

**David Buckingham**

TRIO SSS

My name is David Buckingham and I am currently attending Bellevue College. I enrolled at BC in September of 2014 to get a degree in Computer Science. I am 36 years old and was a little worried about starting college at my age and with my background.

I am a recovering meth addict, alcoholic and a former drug dealer. I have been sober for four years. I am also a single father raising my 5 year old son. The mother of my son abandoned him at birth and it took me 3 years to get him out of the foster care system. Everything I do, I do because of my son. He is the reason I decided to go to college in the first place. I didn't believe people like me belonged in a college setting but I wanted to have a better life for both of us and be a role model for him.

When I came to Bellevue College I was afraid and felt very alone. I joined the TRIO program and everything changed for me. I felt connected to my school, I felt a part of and that I belonged. And the personal support I receive from TRIO, especially the staff, has helped ensure my success. The support has been the best thing. They keep me in check and give me an accountability system. After being a TRIO student for a year they hired me to work as a front desk assistant. This job has been a Godsend. My son keeps me motivated and TRIO helps keep me in school. TRIO has changed my life.

 <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/trio/>

## Student Success Services

Through a grant competition, funds are awarded to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. Student Support Services (SSS) projects also may provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants (# 84.063). The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

All SSS projects must provide: academic tutoring, which may include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects; advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection, assist student with information on both the full range of student financial aid programs, benefits and resources for locating public and private scholarships; and assistance in completing financial aid applications. Education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy and assist students in applying for admission to graduate and professional programs; and assist students enrolled in two-year institutions and applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in four-year programs. The SSS projects may also provide individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic information, activities, and instruction designed to acquaint students with career options; exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available; mentoring programs, securing temporary housing during breaks for students who are homeless youths and students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system.

# TRIO