

Supporting Virginia's Community Colleges with Expert Evaluation Services

Child Trends & Shaffer Evaluation Group

Child Trends and Shaffer Evaluation Group (SEG) are pre-approved evaluation partners under the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Grant Evaluator Services contract. Together, we offer tailored evaluation solutions to support your college's goals in student success, program improvement, and institutional effectiveness. With over five decades of combined experience and a deep understanding of higher education, we work alongside colleges to generate meaningful, actionable insights.

Our services are available to all 23 VCCS institutions. Whether your college is writing a grant application, preparing new initiatives, assessing existing efforts, or expanding initiatives, our team is ready to provide effective, timely, and collaborative support.

Who We Are

Together, we combine national expertise with local insight to provide VCCS institutions with responsive, high-quality evaluation services.

Child Trends

Founded in 1979, Child Trends is the nation's leading research organization focused on improving outcomes for children, youth, and families. We are a full-service research and evaluation partner to federal and state agencies, foundations, and educational institutions. With over 200 staff and a national footprint, we offer deep expertise in postsecondary education, workforce development, and student support services. In Virginia, we work with the Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Social Services, and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

Shaffer Evaluation Group

Shaffer Evaluation Group (SEG) is a SWaM-certified, Virginia-based research, evaluation, and educational planning firm with extensive experience in higher education. We have evaluated 17 Title III grants for community colleges and universities, including Guided Pathways and Strengthening Institutions programs as well as full-college redesigns. We also support evaluations for National Science Foundation (NSF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other federal, state, and tribal government agencies. SEG brings a strong understanding of community college operations and longstanding connections across Virginia.

Our Services

We provide end-to-end evaluation support tailored to your college's goals, funding requirements, and community context. Our offerings include:

Child Trends & Shaffer Evaluation Group

- **Grant Writing Support**

We partner with colleges at the grant writing stage to write the evaluation section narrative and consult on logic model development, goals, and objectives.

- **Grant Evaluation and Compliance Support**

We conduct process, implementation, and impact evaluations that meet federal, state, and grantor requirements. Our team brings expertise in designing evaluations aligned to a wide range of funding streams including Title III, Title V, NSF, and USDA. We help colleges demonstrate progress, identify opportunities for program refinement, and communicate results clearly to funders and stakeholders.

- **Evaluation Planning and Technical Assistance**

We support colleges in developing practical and comprehensive evaluation plans that connect clearly to their strategic goals. This includes building logic models, identifying performance indicators, and designing data collection tools that are useful for both accountability and program improvement. We also provide direct technical assistance to college teams to help integrate evaluation into everyday operations.

- **Mixed Methods Data Collection and Analysis**

Our approach to data collection is informed by both numbers and narratives. We gather and analyze quantitative data (such as student outcomes and administrative records) alongside qualitative information (such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys). Our goal is to help colleges understand how programs are working, what challenges exist, and where opportunities for improvement are found. We ensure that results are communicated in accessible language and actionable for a range of audiences.

- **Improving Student Outcomes and Institutional Impact**

We bring deep experience in evaluating programs designed to support community colleges' successes. This includes career and technical education, dual enrollment, guided pathways, non-credit and credentialing initiatives, and student support programs. Our team works with colleges to understand how systems affect learners and identify practical changes that can lead to stronger student engagement, persistence, and achievement.

Why VCCS Colleges Work With Us?

- **Attuned to What Matters Most**

We understand the complex environments in which community colleges operate. Our evaluations acknowledge the realities of program implementation and focus on identifying what works for the wide range of challenges and opportunities students face.

- **Strong State and National Presence**

We have broad experience in Virginia, working with agencies such as the Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Department of Social Services. Our national partnerships with the U.S. Department of Education, NSF, and other major agencies demonstrate our ability to meet high standards and deliver quality results.

- **Collaborative and Adaptable**

Our teams partner closely with college leaders, faculty, and staff. We tailor each project to local needs and timelines, ensuring that findings inform ongoing decision-making and strategic planning.

- **Contract-Ready and Available Now**

Child Trends & Shaffer Evaluation Group

As pre-approved vendors, we can begin working with your college without delay. This streamlines the contracting process and helps you move quickly from planning to action.

Let's Partner

To learn more about how we can support your college, contact:

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