • Course instructors, workforce development division staff, or staff in advising/counseling who know the delivery format of different workforce programs		

Workforce Program Selection Tool, Part II							
Workforce Programs Under Consideration	**Does the program prepare students for an occupation that ...**					**Is the program ...**	
	Is likely to have robust job openings in the coming years?	Pays a living wage?	Matches the interests and abilities of the local plus 50 population?	Can capitalize well on the accumulated wisdom and expertise of plus 50 individuals?	Is not too physically demanding?	Offered in an accelerated format (or a program that can be)?	Able to offer courses with flexible scheduling?

1 2 3 4

Tool 7: Logic Model Template

Use this tool to develop a logic model. As was discussed in the manual, you may want to invest in taking this table a step further to create a more attractive visual, but that step is optional. One person on the team may want to complete this template and then bring it to the full team for review and feedback. That person should complete the columns using work that has already been done. Using decisions about program components (see Tool 5), complete the second column (using *short* phrases). Then use the work on student outcomes (see Tool 3) to complete the two student outcomes columns. Use your vision statement to create a statement of your ultimate impact.

Program Components *(Which program components are included in your program?)*	**Program Activities** *(What are the specifics for implementing your program components?)*	**Intended Student Outcomes** *(What are the intended outcomes for students?)*		**Ultimate Impact** *(Relate to your vision statement)*
		Short- and Medium-Term	Long-Term	
Outreach				
Workforce Training Programs				
Math and English Refreshers				
Computer Courses				
Professional Development for Faculty				
Plus 50 Coaching/ Advising				
Financial Aid Services				
Credit for Prior Learning				
Career Development Services				

Tool 8: Marketing Action Plan Template

After the team decides on its marketing strategies, it is a good idea to document your steps as part of your action plan or make a stand-alone marketing action plan. Below is a marketing action plan following the format of the action plan template, Tool 2. Be sure to include in your action steps the task of measuring the success of your strategies, so you can use that feedback to modify or improve your tactics.

Action Steps	Task Owner(s)	Timeline	Resources	Benchmarks
What will be done?	*Who will do it?*	*When will it be completed?*	*What do we need to complete this step?*	*How will we know when this step is complete?*
Conduct Marketing Strategy #1				
Tactic #1A				
Tactic #1B				
Success Measure for Strategy #1				
Conduct Marketing Strategy #2				
Tactic #2A				
Tactic #2B				
Success Measure for Strategy #2				
Etc.				

Tool 9: Budget Development Tool

To develop your program budget, you will want to think in terms of cost categories. For each cost category, you can identify: (1) the internal resources you can leverage to build the program that don't require a cash outlay; (2) additional resources that are needed; and (3) the cost for these additional resources. You may want to structure the program budget this way:

Cost Category	Internal Resources That Have Been Leveraged	Additional Funds That Are Needed
Personnel		
Staff Support		
Program Development		
Office Supplies		
Marketing/Communications/ Public Relations		
Evaluation		

You may also want to break down your program development costs into further detail, by program component (if it is helpful to get to this level of detail). For example, you can develop a supplemental table that looks like this:

Program Component Cost Category	Internal Resources That Have Been Leveraged	Additional Funds That Are Needed
Workforce Programming		
Computer Refreshers		
Math and English Refreshers		
Professional Development for Instructors		
Plus 50 Coach/Advisor		
Credit for Prior Learning		
Career Development Services		
Financial Aid Services		

Tool 10: Data Collection Plan Template

The Data Lead should take charge of completing the Data Collection Plan Template. Here is some guidance for completing each column:

- **Data Elements.** To define student outcomes, simply transfer the outcomes you're measuring from the Student Outcomes Identification Tool (Tool 3). For other types of data elements, work with the rest of the Plus 50 Program Team to consider the areas you will want to collect student feedback on. Don't feel that you have to do everything the first year. You can build up your data collection plan over time.
- **Data Source/Data Collection Tool.** Identify the data sources for data on student outcomes already collected by someone else. For example, degree or certificate completion rates, or students receiving credit for prior learning and experience, is most likely captured by a database managed by the institutional research department. There are likely to be some student feedback that you will want to measure using a student survey; for example, participants' evaluation of the usefulness of a workshop, whether the length of time for instruction was sufficient, or if the timing of delivery of a service was effective. For these types of feedback, enter "student survey" in this column. For student feedback, you will most likely use a survey, but you may also use a focus group. Consult Tool 8 and Tool 9 in the online Plus 50 Formative Evaluation Toolkit to make decision about data collection tools.
- **Timing of Data Collection.** When you collect your data will depend on many factors: when the terms are over (e.g., you may not want to wait until the end of the year if your participants are engaged in courses that are over in less than nine months); the schedule of data collection that works for the institutional research department; and when you need to have the data for program improvement purposes. The Data Lead should work with the Program Team to assess when different types of data collection should happen.
- **Person Responsible for Collecting Data.** This person is most likely to be the Data Lead but the Data Lead may want to designate others to collect certain types of data. For example, if an institutional research representative is on the Plus 50 Program Team, the Evaluation Lead may designate her/him to collect data from the college databases. You are likely to have other "designated trackers" in each of the various departments that students move through such as registrar, testing, financial aid, and advising. As you review the Plus 50 Formative Evaluation Toolkit, you will find more guidance on how to assign data collection roles, and how to get support from the departments that the Program Team is working with.

Data Collection Plan			
Data Elements	Data Source/ Data Collection Tool	Timing of Data Collection	Person Responsible for Collecting Data
Student Outcome #1			
Student Outcome #2			
Etc.			
Student Feedback #1			
Student Feedback #2			
Etc.			