

Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development (RPED) Program Fiscal Year 2024 Summary of Funding

- **FY 2024 Appropriation:** \$45,000,000
- **FY 2024 Amount for New Awards:** \$44,839,829
 - **Funding Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition:** \$44,028,056
 - **Supplemental Award to Make FY 2023 Partial Award Whole:** \$811,773
- **Number of Awards:** 22
 - **Funding Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition:** 21
 - **Supplemental Award to Make FY 2023 Partial Award Whole:** 1

Institution Name	State	Type of Institution	Award Amount	Type of Award	Abstract Page
Heritage University	WA	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$811,773	Supplemental Award to Make FY 2023 Partial Award Whole	3
Unite, Inc.	AL	Nonprofit Organization/Agency	\$2,179,248	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	4
Black Hills State University	SD	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$1,993,247	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	5
Palo Verde Community College	CA	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,227,500	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	6
The New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation	NM	Nonprofit Organization/Agency	\$1,804,726	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	7
University of South Dakota	SD	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,227,335	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	8
University of Montana-Missoula College	MT	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$1,815,359	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	9
Halifax Community College	NC	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,182,035	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	10
Marion Technical College	OH	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$1,714,423	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	11
Western Kentucky University	KY	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,035,668	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	12
Ohio University	OH	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,022,519	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	13

Sam Houston State University	TX	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,219,533	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	14
Newman University Inc.	KS	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,103,308	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	15
University of Indianapolis	IN	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,033,672	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	16
Western Technical College	WI	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,202,231	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	17
Southern Regional Education Board	WV	Nonprofit Organization/Agency	\$2,175,937	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	18
EdVenture Group, Inc.	WV	Nonprofit Organization/Agency	\$1,956,655	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	19
Grays Harbor College	WA	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,227,500	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	20
George Corley Wallace State Community College	AL	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,227,500	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	21
Independence Community College	KS	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,225,606	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	22
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	NE	Nonprofit Organization/Agency	\$2,227,500	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	23
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	AL	Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	\$2,226,554	New Award Funded Down the Slate from the FY 2023 Competition	24

Applicant: **Heritage University**

Project Title: **Pathways to Opportunity**

Partners: **Yakama Indian Nation, Local Healthcare Providers, Workforce/Economic Development agencies, University of Washington GEAR UP, 8 small rural and high-poverty school districts, 1 BIE Tribal School and community organizations.**

Target Population: **American Indian Native, Immigrant, Hispanic, Farmworker, low-income and first-generation high school, and college students. This includes reaching out to 7,384 students in the 8 high schools and 1 BIE Tribal School and training 240 nurses over the grant period.**

Services and Activities: Recognizing the critical shortage of nurses in our rural communities, this pathway aims to increase the number of trained diverse nurses. Using a **Grow Your Own** model, the project will reach out to local diverse high school students, prepare them for college, recruit them in the university's nursing program and assist them in entering the workforce in high-wages and the high in-demand nursing local workforce.

We propose developing a career and college readiness pathway with various services, including dual enrollment, SAT/ACT prep, workshops, tutoring, financial aid guidance, mentoring, advising, and STEM summer bridge programs. We'll collaborate with our University of Washington GEAR UP partner and workforce partners. At our university, students will receive support from 2 Case Managers who offer NCLEX prep, advising, coaching, mentoring, career guidance, tutoring, time management workshops, placements, internships, and campus supports to ensure retention and graduation.

Anticipated Results: Our outreach efforts in the high schools will identify and support students interested in the nursing profession, guide and prepare them for college. The students that enroll in the university' nursing program and graduate will fill the workforce nursing needs of local healthcare providers and school districts. In the **next 5 years**, they need to hire **1,132** nurses and an additional **1,185** nurses within four healthcare partner organizations on the west side of Washington.

Competitive Preference Priorities 1: We are addressing this priority by engaging numerous partners in providing a range of **College Readiness** activities in the high schools. We are also providing a range of **Workforce Development** career employment and placement services at the university by project personnel.

Absolute Priority 1 & 2 being addressed: All target communities, schools and IHE are designated as rural by NCES locale codes: Mt. Adams (42), Toppenish (32), Yakama Tribal School (32), Grandview (32), Granger (32), Sunnyside (32), Wahluke (41), Wapato (41), Royal (43). Heritage University (IHE) is designated as **Rural: Fringe** by NCES College Navigator. Services to be provided will lead to increased postsecondary local accessibility, affordability, and enrollment in the university's nursing degree program.

Invitational Priority 1, 2 & 3 being addressed: The project will provide a range of services from secondary to postsecondary to the workforce (job placement). This will include working with community colleges to have their students transfer to our 4-year nursing program.

ED Abstract Form

1. Applicant institution, or nonprofit organization or agency and partner institutions

Unite, Inc.

2. Project title

College Access for Rural Students (CARS)

3. Proposed partners for the purpose of meeting the priorities

Lafayette High School, Lanett High School, Valley High School, Chambers County School District, Auburn University (Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement & Various Departments), Auburn Truman Pierce Institute, Southern Union State Community College, Tuskegee University, Miles College, Alabama State University

4. Target Population (e.g., faculty, staff, students)

The CARS program proposed to provide services for 650 rural, first-generation, and low-income students from 9th -12th grade in high school. All participants will come from Chambers County in Alabama with NCES locale code designations of 32, 42, and 43.

5. Services and Proposed Activities

CARS will provide the following services and activities: Assets Building, Mentoring, Academic Tutoring, Family Outreach Workshop, Academic Support Workshops, Academic Tutoring, Test Preparation (SAT/ACT), Student Success Workshops, Advice and Assistance (with secondary course selection), Presentations about rigorous and advanced courses, Academic Assessment, College and Career Exploration Tours, College application process, Financial Aid and FAFSA, College Transition Workshops

6. Anticipated Results (e.g., learning outcomes) and citations

The anticipated results of the CARS program are:

- 579 students graduate from high school by 8/31/2027¹
- 384 students enroll in a college or university by 8/31/2027

7. Absolute Priorities Addressed: Yes or No; Briefly describe how they are addressed

Yes. **Absolute Priority #1:** Unite is considered rural applicant based on locale. All 3 target high schools are considered "rural" based on their locale code defined by the NCES definition.

Absolute Priority #2: All services provided either address postsecondary education access, affordability, completion, or post-enrollment success.

8. Competitive Preference Priority Addressed: Yes or No; Briefly describe how it is addressed and indicate the institution/s that the applicant is proposing to partner with for the purpose of meeting this priority.

Yes. The CPP proposes to create a family-based set of services that promotes systemic change that will result in a college-going culture. Partners will include Auburn University (Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement & Various Departments), Auburn Truman Pierce Institute, Southern Union State Community College, Tuskegee University, Miles College, Alabama State University

Invitational Priority or Priorities Addressed: Yes or No; Briefly describe how it is addressed

Yes. Invitational Priority #1 is addressed through the pre-collegiate services that the program will provide that promote college enrollment and graduation.

¹ Cholewa et al., 2017

Applicant Institution: Black Hills State University (BHSU) is a four-year public university located in Spearfish, SD, in the Black Hills region of western South Dakota. In a state that has no community colleges, BHSU provides two-year as well as four-year degrees plus several graduate programs and has a total enrollment of 3,425 students and an NCES locale code of 32 (Town, Distant).

Project Title: Pathways to College and Careers for Rural Students in South Dakota

Partner Institutions: Partner institutions include the Spearfish Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), the Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF), and the West River Health Sciences Center.

Target population: This project will serve undergraduate students at BHSU and dual credit students from rural high schools in western South Dakota. BHSU faculty members will also participate in professional development to improve online teaching.

Services and proposed activities: BHSU will increase postsecondary access and success for rural students by creating an office of student transition programs, hiring a professional advisor in the Center for American Indian Studies (CAIS), hiring a financial aid counselor to serve rural schools, offering mini-grants to rural high schools, and providing professional development to faculty to improve online teaching. A weeklong in-person summer experience where high school students receive an orientation to the campus and a variety of majors is also planned. During this week, students will visit the Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) with a focus on careers and engage with BHSU faculty and students.

Anticipated Results: 1) Increased enrollment and success of rural high school students in dual credit courses at BHSU, 2) Reduced equity gaps in dual credit course success between American Indian students and students overall, 3) Increased retention and graduation rates of rural students at BHSU, 4) Increased placement in internships focused on high-demand occupations in western South Dakota.

Absolute Priorities Addressed: Yes

Absolute Priority #1: BHSU is a rural applicant with an NCES locale code of 32 (Town, Distant), serving high schools in western SD with locale codes of 32, 33, 41, 42 and 43.

Absolute Priority #2: The proposed project meets Absolute Priority #2, subcategories (b), (d) and (f) through strengthening advising and counseling services as well as offering expanded online course delivery and career development programs.

Competitive Preference Priority Addressed: Yes

Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change. We are partnering with the SURF, one of the largest employers in the region, and the SEDC to provide job shadowing, career fairs, internships and other work-based opportunities for participants.

Invitational Priorities Addressed: Yes

The proposed project meets invitational priorities #1 and #2 by offering expanded services for high school dual credit students including virtual internship courses and a career focused summer experience.

PALO VERDE COLLEGE

RURAL POSTSECONDARY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ABSTRACT

Palo Verde College is submitting this application for an RPED Project as a NCES defined “rural – distant” college serving regional middle and high schools in Needles USD with locale code: 32 (distant) and Palo Verde USD with locale code: 33 (remote). The RPED Project will provide an array of online and rural services to educate dual enrollment for high and new college students who have demonstrated an academic need as part of the RPED Project’s locational needs. The RPED Project staff will include a Project Director, Faculty Trainer, Course Developer , Help Desk Specialists, and Program Assistant. The staff will work in conjunction with the college faculty, college staff, high school teachers and community agencies to effectively expand and improve the delivery of academic and support services to rural students over the next four years. The Project Design includes:

- Development of a Faculty Training Program
- Development of Remote/Rural Courses and Support Services
- Development of Remote/Rural Counseling for Dual Enrollment Students
- Development of Remote/Rural Academic Support Services
- Development of Remote/Rural Technology Help Desk and Equipment Assistance

These RPED services will reflect comprehensive and proactive strategies that will improve the likelihood of student success in a career development of career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the region. The services will achieve the Project’s outcomes in the areas of persistence, academic success, and graduation. The educational strategies are supported by evidence based best practices that each is effective as presented in this proposal and reflected in the Priorities.

Applicant Name: The New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation

Project Title: Bridging the Gap: Empowering Rural Education through Distance Learning and Mobile Advising

Proposed Partners: Eastern New Mexico University, Ruidoso Branch Campus (ENMU-R)

Target Population: The target population for this project consists of the 1,050 high school students in the seven school districts served by ENMU-R and the 87,382 total population of the counties and tribal nation where the seven school districts are located.

Services and Proposed Activities: To address the areas of access, affordability, completion and post-enrollment success, activities will include train the trainer efforts to increase the FAFSA knowledge base in the targeted communities. Emphasis on obtaining Data Use Agreements with each of the targeted school districts to conduct individualized and directed outreach offering assistance in FAFSA completion. This directed outreach will utilize email, mailing of informational materials, texting and phone calls. Conducting special events, such as Money Mondays to raise FAFSA completion; Financial Aid Literacy events to educate potential students on financial aid terminology, access to financial aid, and degree obtainment financial benefits; and College and Trade Fairs to educate on potential careers. Working with ENMU-R, NMEAF will utilize its call center capabilities to assist with student retention by providing information on where necessary help and services can be found to assist enrolled students in continuing and completing their education or training. ENMU-R will establish remote learning centers to eliminate the digital divide, provide rotating instructors to provide in person instruction to help develop stronger student relationships, and equip a mobile classroom unit to reach the outlying areas and other locations where a permanent learning center is not feasible.

Anticipated Results: Over the 4 year period of the grant, it is anticipated that enrollment in ENMU-R will increase by 3% per year and retention will increase by 10% overall.

Absolute Priorities Addressed: Yes. AP1 – All communities targeted meet the rural definition. AP2 – All activities proposed increase postsecondary education access, affordability, completion and post-enrollment success.

Competitive Preference Priority Addressed: Yes. Collaboration with the targeted school districts, the New Mexico Departments of Higher Education and Public Education, the Mescalero Tribe and New Mexico Workforce Connections will all allow for systemic changes providing support for rural students to increase college readiness and workforce development.

Invitation Priorities Addressed: Yes. IP1 – FAFSA outreach, financial aid literacy, college and trade fairs are in place to increase exposure to postsecondary opportunities. IP2 – the partnership with New Mexico Workforce Connections will allow for the alignment of programs with high-skill, high-wage and in demand occupations in the targeted areas. IP3 – ENMU-R is a branch campus of the Eastern New Mexico University system and will provide a smooth transition to a 4-year degree for those students wishing to continue their educational pursuit.

U.S. Department of Education

**APPLICATION FOR GRANTS UNDER THE RURAL POSTSECONDARY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

University of South Dakota School of Education

Teacher Fellows

The University of South Dakota (USD) is the flagship liberal arts institution in the state, offering degree programs in various fields, including traditional liberal arts, health science, business, education, and fine arts. Around 30% of USD students come from rural high schools. Located in Vermillion, SD, which is classified as a "32: Town-Distant" locale, USD meets the expanded definition for RPED grant submission as indicated by the NCES College Navigator search tool. Rural students often face financial barriers and a lack of support, including career planning assistance. Such barriers have historically hindered Native Americans, those identified as "economically disadvantaged," and rural students entering the teaching profession. To address these challenges, USD's School of Education has created a Teacher Fellows program, which seeks to increase access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success for rural and underserved students in South Dakota in the field of education. Ultimately, the program aims to address the shortage of qualified teachers and education professionals in South Dakota, providing equitable access and a high-quality pathway into the education profession.

The USD School of Education is dedicated to serving underserved students, and this grant proposal expands and enhances an early college program in collaboration with the Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE) Network, which targets underserved populations and eleven rural school districts located in rural locale codes of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43. The goal is to develop a systemic approach that demonstrates improved college readiness, enrollment, persistence, completion, and job placement among rural students. Internships and career development seminars will be available to students throughout their academic journey. In short, USD will collaborate with the TIE Network and Educators Rising SD to create education career pathways and address teacher shortages in rural South Dakota.

Recently, the USD School of Education Teacher Fellows program was approved as a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) by the Department of Labor. This recognition allows students to engage in formalized paid apprenticeship opportunities with a mentor teacher and career development seminars from the beginning to the end of their academic journey. Graduates of the Teacher Fellows program will earn an education degree from USD, a South Dakota Teaching Certificate, and a Department of Labor Apprenticeship Certificate.

This grant proposal for the Teacher Fellows program addresses the absolute, competitive, and invitational priorities. USD's School of Education expects an increase in enrollment, retention, graduation rates, and job placement for rural students, specifically those from the eleven districts in the TIE Network. The First Year Experience course, academic advisors, and Peer Mentoring program will contribute to student performance and learning. The external evaluator, Government Research Bureau, will conduct unbiased, third-party research on the effectiveness of the program.

Applicant Organization: University of Montana-Missoula College

Project Name: Missoula College Rural Career Pathway Program (MC-RCPP)

Proposed Partners: 1) Hamilton School District; 2) Bitterroot Health; 3) Corvallis School District; 4) St. Luke Community Health; 5) Florence School District; 6) Frenchtown School District; 7) Ronan School District; 8) Charlo School District; 9) St. Regis School District; 10) UM-Bitterroot; 11) Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI); 12) Montana Hospital Association (MHA); 13) St. Ignatius School District; and 14) Missoula County Public Schools.

Target Population: This grant will support rural secondary students and teachers in Western Montana by allowing for both the expansion of existing health science CTE programs and the development of new health science CTE programs related to college preparedness and access, student retention and success, and employability.

Services and Proposed Activities: 1. Development of a comprehensive health science career pathway that includes dual-enrollment courses, a pre-apprenticeship component, and healthcare apprenticeships; 2) Postsecondary academic advising; 3) Career coaching and career services for secondary students; 4) Development of resources for high schools, local community-based organizations, students, and families.

Anticipated Results: The anticipated results of this project will be 1) to increase the number of high school health science career and technical education programs in Western Montana; 2) fully aligned high school, postsecondary, and workforce programs through a comprehensive health science career pathway; 3) to increase the number of rural students participating in healthcare work-based experiences; and 4) to increase the number of rural students participating in health science dual-enrollment courses.

Absolute Priority (AP) Addressed: AP 1-Yes. Participating schools: Hamilton High School, Corvallis High School, Frenchtown High School, Florence High School, St. Regis High School, Ronan High School, St. Ignatius High School, Missoula County Public Schools, and Charlo High School. AP 2-Yes. The MC-RCPP will establish a health science career pathway that will increase access to dual-enrollment courses, career services, academic advising, and online and work-based courses.

Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) Addressed: CPP 1-Yes. The MC-RCPP will partner with healthcare workforce partners such as Bitterroot Health, St. Luke Community Health, the Montana Hospital Association (MHA), and the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

Invitational Preference Priority (IPP) Addressed: IPP 1 and IPP 3-Yes. The MC-RCPP will increase access and exposure to postsecondary opportunities by enrolling rural students in the Missoula College Health Professions dual-enrollment courses, along with connecting rural students with academic and career services at Missoula College, UM-Bitterroot, and the University of Montana. IPP 2- Yes. The MC-RCPP will work closely with healthcare industry partners to develop a health science career pathway that includes academic programs and work-based experiences that lead to high-wage, high-skilled, and in-demand healthcare career opportunities.

Student Academic Success Center
Abstract - ED-GRANTS-041823-003
(Project Summary)

Halifax Community College (HCC) is one of 58 institutions within the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). HCC supports two of the most impoverished counties in the state of North Carolina and that are designated as Tier-1. The service area challenges were so significant that the local judicial system forced an oversight committee to monitor the shortfalls of the K-12 system. In the institution services a student base that in many cases arrive under prepared, with what can only be described as significant hardships which impact enrollment, persistence, transfer rates, and employment.

HCC is an IHE admitting students who meet the academic requirements and provides 2-year degree programs. HCC is servicing local high schools including 3 Early colleges on its campus grounds each of which have local codes of 41 meets section 1 of the Absolute Priority 1, Section 2 of Absolute Priority 1, and under section 3 of the Absolute Priority 1 in the NCES College Navigator the HCC is listed as Rural.

The goal of the institution is to create a professionally staffed Student Academic Support Center that will achieve the priorities of Absolute Priority 2 - Employing Academic Success Coaches to support, advise, mentor and case manage students from on boarding to graduation. The SASC will utilize technology and human capital to support, collect meaningful data with an Assessment & Evaluation Specialist, allowing the institution to ensure students with challenges, hardships, and academic needs get adequate support in real time. The SASC will deploy staff to local middle and high schools to build relationships and understanding of utilizing internal and external programs and professionals to address needs so that students become comfortable with revealing challenges early and receiving assistance. These cover concerns in section (A-F) of Absolute Priority 2- and Invitational Priority 1. The SASC will employ and paid internship program providing valuable soft skills and creating opportunities with community business and the students.

The goal is each student enrolls in the program of their choice, have a specialized advisor through the entire program, is assisted with registering each semester, tracked weekly through their progress, early intervention methods ensure they do not fall behind, the liaison fosters a relationship so the student is comfortable notifying of any barriers allowing for time and solution support. This model will be documented and tracked for data, and overseen by the Director. An external evaluator will ensure the program is tracking in the right direction. The coordinator will work with the program director to ensure compliance with the budget, administrative, and inter organizational success.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The Rural Student Support Program at MTC

Marion Technical College (MTC) located in rural Marion, Ohio, submits the project entitled “The Rural Student Support Program at MTC” for review under the Rural Postsecondary Education and Economic Development Program. The **project’s overall goal** is to increase postsecondary enrollment and degree attainment of rural students and to increase awareness of in-demand occupations among rural populations in north-central Ohio. The **target population** for this project are rural high school and college students in the service region.

The proposed project strategically examines the unique needs of rural students and strengthens support for rural students through **key deliverables and associated activities**:

Deliverables and Activities	
Deliverable 1. Guided Pathways Improvement Initiative	
Activity 1.1	Develop clear, easy to understand pathways for in-demand careers in the MTC service area, including stackable workplace credentials, short-term certificates, and prior learning assessments
Activity 1.2	Improve career awareness and communication about career pathways for rural high school students
Deliverable 2. Rural Student Technology Strategy	
Activity 2.1	Procure necessary technology for rural students to succeed in college
Activity 2.2	Establish technology lending program including laptops, hot spots, and hot spot subscriptions
Deliverable 3. Rural Student Transfer Support	
Activity 3.1	Improve Financial Aid Education programming to educate rural students about FAFSA completion and scholarship opportunities
Activity 3.2	Improve transfer process and partnerships with four-year colleges and universities
Deliverable 4. Rural Student Support Evaluation and Improvement Strategy	
Activity 4.1	Create rural student support evaluation to determine the unique needs of the rural student population
Activity 4.2	Provide National Student Clearinghouse access to rural high school districts to enable them to collect and track student enrollment data after high school graduation

The Rural Student Support Program at MTC will address both Absolute Priorities and the Competitive Preference Priority. The project will serve schools with locale codes 41 and 42 and addresses a), b), and c) or Absolute Priority #2. Additionally, MTC’s partnership with MAWAC and other college readiness and workforce partners addresses both parts of the Competitive Preference Priorities. The project also addresses all three invitational priorities.

The anticipated results of the project include:

Long-Term Project Results
Increased number of rural students enrolling in postsecondary education
Increased number of rural students receiving technology and internet access
Improved communication about pathways and career awareness to rural students
Increased number of rural students completing a FAFSA application
Increased number of rural students transferring to a four-year institution
Improved understanding of rural students’ unique needs
Improved data collection of post-graduation outcomes at the K-12 school district level

The services provided by this proposed project were informed by an extensive literature review including “Rural Community College Excellence: A Guide to Delivering Strong Opportunity for Students and Communities” published by the Aspen Institute in 2023.

Program Abstract

- 1. Applicant Institution:** Western Kentucky University (WKU)
- 2. Project Title:** Project CARE (Collaborative Apprenticeships for Rural Educators)
- 3. Proposed Partners:** 10 rural LEAs including, Nelson County (41), Grayson County (41), Russellville Ind. (41), Cumberland County (43), Logan County (41), Muhlenberg County (41), Caverna Ind. (41), Hart County (41), Meade County (41).
- 4. Target Population:** Rural secondary students in 10 LEAs, staff of 10 LEAs, WKU faculty.
- 5. Services and Proposed Activities:** Establish dual credit K-12 Teaching and Learning Early College Pathway through the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, ECTC. Increase postsecondary completion through flexible instructional delivery systems aligned to K-12 Registered Teacher Apprenticeship. Raise quality of teacher preparation with intensive clinical experiences in a residency model. Address basic needs of housing, childcare, transportation, and technology. Improve affordability of postsecondary education. Build network of support, advising, and mentoring.
- 6. Anticipated Results and citations:** Increased rates of college enrollment, retention, and completion of the postsecondary degree among rural students.
- 7. Absolute Priorities Addressed:** 1(a): Yes. Target audience includes participants from 10 rural LEAs. 1(b), (c): No. 2(a) (c) (d) (f) : Yes. a) Dual credit program of study in K-12 Teaching for secondary students to enroll in ECTC, resulting in completion of 60 credit hours upon high school graduation. Coursework is fully transferable to a bachelor's degree program in educational studies at WKU. c) Community, state, and local partners work in a cross-agency coordination to create a comprehensive service program addressing barriers to enrollment for underserved rural Kentucky students, including personal, financial, and social supports. d) Existing 4-year K-12 educator preparatory models will be modified to include flexible, hybrid, and online coursework for rural students to remotely complete postsecondary coursework while employed in a registered paid apprenticeship through a local LEA. f) Local LEAs implement a Grow Your Own K-12 Teacher Program for students to earn up to 60 hours of dual credit. Experience/credit is transferable to a post-secondary Registered Adult Apprenticeship, creating a pathway for students to earn income while attaining the bachelor's degree and Kentucky teacher certification within two years of high school graduation. 2(b), (e): No
- 8. Competitive Preference Priority Addressed:** Yes. Cross-agency collaboration with Kentucky's Community and Technical College System (state), Area Development Districts (Regional Economic Development Agencies), and community-based organizations.
- 9. Invitational Priorities Addressed:**
 - 1: Yes. An Early College approach will be implemented to build long-term relationships. Comprehensive supports include multiple mentoring opportunities, coaching, regular engagement with an assigned adviser, and intentional activities supporting success through and following transition to postsecondary education.
 - 2: Yes. Lincoln Trail Area Development District has engaged in development of the K-12 Teaching and Learning Pathway and identified a significant need for the occupation of K-12 teachers in the region.
 - 3: Yes. WKU will collaborate with the 2-year community college and local LEAs to provide intensive academic, social, and career development support for participants from high school to postsecondary to employment.

1. **Applicant:** Ohio University
2. **Project Title:** Optimizing Navigation for Rural Advanced Manufacturing Pathways (ONRAMP)
3. **Proposed Partners:** ONRAMP will partner with two LEAs, the Fairfield County ESC and the East Central Ohio ESC, both with locale codes 32 satisfying Absolute Priority 1.
4. **Target Population:** High school students
5. **Services and Proposed Activities:** The goal of the proposed RPED program entitled “Optimizing Navigation for Rural Advanced Manufacturing Pathways (ONRAMP)” is to increase the number of underserved students in the Southeastern Appalachian region of Ohio who enroll in, and complete, post-secondary educational pathways leading to careers in Advanced Manufacturing (AM) and related STEM fields. ONRAMP will be built on the Appalachian Semiconductor Education & Technical (ASCENT) Ecosystem, an existing coalition of regional institutions, colleges, and Ohio technical centers funded by Intel to provide a coherent set of pathways for students to acquire skills in AM and STEM fields. The proposed program will; 1) fund Career Navigators in two targeted regions within the ASCENT Ecosystem, 2) provide additional academic advising resources dedicated to ASCENT pathways to supplement and enhance existing structures, and 3) leverage the industrial and educational partnerships being made through ASCENT to provide experiential learning opportunities, form career connections, and provide a regional employer network. The research component will generate empirical findings deemed essential to determining the extent to which place-based approaches to college and career readiness can more effectively meet the needs of rural students and communities [i]. This research is also essential to improving policy that informs STEM career pathway approaches in rural schools—particularly as it relates to funding priorities and recommended organizational practices [ii].
6. **Anticipated Results:** The expected outcomes for ONRAMP are a measurable increase in rural students aware of, prepared for, and entering postsecondary programs geared toward Advanced Manufacturing and STEM fields, and the reduction or removal of spatial inequality barriers rural students encounter when pursuing these fields.
7. **Absolute Priorities Addressed:** Yes. ONRAMP will address Absolute Priority 1 as described in item 3, as well as Absolute Priorities 2b, c, e, and f by building an advising and academic support structure tapping into local partners while leveraging the broad resources and network being built by ASCENT.
8. **Competitive Preference Priority Addressed:** Yes. By partnering with ASCENT, LEAs, the Fairfield 33 Development Alliance (F33), the South Central Ohio Workforce Partnership (SCOWP), and the Appalachian Ohio Manufacturers’ Coalition (AOMC), a regional industrial organization, ONRAMP will naturally address the Competitive Preference Priority to “strengthen cross-agency coordination.”
9. **Invitational Priority Addressed:** Yes. Invitational Priority 2 – “Supporting the Development of Academic Programs With Career Pathways” is also naturally addressed through the foundation of ASCENT and the collaborations with F33, SCOWP, and AOMC.

i. Roberts, J.K. & Grant, P.D. (2021). What we know and where to go: A systematic review of the rural student college and career readiness literature and future directions for the field. *The Rural Educator*, 42(1), 72-94. <https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v42i2.1244>

ii. Biddle, C., Sutherland, D.H., & McHenry-Sorber, E. (2019). On resisting “awayness” and being a good insider: Early career scholars revisit Coladarci’s swan song a decade later. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 35(7), 1-16.

ED Abstract Form

1. *Applicant institution:* The Garrett Center on Transition and Disability Studies at Sam Houston State University
2. *Project title:* Garrett Institute's Rural Online Postsecondary Education Program for Students with Disabilities
3. *Proposed partners:* Texas State Technical College (TSTC, 10 campuses); Texas Workforce Commission – Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR); and Texas Educational Service Centers with predominantly (at least 75%) rural schools.
4. *Target Population:* The estimated 47,000 students with disabilities in rural communities of Texas who require a higher level of support to succeed in postsecondary education and obtain competitive employment.
5. *Services and proposed activities:* SHSU has been designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as the state lead for the transition network for students with disabilities. With support from the RPED program, wraparound services will be provided for rural students with disabilities as they transition from school to employment. These services will be coordinated with all campuses of TSTC, with individualized plans created using assessments and advisement. Program staff will assist students to secure employment and provide job coaching once employed. Recruitment of participants will use existing statewide contacts.
6. *Anticipated results and citations:* Students will enroll in online certificate or degree program at TSTC or SHSU. Vendor tables will be present at state conferences, in-person speaking events held at rural LEAs (9 of the 20 Educational Service Centers in Texas). Texas State Technical College will share the names of rural students with disabilities who are at-risk at TSTC and would benefit from a higher level of support. Exit interviews and annual follow-up studies will provide data to make data-driven continuous program improvement decisions. Year 1 is 20 students growing to 150 in Year 4.
7. *Absolute priorities addressed:* *Absolute Priority 1:* Yes, parts (a), (b), and (c). SHSU is in Huntsville, TX, a city with NCES locale code 32: Town-Distant. The program will serve the 191,589 students in the 699 schools that offer the 12th grade and are in a NCES locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43. *Absolute Priority 2:* Yes, parts (b) and (e). This program will provide an online person-centered academic and employment preparation service delivery model that results in a community or self-employment for individuals with IDD living in rural Texas. Staff will help students navigate financial aid through TWC-VR, FAFSA, or TAFSA, with TWC-VR full funding as the goal to make college affordable. Specialized tutoring, 1-on-1 meetings, coaching, assistance with apprenticeships, internships, job coaching, and community connections are part of the virtual and on-site wraparound services in the rural LEAs facilitated by the instructor/case manager.
8. *Competitive preference priorities addressed:* Yes. The Garrett Center will coordinate efforts among the Texas Workforce Commission and the 10 campuses of Texas State Technical College to promote workforce development and with 9 of the 20 Texas Educational Agency's Educational Service Centers to address and improve college readiness.
9. *Invitational Priorities addressed:* *Invitational Priority 1:* Yes. Long-term academic and career advising relationships will expose postsecondary opportunities as rural students in Texas with IDD make the transition to 2- and 4-year programs.
Invitational Priority 2: No. *Invitational Priority 3:* No.

1. Newman University (NU)
2. Newman University Higher Education Access for Western Kansas Initiative (NU-HAWK)
3. Partners: Dodge City Community College (DCCC), Garden City Community College (GCCC), Dodge City High School (DCHS), Garden City High School (GCHS)
4. Population: Students from middle and high schools, community colleges, and NU in SW KS.
5. Services and activities: (a) recruitment and college/career readiness preparation for middle and high school and CC students; (b) services [advising, registration, pathways] to assist CC students to transition to NU's SW KS programs in agribusiness, business, education, nursing, and sonography; (c) education on financial aid for students and parents (in English and Spanish), including assistance with FAFSA completion; (d) career development skills preparation for all students, internship coordination for high school and community college students and paid internship opportunities in junior and senior year for NU students; (e) academic supports for NU students (dual advising, tutoring); and (f) social supports through information and referral services and the advice of a Community Empowerment Board.
6. Anticipated results: An increase in: (a) career awareness for middle and high school students, leading to better post-graduate preparation;¹ (b) awareness of financial options for and benefits of pursuing a four-year degree;² (c) number of students completing the FAFSA, thus increasing their likelihood of pursuing post-secondary education;³ (d) financial literacy which may reduce economic inequality;⁴ (e) college preparation for middle and high school students, thus increasing self-confidence and academic success;⁵ and (f) outreach programs to families as well as students, in Spanish when needed, to overcome the disadvantages that first-generation students often face⁶ and which has been shown to increase students' likelihood of enrolling in college.⁷
7. Yes. The LEAs towns being served are categorized as locale 33 (town remote) and meet **Absolute Priority 1. Absolute Priority 2** met by (1) providing clear path for students from high school to community college to four-year institution for Hispanic, low-income, rural students through implementation (**Invitational Priorities 1 and 3**) of a (2) comprehensive set of evidence-based student success initiatives that will (3) lead to increased enrollment in and completion of skill-based, in-demand, high-paying jobs in the fields of agribusiness, business, education, nursing, and sonography, with all but education being newly offered at SWKS campuses (**Invitational Priority 2**).
8. Yes, **CPP** addressed by collaborating with local high schools, economic development agencies, and community-based organizations in promoting both college readiness and workforce development.
9. 9. Yes. See #7 above.

¹ Glessner, K., Rockinson-Szapkiw, & Lopez, M.L. (2017). *The Career Development Quarterly*, 65(4), 315-325; You Science. (2022). YouScience national survey finds that most high school graduates do not feel prepared for college and career decisions.

² Scott, S., Miller, M.T., & Morris, A.A. (2016). Rural community college student perception of barriers to college enrollment. *Academic Leadership Journal in Student Research*, 4, Article 7.

³ Prins, E., & Kassab, C. (2017). Rural/non-rural differences among Pennsylvania FAFSA applicants pursuing the same type of postsecondary degree. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 32(7).

⁴ Agrisani, M., Burke, J., Lusardi, A., & Mottola, G. (2020). The stability and predictive power of financial literacy: Evidence from longitudinal data. National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 28125.

⁵ Bandura A. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychol Rev.* 1977;84:191–215.

⁶ Roberts, J.K., & Grant, P.D. (2021). What we know and were to go: A systematic review of rural student college and career readiness. *The Rural Educator*, 42(2), 72-94, pp.79-80.

⁷ Byun, S., Meece, J.L., Irvin, M.J. & Hutchins, B.C. (2012). The role of social capital in educational aspirations of rural youth. *Rural Sociology*, 77(3), 355-379.

ED Abstract Form

1. Applicant: University of Indianapolis - Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning

2. Project title: P-CAP: Pathways to Careers and Postsecondary

3. Proposed partners: IN Dept. of Education, IN Commission for Higher Education, IN Dept. of Workforce Devt., 16 P-CAP high schools (incl. 4 mentor schools) in rural Indiana towns. Local P-CAP HEI partners and P-CAP industry partners. Mentor school locales: Lincoln HS (41), Logansport Comm. HS (32) Perry Central Jr-Sr HS (43), Winchester Comm. HS (32).

4. Target Population: 800 (unduplicated) rural, 9th-12th grade students who are underrepresented in postsecondary education due to educational and resource barriers (which may include poverty, first generation status, being a student of color and resource insecurities such as housing, food, healthcare, high speed internet, and transportation). Target students will enter HS as disconnected youth who are at high risk for dropping out due to histories of low attendance and academic performance. However, they will be selected for their high school's P-CAP program because of their assets and promise for career and postsecondary success.

5. Services and Proposed Activities: CELL will expand the Indiana P-CAP initiative beyond its pilot phase to serve more rural students, schools, and postsecondary and employer partners. The P-CAP model transforms the college and career pathways of Indiana's underserved rural students who require a non-traditional school experience by providing them with relationship-centered learning, integrated hands-on curriculum, and blended career and postsecondary pathways that results in dual credit, workforce postsecondary credentials, and work-based learning experiences.

6. Anticipated Results: Student-level: 1) More students on track for postsecondary and career success through fewer days absent and higher college-ready achievement, completion of pathway courses, participation in WBL including internships, and earned college credit and workforce credentials in HS. School-level: 2) Increased school capacity to sustain postsecondary and career pathways for disconnected youth through a) implementation of P-CAP strategies, b) higher quality partnerships b/n postsecondary institutions, high schools, and employers, c) more work-based learning offerings and d) more pathway aligned dual credit and credential offerings.

7. Absolute Priorities:

☒ Absolute Priority 1: Yes. 100% of students served live in rural communities.

☒ Absolute Priority 2: Yes. The P-CAP model is designed to improve access, affordability, completion of postsecondary certificates and degree and post-enrollment success.

8. Competitive Preference Priority:

☒ Competitive Priority: Yes. P-CAP seeks to locally improve cross-agency coordination and community engagement and increase cross-agency coordination at the state level.

9. Invitational Priority or Priorities:

☒ Invitational Priority 1: Yes. Improving postsecondary attainment is core to the P-CAP model.

☒ Invitational Priority 2: Yes. Improving career attainment is core to the P-CAP model.

☐ Invitational Priority 3: No but P-CAP does address this priority indirectly.

Western Technical College's (Western) project, Apprenticeships for **Rural Regions Innovating Vocational Education (ARRIVE)** will develop pathways for rural students into Certified Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities within the education, information technology, manufacturing, and healthcare industries

Absolute Priority 1: Western serves primarily rural communities, which includes all or parts of 11 western Wisconsin counties. Other than La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, and West Salem, WI, the rest of the communities and K12 districts within Western's district have locale codes of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43.

Absolute Priority 2: ARRIVE partially or entirely meets 5 of the 6 priority areas.

- (a) Reducing the cost of college by creating career pathways where students are paid to participate in the classroom-based instructional elements of apprenticeship
- (b) Increasing the number of rural, underserved students accessing post-secondary education through awareness of and access to apprenticeships
- (c) Incorporating awareness of and access to student support services into the project design to ensure students have access to existing services and leveraging grant funding to provide specific supports for rural students such as transportation costs and technology access
- (d) Implementing accessible learning through micro-credentials and work-based learning through apprenticeships
- (f) Providing Certified Pre-Apprenticeships as career exploration opportunities to help students make informed decisions about their postsecondary enrollment decisions and to place them on a career path

Target population: ARRIVE will serve *rural* high school students, traditional and non-traditional prospective students, K12 districts, and businesses within the Western 11-county district. Starting in Year 2, ARRIVE will serve a minimum of 100 students per year and minimum of 350 over the grant period.

Services to be Provided: ARRIVE staff will build a scalable apprenticeship model, working with businesses to identify apprenticeship employers and K12 districts to identify pathways based on community and student need. Micro-credentials will be developed within the apprenticeship pathways, providing further learning avenues for students.

Proposed Activities: ARRIVE will accomplish its goals through four main activities:

- Establish a framework to support Apprenticeships at Western
- Develop a minimum of four Certified Pre-Apprenticeship pathways
- Develop a minimum of four Registered Apprenticeship pathway
- Develop micro-credentials within the pathways to support accessible learning and award industry-recognized credentials when earned

Anticipated Results: ARRIVE will increase the number of rural students participating in apprenticeships and create the framework to sustain and scale the work into the next decade based on the work of the Urban Institute (Boren, Pruitt, Arabandi, & Rayfield, 2021).

Competitive Preference Priority: ARRIVE will address the Competitive Preference Priority to advance systemic change through the evidence-based practice of Certified Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships.

Project Abstract

1. Applicant Institution: Southern Regional Education Board

Partner Agencies: Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (2-year), Marshall University (4-year). These two regional IHEs serve the project's LEA graduates.

2. Project Title: TTB, To and Through

3. Proposed Partners for Meeting Priorities: Six rural LEAs: Boone, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, McDowell, and Wyoming; public schools in these LEAs; the West Virginia Department of Education; Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (Southern CTC); Marshall University; the Southern Foundation; Communities in Schools; Chambers of Commerce, local business owners, other community organizations serving students and their families.

4. Target populations: Rural secondary students in the target LEAs in two local in-demand career pathways of business/accounting and education; their parents/families; secondary teachers, Southern CTC faculty, and Marshall University faculty in the in-demand content areas of business/accounting and education

5. Services and proposed activities: Sustained expert counseling and advisement to target students that will help transition students from their secondary career pathway preparation to successful postsecondary career pathway completion at Southern CTC and/or Marshall University. Multiple opportunities for secondary students to familiarize themselves with college life, procedures, and support systems prior to transition. Provision of a "home base" at Southern CTC for target students for study, access to technology, homework completion, and social connections and supports. Sustained peer-to-peer professional development for pairs of secondary/postsecondary business/accounting and education teachers/faculty to co-teach dual enrollment classes; develop and align curricula in these in-demand career pathways; learn about the transferring students; and share effective teaching practices for student success. Multiple partnerships with local businesses and other agencies and entities to sustain services to students throughout their secondary and postsecondary education, provide job shadowing and practicum experiences, and promote employment opportunities post-graduation.

6. Anticipated Results: Rural target students will successfully graduate from high school, transition to postsecondary education, earn their AA/AS or BA/BS degree, and enter the local workforce in business/accounting or education. The project will contribute to literature and the body of knowledge around best practices for: career pathways that span secondary to postsecondary; secondary to postsecondary transitions; increasing college readiness and college matriculation for rural, low-income, and first-generation college students; persistence and degree attainment in community colleges; guidance and advisement in secondary and postsecondary; successful transition from 2-year to 4-year colleges; alignment and efficiency in curricula and earning of college credits from secondary to 2-year to 4-year settings.

7. Absolute Priorities Addressed: Yes. **AP 1:** Applicant serves rural LEAs with appropriate location codes of 32, 33, 42 or 43. **AP 2:** Applicant's project will increase postsecondary education access and reduce the cost by creating clear pathways in two regional in-demand career sectors (business/accounting and education), supporting the transition of dual enrollment students to the postsecondary environment and consistently supporting students through multiple sustained personnel, fiscal, and material support systems and services to be successful.

8. Competitive Preference Priority Addressed: Yes. The project promotes the development of multiple cross agency collaborative partnerships and an Advisory Board to support student success that includes the SEA, IHEs, Chamber of Commerce, local employers, and community programs and agencies.

9. Invitational Priority or Priorities Addressed: Yes. **IP 1:** The project will provide sustained targeted and intensive advisement/counseling from specially trained counselors throughout the target students' career pathway from secondary through postsecondary completion at Southern CTC. **IP 2:** The project's Advisory Board will include regional state economic development agencies, regional and local public and private employers in the local in-demand career sectors of business/accounting and education.

Project Abstract:

The West Virginia Career Awareness, Readiness, Education, and Experiences for Rural Students (WV CAREERS) initiative will support fifteen rural school districts in implementing a comprehensive strategy to increase recruitment, retention, and completion of students in career and technical education (CTE) pathways aligned with postsecondary programs.

WV CAREERS addresses Absolute Priority 1 and 2, the Competitive Preference Priority, and Invitational Priority 1 and 2. The initiative addresses both the college readiness and workforce development components of the *Competitive Preference Priority: Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change*. The project will partner with postsecondary partners at two- and four-year institutions to identify barriers to postsecondary success and develop college readiness strategies and activities, including evidence-based practices related to mentorship and dual-credit offerings. The project will also engage industry stakeholders in identifying, developing, and aligning CTE pathways and supplemental curricular resources to meet current workforce standards. This includes evidence-based practices related to apprenticeship and internship programs as well as experiential learning strategies. Finally, WV CAREERS addresses two invitational priorities. *Invitational Priority 1: Supporting Secondary Students to Access Postsecondary Education*, is addressed in all aspects of project design. From career exploration programming in middle school to embedded college *and* career preparation strategies within CTE environments, this invitational priority is a cornerstone of the initiative. *Invitational Priority 2: Supporting the Development of Academic Programs with Career Pathways*, is directly addressed through the engagement of industry and community partnerships in the design, development, and implementation of five CTE pathways (three in development, two new). Priority focus will be given to recruit and retain students within these pathways as well as to measure their effectiveness in meeting industry standards and needs.

The WV CAREERS initiative will provide secondary students beginning as early as eighth grade with career and technical education experiences aligned with high-growth industries. According to ZoomWV's 2022-2023 enrollment data, this represents a total potential audience of 35,483 students across 77 schools. Priority will be placed on students and families of low-socioeconomic status (55% of the population). The initiative will also target rural educators within career readiness and industry-specific career and technical education classrooms with academic supports, technical assistance, and capacity building resources. WV CAREERS also serves a broader network of stakeholders as a secondary audience. Specifically, the initiative will engage: 1) subject matter experts, 2) postsecondary professors and students, 3) industry representatives, 4) workforce and economic development professionals, and 5) additional community stakeholders in thought partnership and capacity building to drive systemic and sustainable change.

Key partners included in the effort include the state education agency partners of West Virginia Department of Education's Division of Adult and Technical Education and the Division of Educator Development and Support, industry partners of the West Virginia Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, West Virginia Department of Tourism and the West Virginia Manufacturing Association, and postsecondary partners of BridgeValley Community and Technical College, Marshall University's Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (iCenter), and West Virginia University's LaunchLab.

Abstract/Profile - Ensuring Success for Rural Students in Grays Harbor & Pacific Cos.

Context - Grays Harbor College (GHC) is a state-supported community college that offers transfer degrees, career technical education degrees, bachelor's degrees, a high school completion program, and English Language Acquisition courses. From its main campus in Aberdeen, Washington, its service district is 3,448 square miles, making it one of the largest service districts served by a postsecondary institution in Washington State. To better serve its rural community, GHC developed satellite campuses in the cities of Raymond and Ilwaco.

GHC's service district comprises Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties, which have a combined population of 97,532. The ethnicity of its service district is primarily white, with an increasing population of Hispanic and Tribal members.

The households within the service district have significantly lower income levels and a far higher general poverty rate compared to Washington State in general. The per capita income level within the two counties is \$28,259 for Grays Harbor and \$31,761 for Pacific County. The state per capita income is \$43,817 in 2021 dollars. This means the per capita income of these two counties is only 68% of the state per capita income (Census QuickFacts, 2023). The childhood poverty rate in these counties—Grays Harbor is 20.8%, and Pacific County is 18.9%—is substantially higher than the state rate of 12% (2021). This poverty is evident in the significant percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch, which is 71% for the two counties compared to the state rate of 46%. Combined, about 30% of the two counties, a population of 28,065, live below 150% of the poverty line, 50% higher than the state's rate.

Project Partners – Ocosta School District (Grays Harbor), Raymond School District (Pacific), Summit Pacific Medical Center, Beyond Survival, and the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council.

Target Population – The focus of the project will be rural students located within the College's services district. Although, a portion of the funding will be spent on training for Project staff, college staff and faculty, and partners.

Services provided – The project will provide a suite of direct holistic student support services and individual support tailored to meet the needs of each individual rural student. It is through a design that integrates multiple recommendations from the *Advising Guide* (see below) that the team was able to create a comprehensive suite of evidence-based, holistic services.

The ESRS Project objectives and outcomes are based on the Department of Education's performance measures outlined in the Notice Inviting Applications.

Objective 1. - Increase the number of enrolled rural students served by direct holistic student services (i.e., outreach, advising, tutoring, etc.) An increase of **615** (38%, from 1,619 to 2,234).

Objective 2. - Increase the annual enrollment rate of rural students served by direct student services, i.e., outreach, advising, tutoring, etc., to **38%** at the end of the four-year grant.

Objective 3. - Increase the number of rural students served by direct student services who transfer to a four-year institution or obtain a degree or certificate of completion by **205 (18% from 1,137 to 1,342).**

Objective 4. - Increase the number of rural students served by the ESRS Project who obtain a paid internship, apprenticeship, or employment by **326** (an increase of 24% from 1,359 to 1,685).

Citations from - What Works Clearinghouse in partnership with National Center for Education Evaluation at IES, (2021) *Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students Practice Guide Summary*. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/WWC-practice-guide-summary-effective-advising.pdf>

GEORGE CORLEY WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

George Corley Wallace State Community College (WCCS) serves an eight-county region representing the western part of the state; it serves the most economically challenged counties in Alabama known as the “Black Belt” area. The College has selected the W.A.Y.S. (Wallace Avenues to Your Success) Project for the purpose of providing rural postsecondary and economic development. The purpose of this project is to increase student retention, graduation, transfer rates and apprenticeship opportunities in first-time, full-time students, implement guided Pathways for all first-time, full-time degree-seeking students, and increase retention rates in all first-time, full-time students.

Through collaborating with business and industries such as: Bush Hog, Eovations, and Vaughan Regional Medical Center, the College plans to provide apprenticeship opportunities for students to gain practical learning experience while matriculating in their academic endeavors. Less than 25% of the population in the College’s service area has a bachelor’s degree. The College has a diverse student population consisting of 62% females, 73% African Americans, and 23% Caucasians. The median age of students attending the College is 22.8. There are seven targeted school districts in which students reside and matriculate from to Wallace Community College and will participate and benefit from the W.A.Y. S. Project are located in the within rural distant (42), rural remote (43), and town district (32).

The W.A.Y.S. project will provide students the opportunities to transfer to a four-year institution or directly into the workforce. Additionally, the W.A.Y.S. project contains the standards and best practices necessary to improve student success by redesigning the first-year experience starting with New Student Orientation and providing additional wrap around services throughout the student’s enrollment. W.A.Y.S. is designed to help students choose a path, get on the path, and stay on the path until degree completion. WCCS serves a large population of first generation and academically under-prepared students who would benefit from the intrusive advisement and guided pathways implemented in the W.A.Y.S. project. To meet the demands of the College’s service areas, the College seeks to expand on new initiatives implemented that will increase the number of students enrolled in post-secondary courses, increase post-secondary graduation among students from the “Black Belt” and surrounding areas, and prepare students to transfer and/or enter the world of work. Wallace Community College Selma has taken a proactive lead in collaborating with community stakeholders to determine how the college can foster and strengthen new and existing relationships with key community leaders. As a result, the college is now a registered apprenticeship sponsor. The College is committed to propose and implement activities and objectives that are aligned with the WAYS Project to encourage students who are no longer enrolled to return back to complete their program of study. Moreover, the W.A.Y.S. project will serve as the primary guide to assist the College with developing new initiatives and academic programs that will help the college to become the hub of workforce development.

ABSTRACT

“Partnering with Fabrication Lab, Tribal Agency, Arts Center, and Employment Office to Enhance Career and College Preparation in Rural Kansas and Oklahoma”

Independence Community College (ICC), Kansas, will leverage existing distinctive programs and agencies in its region to enhance post-secondary career and education opportunities with 12 rural high schools in Kansas and Oklahoma. Each partner school is in an NCES Locale Code 42 or 43 (Rural-Distant or Rural-Remote), and ICC is Locale 33, “Town-Remote.”

ICC serves a highly rural location. Its closest metropolitan area is Tulsa, Okla., 90 miles distant.

This project takes further advantage of local assets rare in other rural areas. For its Competitive Preferences Priority, **this project partners with these organizations:**

- Since 2014, **ICC Fab Lab** is home to a fully equipped and MIT-certified 3-D Fabrication Laboratory, for which it has experienced and knowledgeable staff. This project leverages this expertise with a Mobile Fab Lab that can tour to rural schools.
- Independence hosts a regional office of the **KansasWorks Employment Center**, allowing close planning and partnership with their staff in seeking apprentice/internship opportunities for youth seeking post-secondary opportunities.
- The **Delaware Tribe of Indians** has its Kansas office in Caney, 20 miles from Independence and in the same county. This project extends access of its Mobile Fab Lab educational tours to the Tribe’s wider community.
- Independence is home to **The William Inge Center for the Arts**, a nationally prominent theater company. It is designated by the state legislature as producer of Kansas’ Official Theatre Festival. This project utilizes its year-round arts education program to tour a production with trained, paid actors.

For the Absolute Priorities, this project aids rural schools with a multitude of serves that increase postsecondary education success: a Pathways Advisor; Professional Tutor; K-12 Fab Lab Learning Facilitator; and Higher Education Recruiter are among those serving the students. The project targets 12 rural high schools of some 2,000 students.

The project addresses Invitational Priorities through staff who visit the project schools share opportunities, assess student interests and needs, and encourage appropriate apprenticeship, internship, employment, and education options to students

The goals are to reach rural students who attend geographically isolated high schools and match students’ interests and aptitudes with career or academic pathways. The outcome will be greater employment of rural citizens in post-secondary careers in desirable professions; and, also, greater rates of enrollment and success for rural students in traditional higher education.

ED Abstract Form

Applicant Institution: Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF)

Project Title: Learn and Earn To Achieve Potential For Rural Nebraska Students (LEAP4NE)

Proposed Partners: LEAs with Rural Locale Codes 32 and 33: The public school districts of: twin cities Scottsbluff - Gering, Harvard, Hastings, Adams Central, Norfolk, Kearney, Fremont, North Platte, Beatrice and Fairbury; **IHE's Serving Rural Nebraska:** NE State College System (Chadron, Wayne, Peru campuses), and the community colleges of: Western, Central, Northeast, Mid-Plains, and Southeast NE; **State Government and Affiliated Agencies:** NE Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, Greater NE Workforce Development Board, and the NE Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Economic Development; **Community-State-National Partners of:** Bring Up NE Community Well-Being Collaboratives, Jobs for America's Graduates-NE, Central Plains Center for Services, Jobs for the Future, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Target Population: Disconnected students living in rural Nebraska, between the ages of 14 and 24, who may be from a low-income background; experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; is or was in foster care; is or was involved in the justice system; is a survivor of human trafficking or exploitation; is pregnant, parenting, or caregiving and/or is not working or enrolled in (or at risk of dropping out of) an educational institution.

Services and Proposed Activities: Implementation of high-quality student success programs, career exploration, wraparound services, and cross-agency coordination to advance systemic change aimed at increasing access to postsecondary education for rural students.

Anticipated Results: Nearly 900 LEAP4NE rural students will have the academic, social, basic daily living, career guidance and preparation – including earning while learning – services and supports they need in order to enjoy and benefit from careers they are well-suited to succeed in.

Absolute Priorities (AP) Addressed: YES

AP1: LEAP4NE will serve students in communities with LEA locale codes of 32 and 33.

AP2: New and existing partnerships with rural LEAs to support development of high-quality academic programs with career pathways and enhanced evidence-based Career Development Coaching for secondary to postsecondary to completion (and beyond) transitional support.

Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) Addressed: YES – Addressing the Sole CPP

LEAP4NE will utilize Bring Up Nebraska Community Well-Being (CWB) collaborative infrastructure, evidence-based Connected Youth Initiative (CYI) Career Development Coaching, and existing relationships with LEAs and IHEs via statewide Fostering Achievement Nebraska (FAN) to strengthen career pathways for the population of focus.

Invitational Priorities (IP) Addressed: YES

IP1: Career Development Coaches and partner LEAs will utilize new and existing practices such as dual enrollment, Back on Track™, Career Readiness Plans, and JAG NE programming beginning in 9th grade through graduation and into postsecondary education to completion.

IP2: LEAP4NE will engage workforce partners in assessment, planning, and development of high-quality career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage, high-demand (H-3) industries in Nebraska and school districts and Career Development Coaches will structure career pathways based on these sectors.

Abstract

CVCC RPED Center to Improve Rural Student Success (CIRSS)

Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC) mission and core values are intended to be diverse, inclusive, and socially responsible; hence recognizing that rural citizens have barriers to access information and educational opportunities that may impede their quality of life. CIRSS is designed to improve rural student success through the development of career pathways aligned to high-skill, in-demand industry sectors.

Goal One: Conduct outreach into the CVCC service region, recruit rural students, and provide improved enrollment and onboarding support at the students' initial point of entry. The targeted outcome of Goal One is increased rural student enrollment.

Goal Two: establish model advising and student support programs in order to increase rural student success." The targeted outcome is increased student retention and completion/graduation rates.

Expected Outcomes (Student Success Measures -SSM): SSM 1.1: The College will enhance recruitment and communications with rural prospects who demonstrate an interest in the institution to increase the number of applicants who enroll in the upcoming semester.

SSM 1.2: The College will ensure that students who are admitted to the institution will have information to enable them to participate in pre-college orientation (New Student Experience [NSE]) prior to their first semester. **SSM 2.1:** The College will implement strategies to enhance fall to fall retention of first-time, full-time students. **SSM 2.2:** The College will implement strategies to increase the number of contacts with sophomores to facilitate an increase in applications for graduation/completion.

Population: Region 5 has approximately 15,800 youth ages 16-24 and approximately 26,000 adults ages 25-34, who are not in school and are not employed. CVCC would target a cohort of rural students from the group of underserved individuals who are not employed, enrolled in school, or enlisted in the military, who could benefit from gaining a workforce credential.

Partners: CVCC and its Workforce Development Department will collaborate with business and industry, and engage ministerial alliances, and community organizations e.g. the Divine Nine (African American Fraternities and Sororities), through advisory boards, clinical events, and College activities to maximize the effectiveness of project services, and holistically serve rural students and communities.

Services/Activities: CVCC proposes to mitigate barriers by strategically recruiting in rural communities; providing enrollment, advisement, and support services to students; taking educational programs and services to those who could not otherwise attend; completing applications to the College; assisting with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at LEAs; college/career exploration events in rural communities; recruitment activities and entrance testing exams off-site to students in rural communities; deliver resources to bridge the digital divide and access electronic enrollment processes; provide educational and career information to middle and high school students.

CIRSS responds to **2 Absolute Priorities:** LEAs/schools with locale codes of 32, 42, and 43. CVCC is a Rural – Fringe campus setting. Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post-Enrollment Success. **Competitive Preference Priority:** Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change (a) college Readiness and (b) Workforce Development.