

# NCII Rural Pathways Project



Institute #1 Preview Webinar

March 5, 2025

Chris Baldwin, Senior Fellow, NCII

Gretchen Schmidt, Senior Fellow, NCII

# Agenda

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- **Project Overview**
- **Pathways Overview**
- **Rural Pathways Cohort Colleges**
- **Institutes, Curriculum, & Supports**
- **Aspen Leadership Curriculum**
- **Project Coaches**
- **Preparation for the March Institute**
- **Questions**



# Project Overview

# Rural Guided Pathways Project Overview

**This is a three-year project with a national cohort of 28 rural community colleges who will work with each other — and with community partners in their regions — to implement pathways to economic prosperity. The goals of the the project are to support participating colleges as they:**

- Design and implement a better student experience at their colleges.**
- Collaborate with key local stakeholders to increase economic opportunity and partner on a cross-sector approach to implement guided pathways.**
- Adopt evidence-based reforms that will address inequities and lead to improved educational and workforce outcomes.**

# Rural Guided Pathways Project Funders

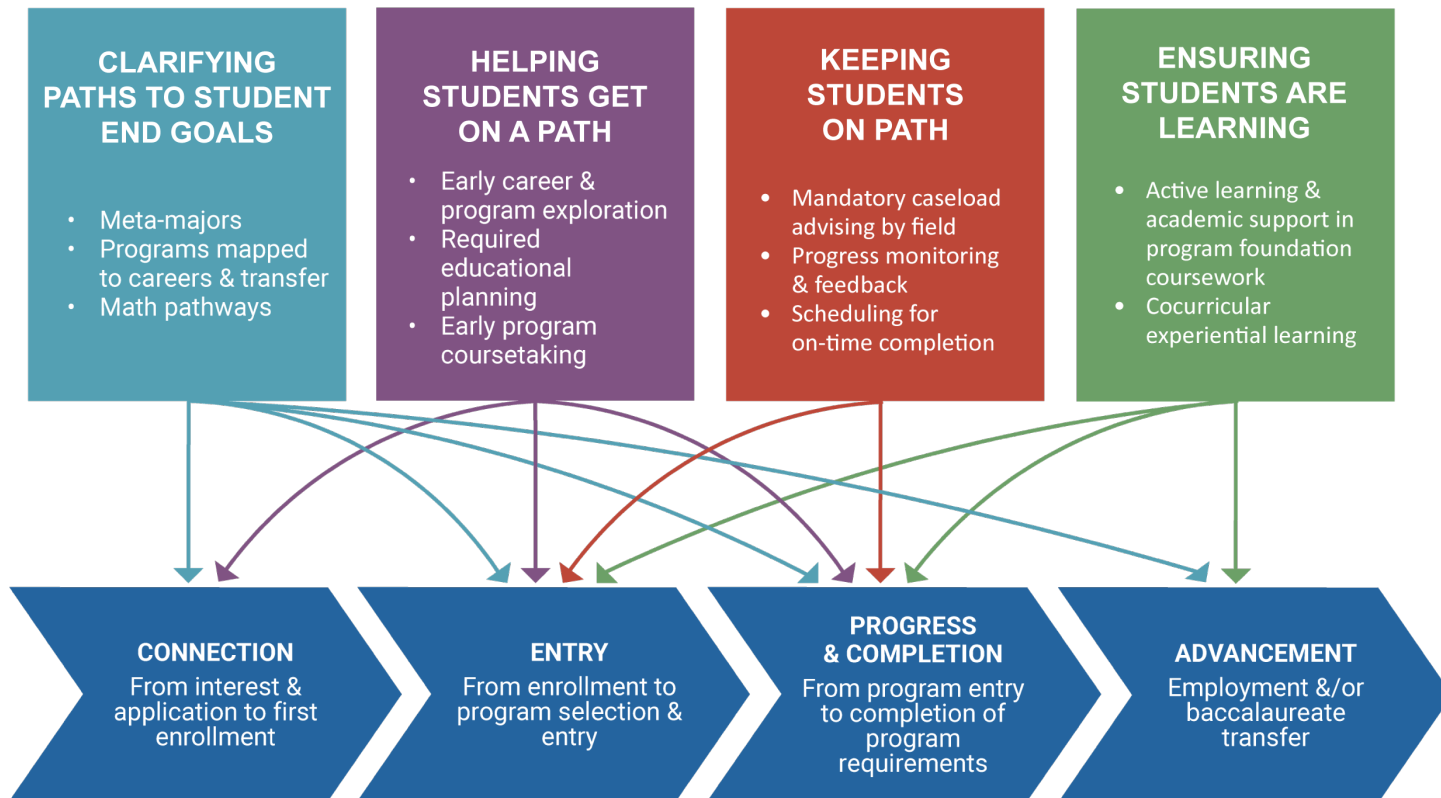


# Rural Guided Pathways Project Partners



# Pathways Overview

# Guided Pathways Theory of Change





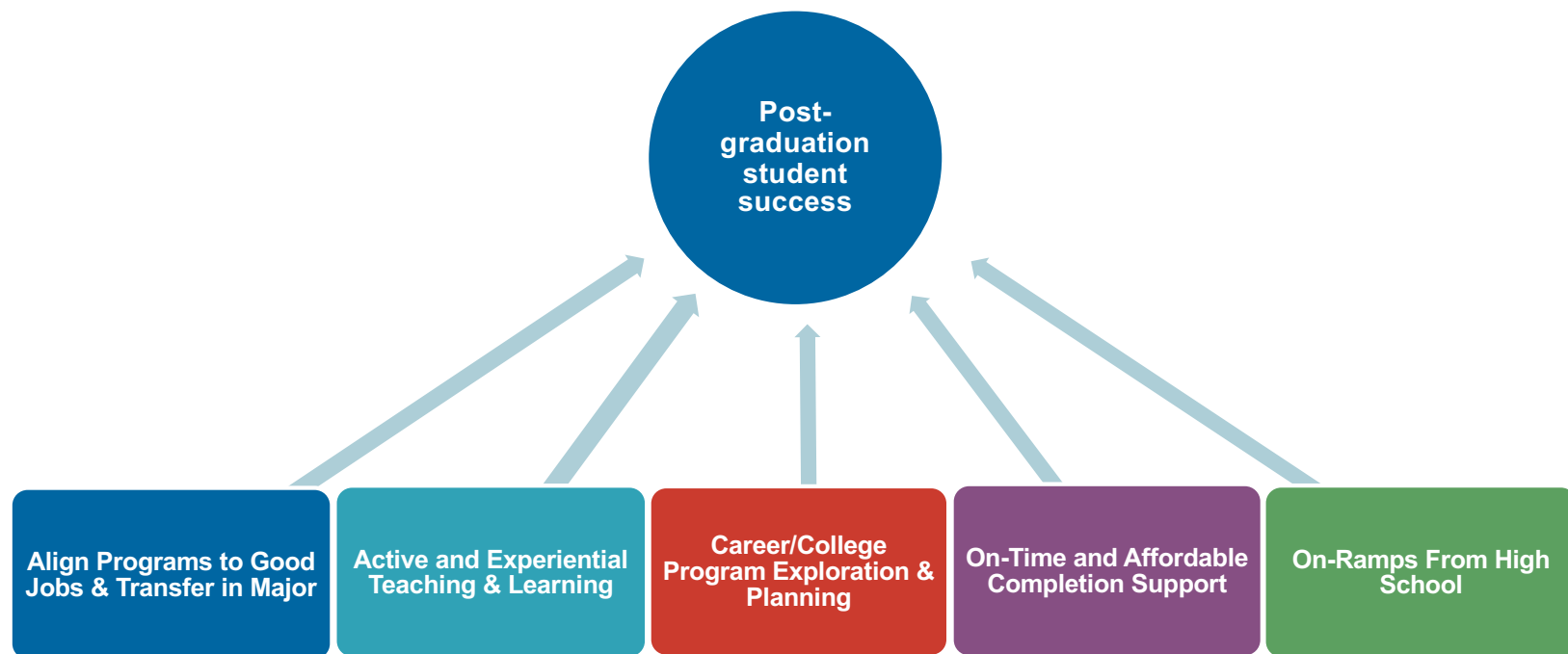
# The Evolution of Pathways Implementation

- **An intentional cross-sector approach to implementation that includes K-12, employers and workforce development leaders**
- **Internal transparency about program enrollment and completion data**
- **Reimagining onboarding using CCRC's ACIP Framework**
- **Creating connections for students and the community between college programs, the regional labor market, and living wages**
- **Defining and tracking post-graduation success**

# Pathways to What? For Whom?

- **A more integrated approach to pathways implementation**
- **Focusing on post-graduation success, including bachelor's degree attainment and jobs with a living wage**
- **Conducting an examination of an institution's program enrollment and completion data – both in credit and non-credit**
- **Aligning programs with living wage jobs in the region**
- **Leading difficult conversations about programs that do not lead to a living wage and the implications**
- **Fostering a more regionalized approach to pathway implementation – community college as the intermediary with K-12, universities, employers, workforce agencies and CBOs at the table**

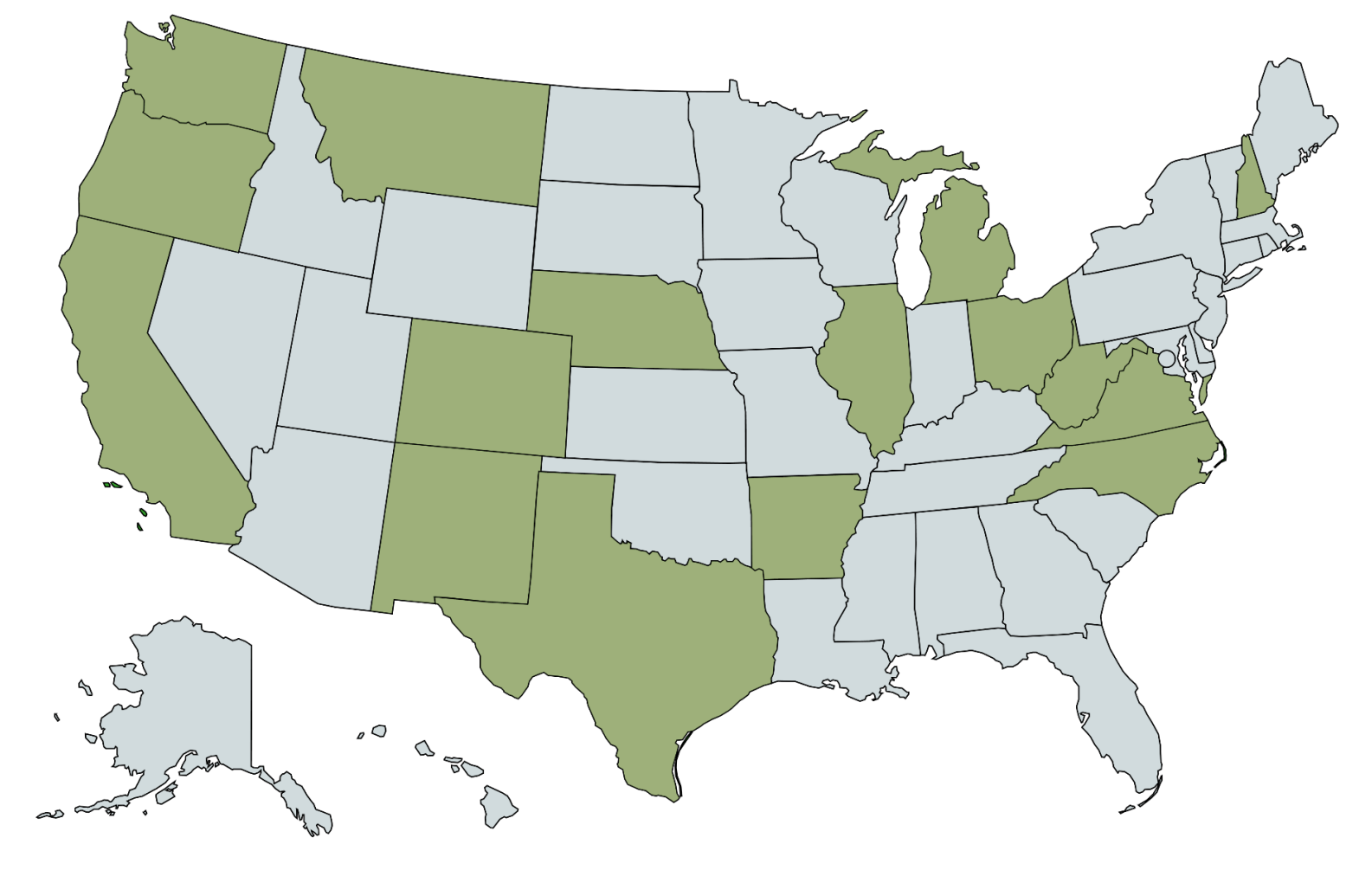
**Pathways reforms to date have focused on removing barriers to completion. That's important, but colleges must do more to tap into students' motivation to enroll and complete by strengthening pathways to post-completion success.**

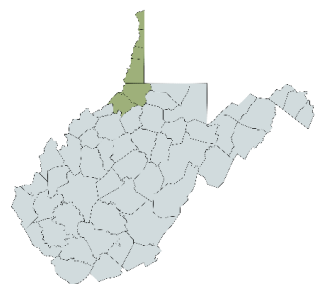
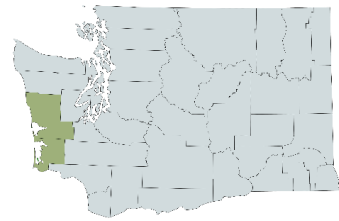
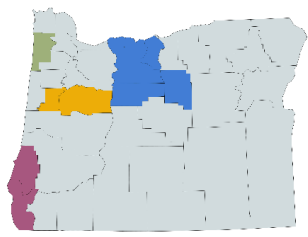
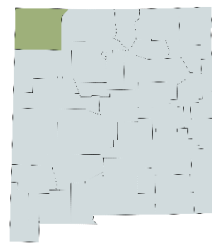
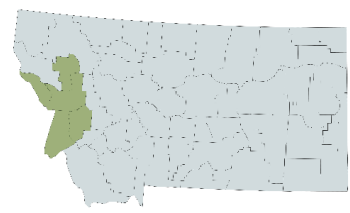
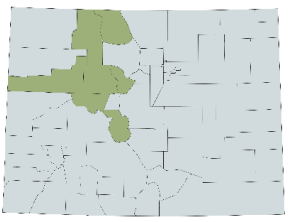
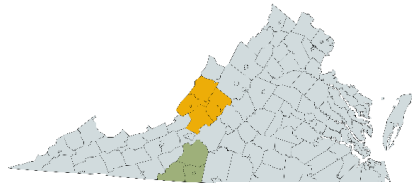
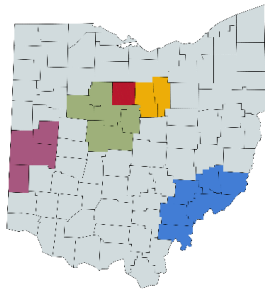
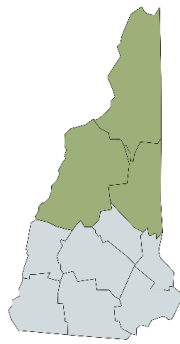
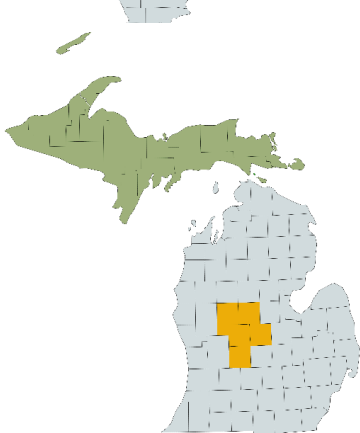
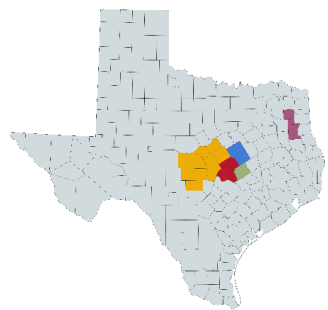
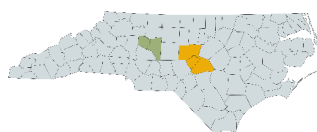
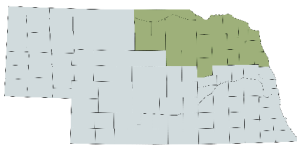
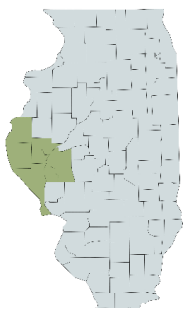
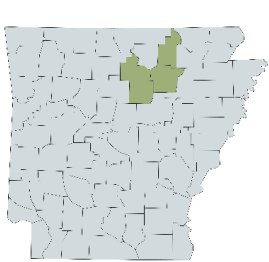


# Cohort Colleges

# Rural Guided Pathways Project Colleges

- Bay de Noc Community College (MI)
- Central Carolina Community College (NC)
- Central Texas College (TX)
- Colorado Mountain College (CO)
- Columbia Gorge Community College (OR)
- Davidson-Davie Community College (NC)
- Edison State Community College (OH)
- Grays Harbor College (WA)
- John Wood Community College (IL)
- Kilgore College (TX)
- Linn-Benton Community College (OR)
- Marion Technical College (OH)
- Missoula College (MT)
- McLennan Community College (TX)
- Montcalm Community College (MI)
- Mountain Gateway Community College (VA)
- North Central State College (OH)
- Northeast Community College (NE)
- Patrick & Henry Community College (VA)
- Reedley College (CA)
- San Juan College (NM)
- Southwestern Oregon Community College (OR)
- Temple College (TX)
- Tillamook Bay Community College (OR)
- University of Arkansas CC – Batesville (AR)
- Washington State Community College (OH)
- West Virginia Northern CC (WV)
- White Mountain Community College (NH)





Curriculum  
Support Structures  
College Expectations



# Project Professional Development and Support

## Institutes

Six 2 ½ day institutes. Participating colleges will send an 8-person team to each institute.

## Coaches

Colleges will have an assigned implementation coach & leadership coach

## Site Visits

Colleges will have one site visit from its rural pathways coach each year

## Office Hours

Each college team will participate in two virtual office hours per semester

## Virtual Consultancies

Each college team will be invited to two virtual consultancies during the project

## Topical Webinars

NCII and its partners will develop and host three topical webinars per year

# Rural Pathways Institutes & Curriculum

## ◆ Institute #1

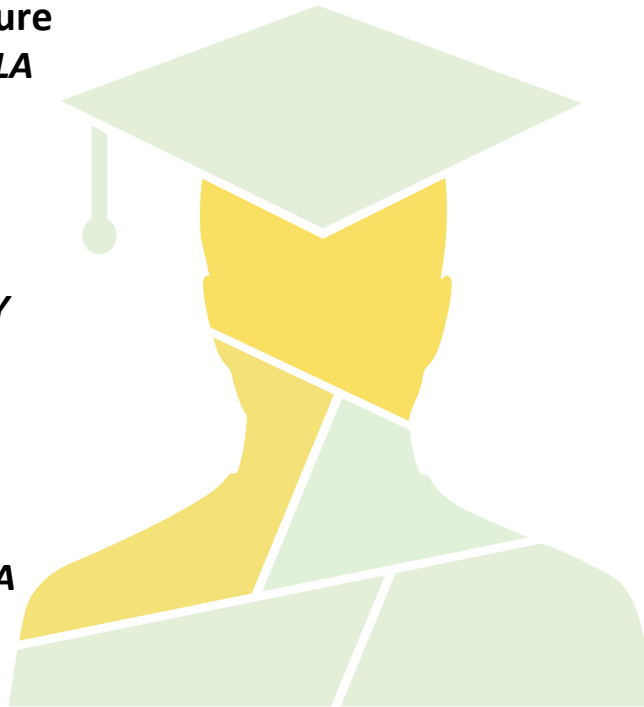
Creating and refining an institutional improvement culture  
*March 19-21, 2025 - New Orleans, LA*

## ◆ Institute #2

It's all about the program  
*October 29-31, 2025 - Louisville, KY*

## ◆ Institute #3

K-12 Summit  
*March 11-13, 2026 - Pittsburgh, PA*



## ◆ Institute #4

Post-graduation success for transfer programs  
*October 28-30, 2026 - Dallas, TX*

## ◆ Institute #5

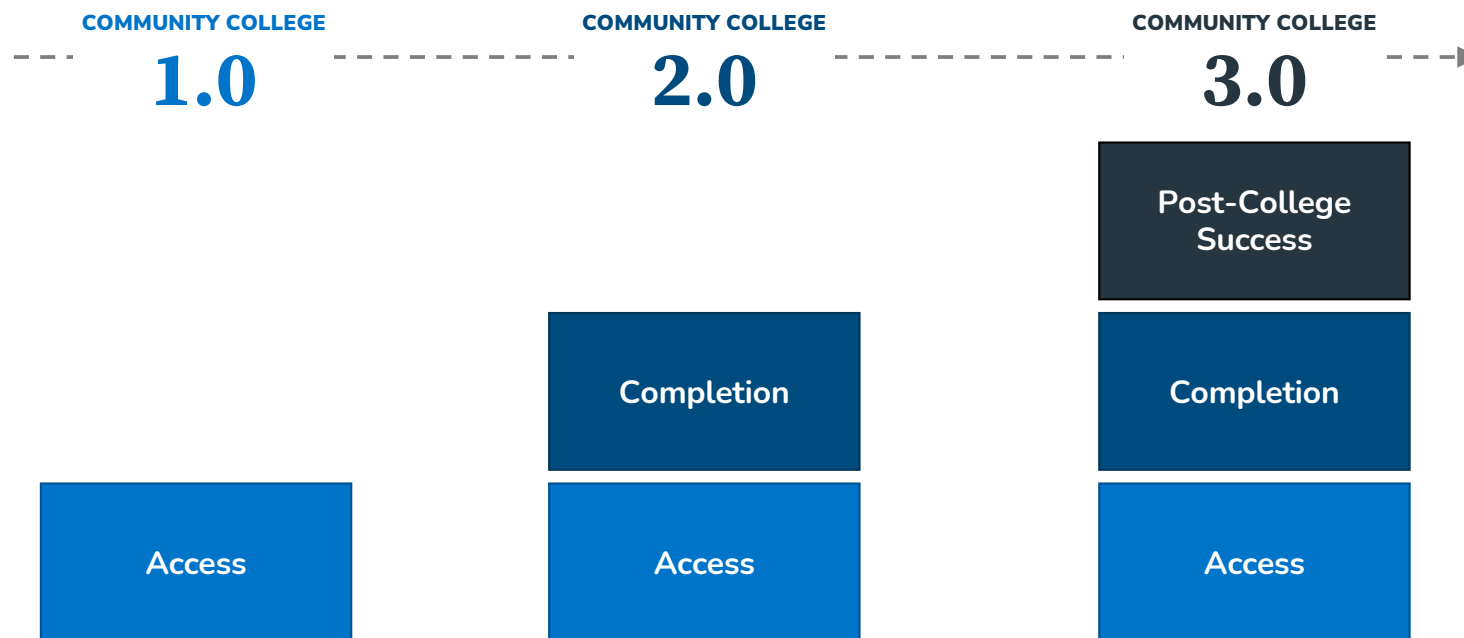
Workforce/Employer Summit  
*March 17-19, 2027 - Atlanta, GA*

## ◆ Institute #6

Identifying gaps and next steps – evaluating college culture  
*October 27-29, 2027 - Location TBD*



# Aspen Leadership Curriculum

# Aspen Leadership Curriculum to Enable Excellent Student Outcomes



# Aspen Leadership Curriculum to Enable Excellent Student Outcomes



<b>Capacities</b> 	<b>Key Audiences</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human capital</li><li>• Strategic finance</li><li>• Data use</li><li>• Strategic implementation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board of trustees</li><li>• Senior team</li></ul>

# Rural Pathways Project Coaches

# Rural Pathways Implementation Coaches

- **There are 14 Implementation Coaches grouped into two-person teams**
- **Each coach is responsible for leading the work of 2 colleges.**
- **Coaches will work with their partner to provide backup for 2 additional colleges.**
- **Coaches will provide facilitation, guidance, leadership, and support to their colleges throughout the project. This will occur through the following activities:**
  - **The coaching team will work with their assigned colleges during the team time at all Institutes**
  - **Coaches will have regular check-in meetings with their college project leads**
  - **Coaches will also support their colleges as they prepare for the institutes and the virtual consultations, and office hours**
  - **The lead coach will work with the CEO and Project lead to conduct one site visit to their assigned college per year. The first site visit will likely occur between Institutes 1 & 2.**

# Implementation Coaches



**Ed Bowling**  
Senior Fellow, NCII

- Linn Benton CC
- Mountain Gateway CC



**Octavia Lawrence, Portfolio**  
Project Manager  
Kentucky Community & Technical  
College System

- Grays Harbor College
- Temple College



# Implementation Coaches



**Dr. Joyce Walsh-Portillo**  
**Retired Business Faculty**  
**Broward College**

- **Northeast Nebraska CC**
- **Reedley CC**



**Dr. Adrienne Forgette**  
**Vice President of Academic Affairs**  
**Clark State College**

- **Bay College**
- **West Virginia Northern CC**

# Implementation Coaches



**Laura Rittner**  
VP Operations and Student Success  
Ohio Assn. of Community Colleges

- John Wood CC
- Southwestern Oregon CC



**Dr. Melinda Karp**  
Founder  
Phase Two Advisory

- Montcalm CC
- North Central State College

# Implementation Coaches



**Dr. Chris Wikstrom**  
**Vice President for Academic & Student**  
**Success Services, Patrick & Henry CC**

- **Tillamook Bay CC**
- **White Mountain CC**



**Dr. Ann Buchele, Vice President of**  
**Academic and Student Affairs**  
**Linn-Benton Community College**

- **U of Arkansas CC - Batesville**
- **Marion Technical College**

# Implementation Coaches



**Dr. Hana Lahr**  
**Assistant Director Of Research and  
Director of Applied Learning, CCRC**

- Colorado Mountain College
- Patrick & Henry CC



**Keisha Jones**  
**Vice President of Student Services,  
Davidson-Davie Community College**

- Central Texas College
- Edison State College

# Implementation Coaches



**Dr. Elizabeth Cox-Brand**  
Director, Student Success  
Center, Oregon CCA

- Kilgore College
- Missoula College



**Dr. Stephanie Sutton**  
Retired Vice President, Stark State  
College & Lorain County CC

- Davidson-Davie CC
- McLennan CC

# Implementation Coaches



**Victor Torres**  
Associate Dean, Economic and Workforce  
Development, Imperial Valley College (CA)

- San Juan College
- Washington State College (OH)



**Dr. Rob Johnstone**  
Founder & President  
NCII

- Central Carolina CC
- Columbia Gorge CC

# Rural Pathways Leadership Coaches

- **There are six Rural Pathways Leadership Coaches**
- **Their role is to support the institution when participating in the Aspen Leadership Teams curriculum**
- **Leadership coaches will attend two in-person institutes**
  - **Spring 2025 and Fall 2027**
- **Leadership coaches will facilitate the virtual Aspen Leadership Teams events**
  - **September 3rd, 2025**
  - **February 6th, 2026**
  - **September 3rd, 2026**
  - **February 5th, 2027**

# Leadership Coaches

Marcia Ballinger, President, Lorain County Community College (OH)

Tina Hart, Retired VP Enrollment and Student Services, Indian River State College (FL)

Doreen Larson, Retired President, Edison State College (OH)

Kay McClenney, Senior Fellow, NCII

Joe Schaffer, President, Laramie County Community College (WY)

Jason Wood, President, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (WI)



# Preparation for the March Institute

# Preparation for the March Institute

- **All colleges have submitted their Advance work**
- **On Monday 3/10, the leads will receive a Dropbox link with:**
  - **the final agenda**
  - **the Institute's team time documents**
  - **the results of the Aspen Senior Teams Self-Assessment**
  - **a master calendar for the project**
- **Team leads should review these documents, share them, but NOT start working on the team time documents prior to the Institute**

# Aspen Self-Assessment Tool Results Example

Your average score across assessment:

The following results are based on a rating scale of 1 to 5.

3.6

## DOMAIN 1 Composition

4

1. The college's senior team is strongly committed to achieving high, improving, and equitable levels of student success.



4.1

2. The college's senior team members are bold and courageous in advancing student success reforms.



3.5

3. The college's senior team members are good communicators, emotionally intelligent, and good listeners.



3.8

4. The college's senior team has members with the strategic, analytical, and innovative capacity to lead reform.



4

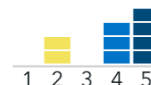
# Aspen Self-Assessment Tool Results Example

## DOMAIN 2

### Common Purpose

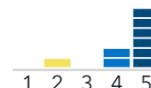
3.6

9. Each year, the senior leadership team has defined a limited number of prioritized reforms (no more than five) the college will focus on to advance student success.



4

10. The institution's priority student success reforms are discussed frequently at senior team meetings.



4.4

11. Senior team members have a clear, aligned way to explain why the college is engaged in priority student success reforms.



3.9

12. In meetings and other settings, the president frequently repeats explanations about why student success reforms matter.



4

13. All senior team members can name the institution's priority student success goals and major reforms, and how they relate to one another.



3.7

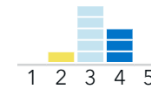
# Aspen Self-Assessment Tool Results Example

## DOMAIN 3

### Collaboration and Implementation

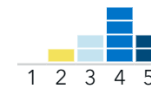
3.3

20. The president regularly sets the conditions and expectations for candid conversations in meetings, including about substantial challenges and failures.



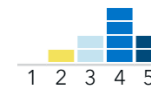
3.2

21. Members of the senior team are open and honest with one another and the president about challenges they face in advancing student success reforms and provide helpful feedback when they discuss challenges.



3.8

22. All senior team members are substantially engaged in implementing each priority student success reform.



3.8

23. The main decision-making committee/workgroup for each priority student success reform includes appropriate senior team representatives from different units that need to be involved for the reforms to be implemented effectively.



4

24. Beginning in the planning stage, each priority student success reform includes a dedicated senior team sponsor responsible for remaining close to the design and implementation of major reforms, and for bringing needs and challenges to the president and senior team.



3.8

# Team Time Sessions

- **Team Time 1: Making the Case for New Definitions of Student Success**
- **Team Time 2: Reflections on the Senior Team Assessment Tool**
- **Team Time 3: Institutional Priorities for the Project**
- **Team Time 4: Identifying Immediate Next Steps**
  
- **Team Times 1 & 2 will be led by leadership coaches**
- **Team Times 3 & 4 will be led by implementation coaches**

# Institute # 1 Agenda

## Creating & Refining an Institutional Improvement Culture

### Day 1 – March 19<sup>th</sup>

<b>9:00 – 11:00am</b>	<b>Orientation for Coaches, Subject Matter Experts, Partners and NCII</b>
<b>11:00 – 12:30pm</b>	<b>Leadership Coach Planning Meeting</b>
<b>1:00 – 1:45pm</b>	<b>College Team Leads / Coach Prep Meeting</b>
<b>1:00 – 2:00pm</b>	<b>Institute Check-in</b>
<b>2:00 – 3:00pm</b>	<b>Welcome, Introductions &amp; Overview</b>
<b>3:00 – 3:45pm</b>	<b>Plenary: Why is This Work Still Important?</b>
<b>3:45 – 4:30pm</b>	<b>Plenary: Overview of Community College 3.0</b>
<b>4:30 – 4:50pm</b>	<b>Table Discussion &amp; Report Out</b>
<b>5:00 – 5:45pm</b>	<b>Team Time #1</b>
<b>6:00 – 7:00pm</b>	<b>Opening Reception</b>

# Institute # 1 Agenda

## Creating & Refining an Institutional Improvement Culture

### Day 2 – March 20<sup>th</sup>

<b>8:00 – 9:00am</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>9:00 – 10:15am</b>	<b>Presidential Panel: Building a Leadership Structure for Improvement</b>
<b>10:15 – 10:45am</b>	<b>Plenary: Collaboration &amp; Common Purpose for Senior Teams</b>
<b>11:00 – 12:15pm</b>	<b>Team Time #2</b>
<b>12:15 – 1:15pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:15 – 2:15pm</b>	<b>Plenary: Building and Refining an Institutional Improvement Culture</b>
<b>2:30 – 3:30pm</b>	<b>Team Time #3</b>
<b>3:45 – 4:30pm</b>	<b>Plenary: Setting Goals and Using Them to Structure Implementation</b>
<b>4:30 – 5:30pm</b>	<b>Table Exercise: Prepping for Project Goal Setting</b>



# Institute # 1 Agenda

## Creating & Refining an Institutional Improvement Culture

### Day 3 – March 21<sup>st</sup>

<b>7:30 – 8:15am</b>	<b>CEO Breakfast</b>
<b>7:30 – 8:15am</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>8:15 – 8:30am</b>	<b>Plenary: Using Data for Improvement by Role</b>
<b>8:30 – 10:00am</b>	<b>Role Alike Sessions: Data Use for Improvement by Leadership Role</b>
<b>10:00 – 10:30am</b>	<b>Break &amp; Room Checkout</b>
<b>10:30 – 11:00am</b>	<b>Team Session #4</b>
<b>11:00 – 11:45am</b>	<b>Plenary: Preview of CCRC Book</b>
<b>11:45 – 12:00pm</b>	<b>Closing Thoughts &amp; Evaluation</b>

# Institute Norms

- **All events will start on time and end on time**
- **These institutes are working meetings -- and require active engagement from all participants in all sessions**
- **This project values the diverse range of participants that will be attending each institute -- all voices need to be valued and heard**
- **The ultimate success of this project will be measured by scaled changes to the student experience resulting in increased outcomes and goal attainment**
- **The rural focus of this project requires a much more intentional focus on the communities in which the colleges operate; it's our collective responsibility to engage the community partners and integrate their perspectives**
- **Evaluations are important and used; PLEASE complete them**

# Following the Institute

- **Send Institute #1 team time documents to Sarah Cale ([sarah@ncii-improve.com](mailto:sarah@ncii-improve.com)) by May 2<sup>nd</sup>**
- **Initial submission of the Key Performance Indicators and the Cross-Sector Cross-Sector Guided Pathways Self-Assessment – Due May 15<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Templates will be provided after the institute**
- **Set implementation goals for the duration of the project – Summer 2025**
- **First Implementation Coach Site Visit before October 2025**

## QUESTIONS?

Gretchen Schmidt, Senior Fellow  
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Chris Baldwin, Senior Fellow  
[chris@ncii-improve.com](mailto:chris@ncii-improve.com)

