

Education Design Lab

Arkansas Division of Higher Education

SCALING LEARNER OPPORTUNITY & ECONOMIC GROWTH ACROSS ARKANSAS

Call for Arkansas Community College Design Teams

Community College Growth Engine (CCGE)

The rapid transformation of the education-to-workforce ecosystem in the United States has drastically impacted communities and states across the nation, particularly rural states like Arkansas. With Governor Sanders' focus on a new workforce strategy, there is a unique opportunity to develop a sustainable education-to-workforce architecture with community colleges serving as regional transformation leaders. Arkansas' two-year institutions are poised to deliver skills-focused and market-driven educational pathways, credentials, and partnerships to learners and workers in their communities, thereby increasing wage growth and career opportunities while catalyzing economic growth in their regions.

The Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE), in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Transportation and Shared Services (TSS) and the Education Design Lab (EDL), announces the "Scaling Learner Opportunity & Economic Growth Across Arkansas Initiative". This two-year effort will engage key stakeholders to design, build, and implement a sustainable education-to-workforce ecosystem that will enable the state to more responsively, flexibly, and quickly respond to the changes in high-demand jobs paying livable wages.

The Lab will bring demonstrated, nearly decade-long experience of working on the ground with stakeholders in the education-to-workforce ecosystem, especially community colleges, supporting them to bolster their internal capacity to address these challenges, add competencies to their teams, and forge meaningful partnerships with other stakeholders. Through the [Community College Growth Engine \(CCGE\)](#), the Lab will provide colleges with a structured, proven education-to-work pathway design process, technical assistance, and a national community of learning to position them as talent suppliers and drivers of innovation between education and employment.

Overview

The College Design Team is an integral part of successful micro-pathway design and implementation. This cross-functional group will collaborate with one another and other key stakeholders internal and external to the institution throughout the design process.

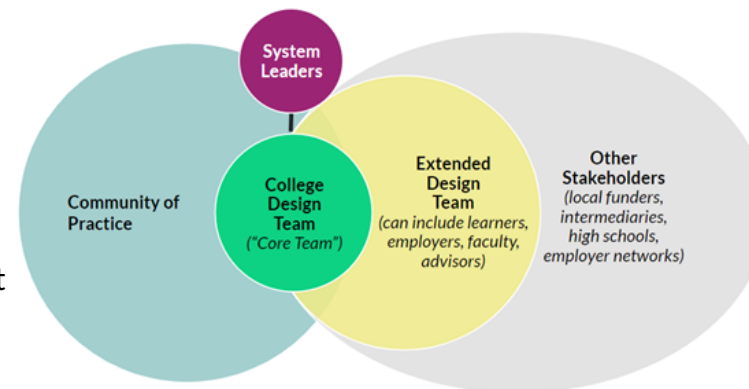
What is a College Design Team?

- A group of people dedicated to the outcomes of this work
- Committed to this work for the first year, and beyond
- Includes multiple stakeholder groups (i.e.-College leaders, faculty, staff, learners, external partners)
- Provide diverse perspectives and expertise

College Design Team Structure

Known as the “Core Team”, the College Design Team includes representation from a variety of offices and departments. College Design Team roles may include, but are not limited to:

- Design Lead/Workforce Representative
- Data Lead/ IT Representative
- Academic Representation from Program Areas/Industries selected
- Research + Evaluation
- Student Services + Supports
- Employer Partnerships/Business Development
- Senior Leadership
- Learner co-designers



Reference the [Developing Your Design Team](#) document for more guidance.

College Design Team Workflow

While each project is flexible to meet the needs of the institution(s), the College Design Team will typically **meet every other week for 90 minutes via Zoom for design sessions** facilitated by a CCGE Education Designer. During these sessions, the team will engage in design work together as they navigate the micro-pathway design process. The CCGE Education Design provides agenda items in advance to ensure College Design Team members know when their attendance is critical to meeting design session outcomes. Further, there will be opportunities to engage other stakeholder groups in these design sessions which the CCGE Education Design will help to identify in advance.

The College Design Team will also be invited to **attend employer skills-mapping conversations**. These 60-90 minute conversations are led by the CCGE Education Designer to gather important information from employers that will inform the micro-pathway design. College Design Team members are encouraged to attend these conversations as their schedule allows.

Outside of the design sessions and employer conversation, the College Design Team **may need to meet offline to complete work** related to the micro-pathway design process. This might include reaching out to employer partners to identify dates/times for skills-mapping conversations, engaging in learner focus groups to gather insights and feedback, gathering institutional data to inform micro-pathway decisions, or preparing and implementing communications to other institutional groups such as senior leadership to keep them informed of project progress.

Lastly, as part of the larger **CCGE Community of Practice**, the College Design Team will be invited to attend and participate in CCGE events focused on learning from other CCGE college partners, higher education thought leaders, and sharing work with other CCGE college partners. There are large and small group opportunities to engage in the CCGE Community of Practice throughout the design year and beyond.

A College Design Team member can expect to dedicate roughly 6 hours per month to the micro-pathway design process for the first year. After micro-pathway implementation, this will likely be reduced to 3 hours per month. This is an estimate, and may fluctuate based on the changing needs of the project.

Benefits to College Design Team Members

While the micro-pathway is the result of this process, College Design Team members become champions and drivers of transformation within their institution equipped with a series of tools and resources that can be leveraged in a variety of ways.

- **Human-Centered Design (HCD):** College Design Team members will learn about the phases of HCD and then apply them to the micro-pathway design process. In doing so, College Design Team members will gain insight into how HCD can be used in other areas of their institution.
- **Employer Engagement:** The CCGE's employer engagement approach will equip College Design Team members with tools and resources to cultivate meaningful and long-lasting employer relationships. This includes the use of the Lab's T-Profile tool and the CCGE Employer Engagement Guidebook.
- **Learner Engagement:** Throughout the micro-pathway design process, College Design Team members will use CCGE-designed tools to better understand the learner populations their institution(s) serve, as well as tools to gain their insights and feedback on micro-pathway designs and related wraparound support services. These tools and resources include learner persona development, learner journey mapping, learner focus group tools, and learner survey tools.
- **Collaboration:** The CCGE micro-pathway design process is intentional about including a cross-functional representation from different departments and offices across the institution(s) involved in the project. Throughout this process, College Design Team members will learn how to gather diverse perspectives to inform decision-making and take a learner-centered approach to the work, which results in a more holistic academic and cocurricular experience for learners. These skills can be used in a multitude of ways across different areas of an institution or system to drive transformation.
 - College Design Team members are part of a national CCGE Community of Practice in perpetuity, providing opportunities to connect with other CCGE college partners and practitioners across the country. The CCGE hosts regular Community of Practice events at large and small scales to encourage networking and thought partnership.

- Introduction to the Skills-Based Ecosystem: Throughout the CCGE micro-pathway design process, College Design Team members will work with employers, learners, and colleagues to understand the specific skills an employer is hiring for and how to develop skills-based language and programming to address critical hiring needs and facilitate learner success. A focus on skills pushes beyond traditional course learning outcomes to include the technical competencies a learner has successfully demonstrated as a result of completing the micro-pathway. Employers place a high value on skills, as they can see the direct relation to the job they are hiring for.

This [LINK](#) is a tentative plan for the Arkansas community of practice micro-pathway design timeline, providing an idea of what topics and design sessions the College Design Team can expect to engage in at each phase of the design process.

Please note that this is highly flexible and the design timeline for each institution or group of institutions working together will be created by the College Design Team and the CCGE Education Design to best support the needs and goals of the institution(s).

An informational Zoom will be held on Wednesday, August 28, 2024, at 3 pm. You must register here in advance:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pcuiugT4qGtw3miDqQ4tS090EKiUYLc3B>.

How to Apply

Community colleges interested in participating should submit a letter of interest to ADHE by **Friday, September 13, 2024**, using this [FORM](#). The letters of interest will be used to select up to seven (7) Arkansas public community colleges to participate in the EDL SCALING LEARNER OPPORTUNITY & ECONOMIC GROWTH ACROSS ARKANSAS project. Statewide representation across regions is desired. In recognition of the effort and work required, participating colleges will receive a \$50,000 incentive award. An initial payment of \$25,000 or 50 percent of the total grant amount will be made upon execution of an Agreement to support the design and implementation of micro pathways. A second payment of the final \$25,000 of the total grant amount will be made upon successful execution of the Data Contributor + Participation Agreement (for project outcome evaluation). Other than a requirement that these awards be spent specifically to support the goals of the CCGE, there are no other specific requirements for how this funding is used to support a team's pilot design and implementation.

The letter of interest form requires the following information and answers to the question prompts (see accompanying rubric).

General Information

- Institution
 - Name
 - City, County
- Primary Contact Person
 - Name
 - Title
 - Email
 - Phone Number
- College Design Team Members (Form requires 5 and allows 7 entries)
 - Names
 - Titles
 - Departments/Organization/Affiliation

Questions

Part I: Vision and Goal Alignment

Describe your institution's overall vision to support access and completion goals for your learners within your economic pipeline. How would joining the Community College Growth Engine program align with your institution's vision and goals? What benefits would it bring to your institution, learners, and community? (500 words or less)

Part II: Organizational Capacity

The Lab is seeking institutional commitment from a campus-wide perspective from institutions that possess the following:

- Strong leadership and management systems, including data collection and management; and
- The ability to sustain the initiative after the CCGE period concludes.

Please identify the following individual(s) on your campus who are:

- Responsible for the management and/or administration of the CCGE program.
- Responsible for the tracking of performance indicators/targets, key deadlines, evaluation tools, and outcomes at your institution and who will collaborate with the CCGE program.
- The primary stakeholders driving the design, success, and long-term sustainability of initiatives on your campus.

Part III: Innovation Readiness and Track Record

- Current and Past Partnerships - Describe your institution's partnerships with national, state, or local community organizations, including recent or existing collaborations aimed at improving education outcomes for [new majority learners](#) or related student success efforts.
- Previous Initiatives - Describe any recent or existing student success initiatives that demonstrate your institution's ability to drive change and improve outcomes. What motivated these efforts, what was required to execute them, and what were the results? How did you measure impact, and what challenges did you face?
- Sustainability - How will your institution sustain participation throughout this initiative's lifecycle, and what resources (e.g., staffing, funding, technology) will you commit?
- Risk Factors - Based on your institution's track record, describe potential risk factors that may impact the pilot's success, including constraints (e.g., staff capacity, institutional culture), areas of concern, and necessary conditions for achieving project goals.

Rubric

Part I: Vision and Goal Alignment

Describe your institution's overall vision to support access and completion goals for your learners within your economic pipeline. How would joining the Community College Growth Engine program align with your institution's vision and goals? What benefits would it bring to your institution, learners, and community? (500 words or less)

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Definitely.</i> Statement clearly states a vision for increasing overall access and completion for learners. This includes identifying an economic pipeline or economic opportunity areas. | Statement sets a vision for increasing overall access and completion but does not articulate a specific economic pathway. | Statement sets a vision for increasing overall access and completion for learners but does not identify specific targets. | Statement sets a vision for increasing overall access and completion for learners but does not articulate desire for dramatic increase nor identify specific economic opportunities. | <i>Not at all.</i> Statement does not clearly state a vision for increasing access and completion for learners. |

Part II: Organizational Capacity

The Lab is seeking institutional commitment from a campus-wide perspective from institutions that possess the following:

- Strong leadership and management systems, including data collection and management; and
- The ability to sustain the initiative after the CCGE period concludes.

Please identify the following individual(s) on your campus who are:

- Responsible for the management and/or administration of the CCGE program.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| There is a clear role or assignment for the work. | N/A | There is a clear role or assignment for the work, but the fit is unclear. | N/A | There are no current roles or assignments for the work. |

- Responsible for the tracking of performance indicators/targets, key deadlines, evaluation tools, and outcomes at your institution and who will collaborate with the CCGE program.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| There is a clear role or assignment for the work. | N/A | There is a clear role or assignment for the work, but the fit is unclear. | N/A | There are no current roles or assignments for the work. |

- The primary stakeholders driving the design, success, and long-term sustainability of initiatives on your campus.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
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| There is a clear role or assignment for the work. | N/A | There is a clear role or assignment for the work, but the fit is unclear. | N/A | There are no current roles or assignments for the work. |
|---|-----|---|-----|---|

Part III: Innovation Readiness and Track Record

- Current and Past Partnerships - Describe your institution's partnerships with national, state, or local community organizations, including recent or existing collaborations aimed at improving education outcomes for [new majority learners](#) or related student success efforts.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Institutions have demonstrated a successful working relationship with partners and projects with great success. | Institutions have demonstrated a somewhat limited working relationship with partners and projects with good success. | Institutions have demonstrated a few partnerships and projects with limited success. | Institutions have a desire to develop partnerships and projects. | Institutions have not demonstrated interest in developing partnerships and projects. |

- Previous Initiatives - Describe any recent or existing student success initiatives that demonstrate your institution's ability to drive change and improve outcomes. What motivated these efforts, what was required to execute them, and what were the results? How did you measure impact, and what challenges did you face?

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Institution provides clear examples of other successful transformation projects. | Institution provides some examples of other successful projects. | Institution provides some examples of other projects though projects may not be transformational. | Institution provides some examples of other projects though projects may not be transformational. | Institution does not provide examples of other projects. |

- Sustainability - How will your institution sustain participation throughout this initiative's lifecycle, and what resources (e.g., staffing, funding, technology) will you commit?

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Institution has clearly defined strategies for sustainment with ample institutional resources committed to the project. | Institution has some defined strategies for sustainment with several institutional resources committed to the project. | Institution has limited strategies for sustainment with restricted institutional resources committed to the project. | Institution has very few strategies for sustainment with insufficient institutional resources | Institution has no strategies for sustainment with no institutional resources committed to the project. |

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|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| | | | committed to the project. | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|

- **Risk Factors** - Based on your institution's track record, describe potential risk factors that may impact the pilot's success, including constraints (e.g., staff capacity, institutional culture), areas of concern, and necessary conditions for achieving project goals.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Institution demonstrates a clear awareness of risk factors and has a clear open dialogue on concerns regarding success. | Institution outlines some concerns regarding success but are limited to capacity/resources only. | Institution has limited concerns regarding success but are very generalized. | Institution is not clear on risk factors and has identified very few concerns regarding success. | Institution did not indicate any concerns. |