



## Housatonic Community College

### Award Money Granted Faster for Students at Inner-City Community College

Housatonic Community College is one of 12 community colleges in the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system and is located in Bridgeport, Connecticut's largest city. Housatonic is devoted to serving students in all capacities of their journeys: whether they want to transfer to a four-year institution, earn an associate degree, or jump straight into the workforce. Housatonic also provides seminars and workshops to fulfill students' community and personal enrichment needs. Because of the many geographic locations Housatonic serves, its student population varies in economic backgrounds and financial aid plays a big role in helping students pay for college.

#### Reduced Staffing Reveals Verification Processing Concerns

Housatonic's decreased staffing levels in the Financial Aid Office had the potential to be a sizeable challenge for processing verification. The team had taken steps to clean up a previously paper-heavy process, overcome the over-stuffed file cabinets, and increase reporting accuracy. Still, the smaller staff was concerned about falling behind in completing verifications and the overall impact it would have on students. Housatonic wanted to find a solution that made the entire process easier for students to be awarded financial aid.

#### Verification Gateway Replaced Paperwork with Time

Omar Livingston, Director of Financial Aid at Housatonic, selected Verification Gateway (VG) as its solution because of the electronic and efficient platform it provided. Verification Gateway from Inceptia is an automated online platform that streamlines federal verification processing for students and schools. Offering interview-style questions, simple and secure document collection, complete reporting and personal interaction when needed, VG enables schools to process and package aid faster.

#### CHALLENGE

Housatonic Community College had a secure room dedicated to processing verifications. It was as efficient as they could be and included piles of paper, but they were falling behind and grew concerned about the overall impact on students and enrollment goals.

#### SOLUTION

With Verification Gateway in place, Housatonic's financial aid office was able to award students faster and boost enrollment.

#### RESULTS

- Reduced verification time by more than 50 percent
- Tracked students completely through the process, which helped award sooner
- No longer needed to use the work room for verification processing

“We had a reduction in paperwork and students were awarded much quicker than in the past,” said Livingston. “Even during our busy season in July and August, VG made it less chaotic.”

As a parent, Livingston also noticed how quick and easy the verification process was.

“My son was a freshman and selected for verification,” said Livingston. “He created his account online with VG, submitted the paperwork, and his verification was reviewed within two days. He was then awarded financial aid shortly after. Everything was right on schedule and came through quickly.”

### Provided Intuitive Online Experience for Students

“One concern we had before implementing VG was from the technology standpoint,” Livingston said. “As an inner-city school, we weren’t sure if some of our students would have a hard time navigating this new verification process and technology or have access to it.”

Those fears quickly subsided after students learned how to easily navigate VG’s online platform. With computers and tablets available throughout Housatonic’s campus, all students have the ability to access VG.

“The website was very intuitive and easy to navigate,” said Livingston. “The support materials on the website also make it easy to understand how the verification process works.”



### Talk to Us

To learn more about Verification Gateway, contact your Business Development representative or visit [inceptia.org](http://inceptia.org).



### PARTNER PROFILE

Housatonic Community College is located in Bridgeport, Connecticut and is accredited by the New England Convention of Higher Education (NECHE). Housatonic is one of 12 community colleges in the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system. Housatonic offers associate degree programs in preparation for transfer to four-year institutions, as well as occupationally-oriented associate degree and certificate programs. The college also assists local businesses and institutions to train and update the skills of their workers.

### We uncomplicate financial aid.

Inceptia is a nonprofit organization committed to innovative, effective, and uncomplicated solutions for financial aid management, smart borrowing, financial education, and repayment wellness.

