

June 2017

College Assistance for Migrants Programs (CAMP): Increasing access, first year success, and beyond

*Excelencia in Education is dedicated to bringing attention to practices that work for Latino students through **Examples of Excelencia**; the only national effort to recognize evidence based-practices serving Latino students in higher education. Programs from Examples of Excelencia populate our **Growing What Works database** – a national database that shares evidence-based programs that serve Latino students. We aim to inform policy and practice by sharing models and strategies of what works for Latinos and other post-traditional students.*

We have consistently received submissions from College Assistance for Migrant Programs (CAMP) and featured them in the Growing What Works database.

CAMP is a federally funded program dedicated to serving students “who are migratory or seasonal farmworkers (or children of such workers) enrolled in their first year of undergraduate studies at an institution of higher education.”¹ These programs not only help students succeed in the first year of college enrollment, but can also provide services through college completion. While there is limited data on the race/ethnicity of all CAMP students, 77 percent of farmworkers are Latino.²

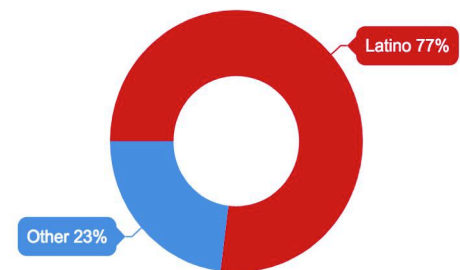
CAMP was established in 1972 to provide migrant students with resources and support for college access and first year success. The Office of Migrant Education (OME), established in 1966 in response to the growing number of U.S. born children of farm workers, houses CAMP. OME manages programs to support families that go unnoticed in the fields of American agriculture. While the program has operated across the country for over 40 years, there is still a need for students to access these opportunities. OME reports that CAMP currently serves approximately 2,000 students at about 40 programs nationwide.³

Why is CAMP important?

Education is not always accessible. Those motivated enough to work in the fields are driven by their desire to provide for their families and hope for a better future. The program’s impact helps increase migrant student college success and their families’ likelihood of social mobility from the fields into the “skilled workforce.” However, a small number of students benefit from CAMP.

Who are our farm workers?

Percent of Farmworkers that identify as Latino



Source: National Agricultural Worker's Survey, 2013-14 National Demographic Characteristics

The National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS) found that Latinos made up 77 percent of migrant farmworkers in the United States in 2013-2014.¹ The NAWS found that the average highest grade completed in 2014 for farmworkers was ninth grade. Of those surveyed, 41 percent said they first started agriculture work before or at the age of 18. Only 21 percent of respondents had graduated high school. With the average student loan debt (\$30,100 in 2015)¹ higher than the average annual earning of a farmworker (\$18,000),¹ the idea of pursuing higher education, based on cost alone, may seem out of reach. Students who come from this background that graduate high school and pursue post-secondary education are able to succeed in that first crucial year of college because of programs like CAMP.

Approximately 500,000 children under the age of 18 currently work in U.S. farm fields.⁴ OME estimates half of farmworkers under 18 drop out of high school and never complete a degree.⁵ The students who are able to access higher education continue to face challenges to degree completion. Some of the challenges these students and families face include:

- **Affordability:** Twenty-five percent of migrant families live below the poverty line, making it difficult for them to pay for college.⁶
- **Increased mobility through K-12:** Migrant students may attend several schools throughout the year leading to poor academic progress and lower reading and math skills. This leads to under preparedness for college level coursework.⁷
- **First-generation:** Students are unfamiliar with the college-going process or navigating the college environment.
- **Lack of Stability:** Farm work is seasonal, and some workers/families may travel throughout the year.

Highlight of services and practices provided by CAMP

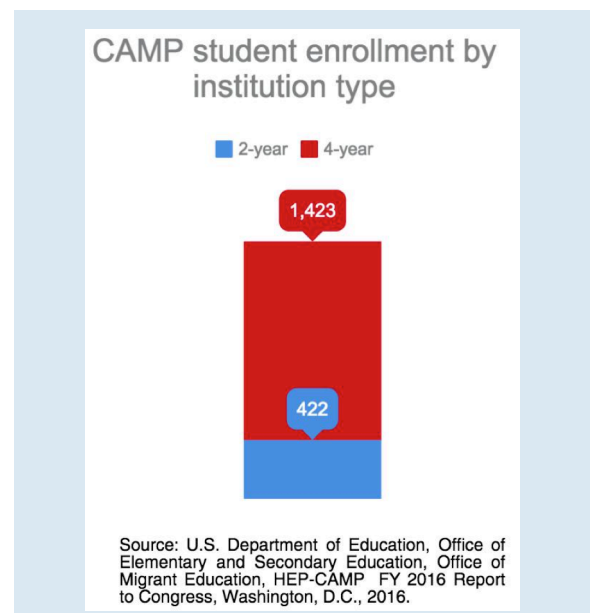
CAMP programs are typically found at institutions of higher education within communities that have a significant number of farmworker families. While each individual CAMP uses practices that are unique to the students they serve, they tend to follow similar models. There are three specific services, among the many offered, that most CAMP programs provide:

1. Recruitment and college readiness
2. Learning communities
3. Culturally competent practices

Students eligible for CAMP face a number of obstacles that at times discourage them from considering post-secondary education; mainly, they do not see themselves on a college campus. With little federal oversight on children in farm fields, the only future some students see is work in the fields. CAMP tries to recruit within the local high schools and communities with high migrant populations. The programs provide information sessions on college applications, ACT/SAT prep,

applying for financial aid, and potential scholarship opportunities. Typically, CAMP programs at colleges and universities help students apply for and enroll into their institutions. While they do not necessarily provide guaranteed admission, they help increase access to college for these students. By engaging with students and families, these programs show them that a college education is within reach. For example, the University of Washington's CAMP recruits through their Dare 2 Dream Academies where high school students are invited to a weeklong program to experience life on a college campus. This outreach is just one way programs engage students and spark more interest in post-secondary education.

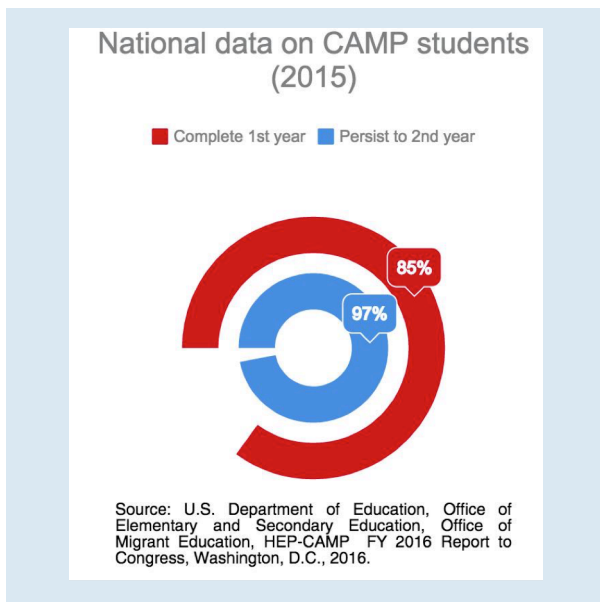
Students who enroll in college with CAMP's help find themselves in an unfamiliar environment. For many students, this is their first time on a college campus. It is important for them to feel as if they belong in a college environment. To help satisfy the natural urge to belong, CAMP programs follow a cohort model and encourage students to become part of a campus community. New Mexico State University's CAMP, for example, created a residential learning community where in addition to taking similar classes, all CAMP students live on campus together and are provided CAMP study halls and computer labs. These CAMP communities foster a space where students have shared experiences with their peers, creating a sense of family and understanding.



While providing these services helps increase both access and first-year retention, practitioners must be cognizant of the cultural and social backgrounds of the students they serve to ensure that students remain engaged through their participation in CAMP. Programs often provide orientation and programming for students and their families in both English and Spanish. They host cultural events throughout the year and embrace their students' shared stories and experiences. For example, at Sacramento State University, CAMP students participate in a freshman seminar course where they learn how to navigate the University and its services. In this seminar, students are also exposed to topics of identity and social issues and how these issues relate to their personal stories. Further, the University of Washington follows a similar approach and asks students to share their stories through assignments in their freshman seminar courses. The course, "CAMP Transitions and Problem Solving," is described as "[a] space for students to explore the various aspects of their identity, the power of their personal stories, and how they can use their stories as a means to enact change in their immediate and larger communities."

These three practices complement each other and are common components of many CAMP programs. While they are not exclusive practices, they are an important part of ensuring student success. Along with these common components, programs typically use cohort models to further promote the idea of community and togetherness. Other common practices include the following:

- **Mentoring:** Peer-to-peer or near-peer mentoring shows students it is possible to succeed in college.
- **Academic and support services:** Students are provided with tutoring, supplemental instruction, and dedicated counselors that can assist with both personal challenges and academic advising.
- **Health and financial support:** Programs provide financial support for housing, meal plans, comprehensive health exams, and textbooks to help tackle the financial obstacles the majority of their students face.



National data on CAMP

In 2014, 39 CAMPs served a total of 1,825 students, with the majority of those students attending traditional 4-year institutions (1,423).⁸ The Office of Migrant Education's 2015 performance report on CAMP found that in 2015:⁹

- 84.5 percent of program participants across all CAMPs nationwide completed their first year of higher education.
- Of those who completed, 96.7 percent continued postsecondary education.

Some examples of successful CAMPs

Below is a list of some programs recognized by *Excelencia* for their work to serve Latino students of migrant farmworker

backgrounds in higher education. These programs, while aligned with CAMP's mission to ensure first year success, also provide services to support student persistence and degree completion. Though they are concentrated geographically on the west coast, they have their own unique communities and provide specific practices to serve their students.

Information on other programs that use evidence-based practices to serve Latino students can be found on our Growing What Works database (www.EdExcelencia.org/Growing-What-Works).

New Mexico State University (NM)

This residential program has a centralized dormitory for CAMP students, allowing them to live and learn together in a community of their peers. Students are provided with a special course for CAMP students, workshops, and art and cultural activities. Students also receive financial help for health, housing, and other expenses. CAMP freshmen retention rate in 2016 was 85% compared to only 70% retention for all other freshmen at New Mexico State. The average GPA for CAMP graduates is 3.17.

St. Edward's University (TX)

Federal support for CAMP is limited to first year success. This program secured funds to provide tuition support and tutoring services for all CAMP freshmen through their senior year. In 2012, 95 percent of students completed their first year. The program boasts an 83 percent first year retention rate. Their 2006 cohort has a 62 percent six-year graduation rate, comparable to the institution's 68 percent six-year graduation rate.

University of Washington (WA)

With the support of their institution and local community-based organizations, this program provides students with services such as help on the admissions process, access to research and internship opportunities, and a \$1,200 participation stipend. From their first cohort in 2010, 86 percent of students graduated compared to only 78 percent of other UW non-CAMP students. Ninety-two percent of students successfully complete their first year. UW conducts annual outreach to local high schools and reaches at least 1,500 students.

Beyond first-year completion

CAMP's federal funding, for the most part, is to ensure first-year success. While the federal program's goals are focused on that crucial first year, the majority of individual programs have taken it upon themselves to support students to and through degree attainment. Through continued services for CAMP students, many CAMP programs have seen success in retention and completion rates that are comparable to, and at times even exceed, their institution's average.

California State University, Sacramento (CA)

Described as "A Home Away From Home," this program first focuses on the transition from high school to college and then integration into the campus community. They provide multiple services that include career exploration, personal counseling, tutoring, and pre-admission services. The first year retention rate for CAMP students was 91 percent versus 76 percent for non-CAMP students. Between 95 percent and 98 percent of CAMP students complete their first year and enroll in their second year of college.

Additional resources on CAMP and migrant farmworkers:

- The National Association of HEP and CAMP programs: www.hepcampassociation.org
- Farmworker Justice: www.farmworkerjustice.org
- The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Program: www.afop.org/cif/learn-the-facts/
- Migrant Education Program: <https://results.ed.gov>

Compiled by Andres Quintanilla, program manager for Examples of *Excelencia*

¹ College Assistance Migrant Program. www2.ed.gov/programs/camp

² Farm worker Justice. Selected Statistics on Farmworkers. Retrieved March 22, 2017 from www.farmworkerjustice.org/sites/default/files/NAWS%20data%20factsht%201-13-15FINAL.pdf

³ College Assistance Migrant Program. www2.ed.gov/programs/camp

⁴ The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Program. Learn the Facts. Retrieved March 22, 2017 from www.afop.org/cif/learn-the-facts/

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Migrant Education, *HEP-CAMP FY 2016 Report to Congress*, Washington, D.C., 2016.

⁶ [Farm worker Justice. Selected Statistics on Farmworkers. Retrieved March 22, 2017 from www.farmworkerjustice.org/sites/default/files/NAWS%20data%20factsht%201-13-15FINAL.pdf](http://www.farmworkerjustice.org/sites/default/files/NAWS%20data%20factsht%201-13-15FINAL.pdf)

⁷ U.S Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education. *Literature Review on Migrant Education*. Retrieved March 28, 2017, from www.nysmigrant.org/literature-review-on-migrant-education

⁸ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Migrant Education, *HEP-CAMP FY 2016 Report to Congress*, Washington, D.C., 2016.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Migrant Education, *2015 CAMP Performance Report*, Washington, D.C., 2016

Excelencia in Education accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting Latino student achievement, conducting analysis to inform educational policies, and advancing institutional practices while collaborating with those committed and ready to meet the mission. Launched in 2004 in the nation's capital, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leadership. For more information, visit: www.EdExcelencia.org.

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