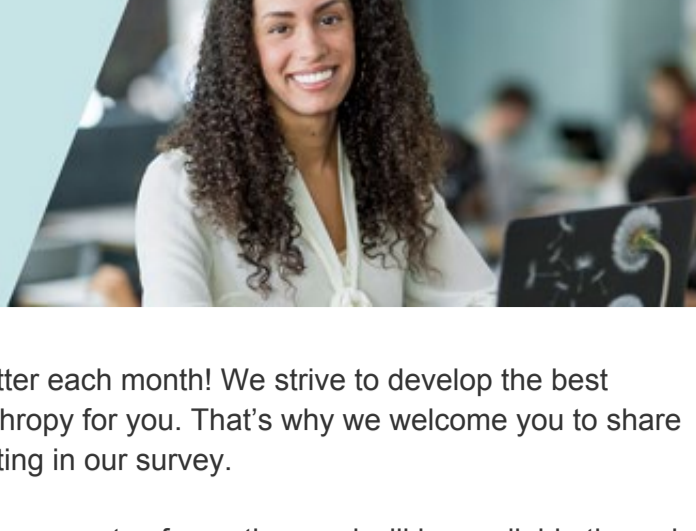
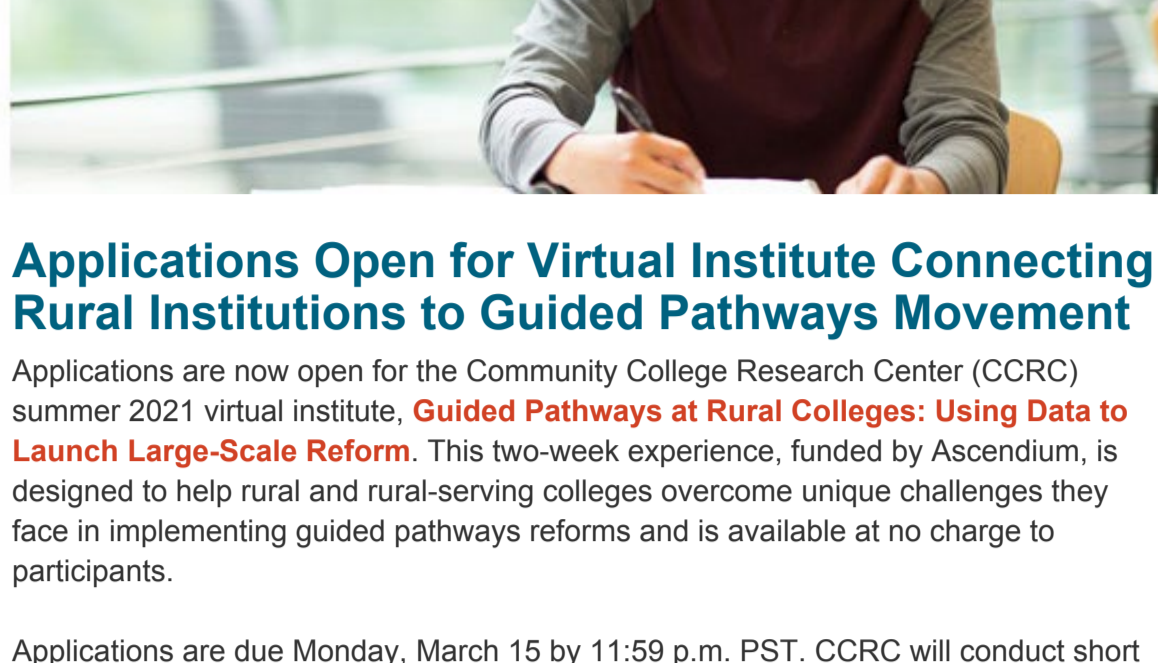


### Share your thoughts with us!



Thank you for reading our newsletter each month! We strive to develop the best possible content about our philanthropy for you. That's why we welcome you to share your thoughts with us by participating in our survey.

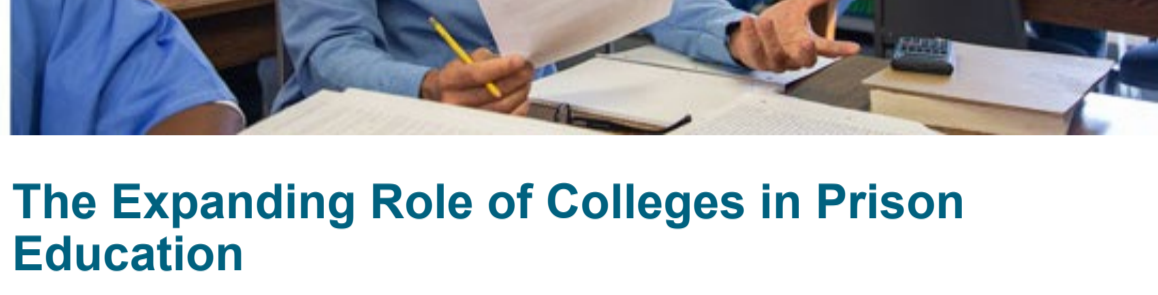
The survey should only take a few moments of your time and will be available through February 25, 2021.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)


## Applications Open for Virtual Institute Connecting Rural Institutions to Guided Pathways Movement

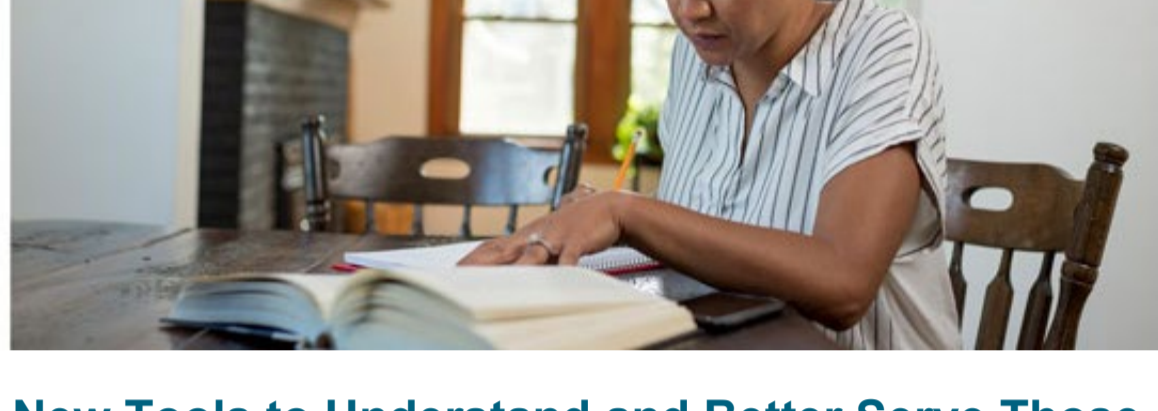
Applications are now open for the Community College Research Center (CCRC) summer 2021 virtual institute, **Guided Pathways at Rural Colleges: Using Data to Launch Large-Scale Reform**. This two-week experience, funded by MDRRC, is designed to help rural and rural-serving colleges overcome unique challenges they face in implementing guided pathways reforms and is available at no charge to participants.

Applications are due Monday, March 15 by 11:59 p.m. PST. CCRC will conduct short interviews with college teams under consideration during the last two weeks of March, with colleges selected to participate notified by Monday, April 1.



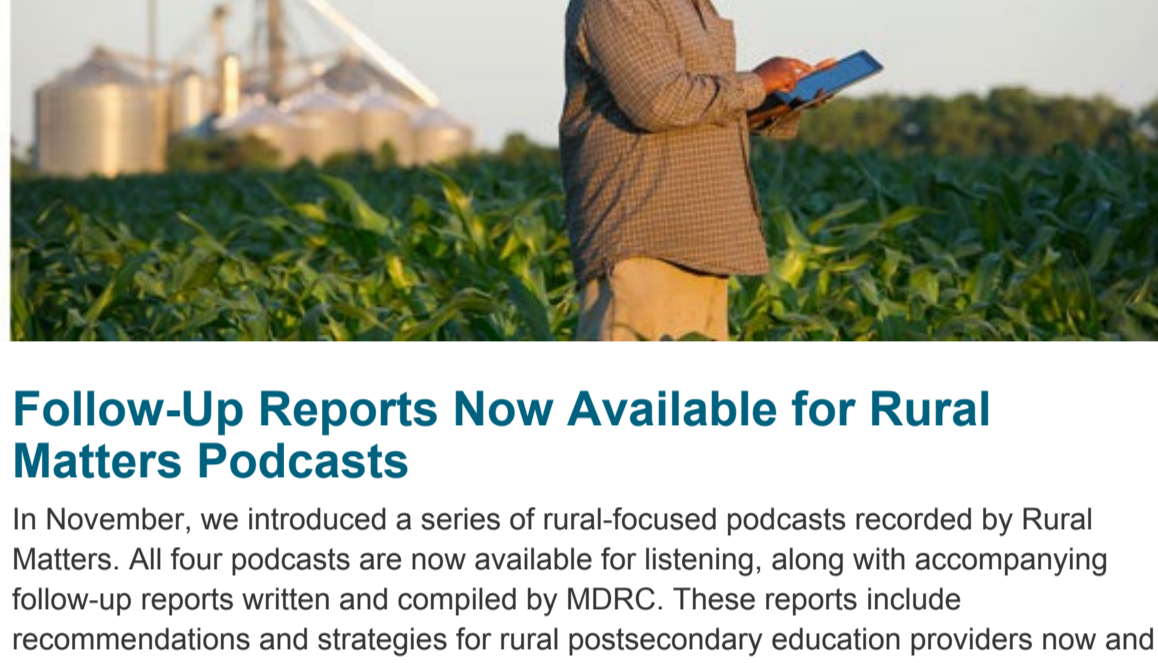
## The Expanding Role of Colleges in Prison Education

To get a better sense of higher education's views of and participation in postsecondary education in prison programs, we supported a national research project by The Chronicle of Higher Education. Here's what they found.

[Read more...](#)


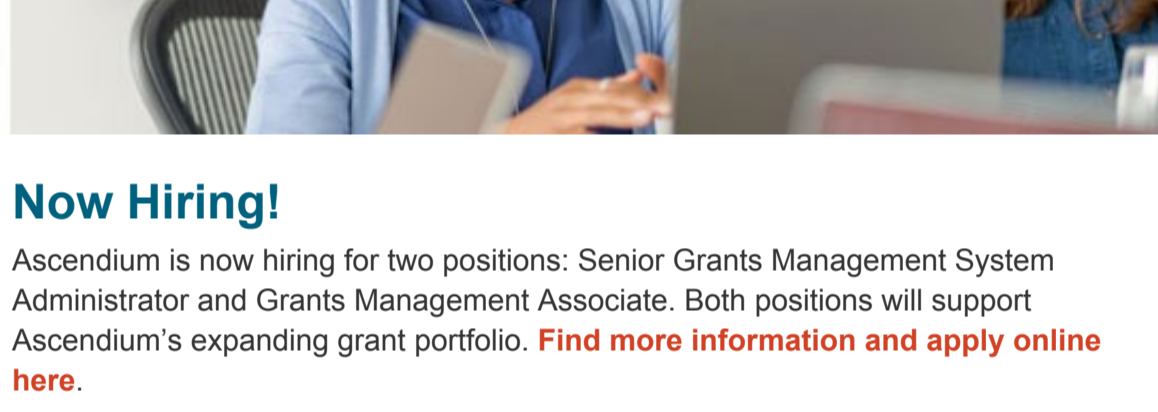
## New Tools to Understand and Better Serve Those with Some College, No Degree

A 2019 study by the National Student Clearinghouse revealed that 36 million Americans had some college credits, but no completed degree. Ascendium is funding research that aims to help systems better support this learner population.

[Read more...](#)


## Follow-Up Reports Now Available for Rural Matters Podcasts

In November, we introduced a series of rural-focused podcasts recorded by Rural Matters. All four podcasts are now available for listening, along with accompanying follow-up reports written and compiled by MDRRC. These reports include recommendations and strategies for rural postsecondary education providers now and into the future. The reports also highlight the important work of several of our grant partners and rural leaders.

[Read more...](#)


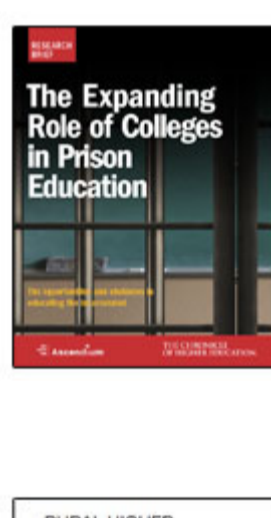
## Now Hiring!

Ascendium is now hiring for two positions: Senior Grants Management System Administrator and Grants Management Associate. Both positions will support Ascendium's expanding grant portfolio. [Find more information and apply online here.](#)

## New Resources

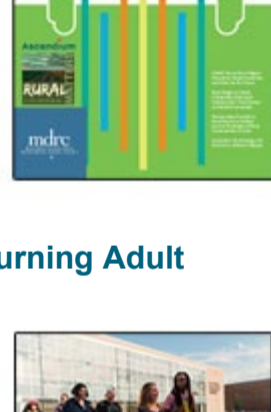
### The Expanding Role of Colleges in Prison Education

**Ascendium supported a national survey** by The Chronicle of Higher Education of over 750 college administrators and faculty members to learn more about potential opportunities and challenges of expanding postsecondary education in prison programs. Now, with a recent vote to reverse a longstanding ban on Pell Grants for incarcerated learners, more incarcerated people will have access to federal resources for postsecondary education in prison programs. How will colleges respond?



### Rural Higher Education: Realities & Opportunities

These **reports by MDRRC** are a special supplement to a series of four Rural Matters podcasts which were supported by Ascendium. Offered in these reports are ideas and recommendations for education professionals and policymakers to boost success for postsecondary education and workforce training in rural areas, along with links to listen to the original podcasts.



### College System of Tennessee: Meeting the Needs of Returning Adult Students at Community Colleges

The College System of Tennessee analyzed re-enrollment, transfer and completion patterns for 113,000 of its learners who reconnected with its community colleges. This **Ascendium-funded working paper** identifies four distinct reconstructor groups and includes research and action steps for institutions to consider.



## Recent Grants

### Remove Structural Barriers to Success

**Cataloguing and Understanding the Origins and Intents of Administrative Holds**

[Exploration](#)

**Education Commission of the States | \$75,000 | 01/2021 - 10/2021**

This grant supports Education Commission of the States in exploring the origins of administrative holds and understanding the role state, postsecondary system and institutional policies have in authorizing the practice of levying administrative holds.

### Streamline Key Learner Transitions

**Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance**

[Scaling](#)

**Midwestern Higher Education Compact | \$1,280,400 | 12/2020 - 12/2022**

This grant supports the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and Credential Engine in developing the Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance. Intensive work in five states and regional coordination across the 12-state region will contribute to significantly expanding the public repository of detailed, accurate information about postsecondary credentials available to learners, employers, schools and state agencies.

**The Future of Associates Degree for Transfer in LA**

[Validation](#)

**UNITE-LA Inc | \$115,400 | 12/2020 - 12/2021**

This grant supports UNITE-LA in convening Los Angeles Community College District and California State University leaders in a focused, facilitated planning process to craft action plans to improve the effectiveness of Associate Degree for Transfer pathways for low-income students in the region.

**Career Advising Tools and Outreach for Low-Income College Graduates - Planning Phase**

[Exploration](#)

**The Rector & Visitors of the University of Virginia | \$284,300 | 12/2020 - 06/2022**

This grant supports the University of Virginia in developing a personalized job recommendation tool and intrusive advising resources designed to improve employment outcomes for low-income community college graduates.

### Support Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

**Exploring Pathways to Sustainable Digital Employment in Rural Communities**

[Exploration](#)

**Center on Rural Innovation | \$403,100 | 12/2020 - 12/2021**

This grant supports the Center on Rural Innovation in researching foundational questions related to building an inclusive tech workforce in rural America. Research will be synthesized into a public-facing report that will drive real impact on creating skilling pipelines, localizing outsourced tech jobs and leveraging the power of remote work in rural areas — ultimately setting the stage for low-income rural learners to achieve their academic and career goals in the fast-growing, high-paying fields of the digital economy.

**Defining What It Means to Be a Rural-Serving Postsecondary Institution**

[Validation](#)

**Appalachian State University | \$428,000 | 12/2020 - 12/2021**

This grant supports Appalachian State University and researchers from the Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges in utilizing and analyzing various data sources to develop a formal definition of operating as a "rural serving postsecondary institution." The team will create a series of interactive data tools, corresponding documentation and a list of institutions that meet this definition.

## On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

Ascendium Education Group has cancelled all staff travel plans until further notice due to COVID-19 concerns, but we are supporting and attending virtual events. We hope everyone stays safe and we look forward to participating in live events in the coming months. We will continue to share past virtual event recordings, resource links and future opportunities to connect with Ascendium staff.

**National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students**

February 23-25, 2021

**League for Innovation in the Community College: Innovations Conference**

March 1-4, 2021

**Virtual National Conference on Higher Education in Prison**

March 1-5, 2021

**Grantmakers for Education**

March 3, 2021

Danielle Vetter and Kirstin Yeado, presenters, "Supporting Rural Communities: Emerging Lessons Learned and Opportunities for the Future"

**SXSW EDU**

March 9-11, 2021

**ACE Annual Meeting**

March 22-24

**Association of American Colleges & Universities: Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Student Success**

March 24-26, 2021

**American Association of Community Colleges: AACC Digital**

Thursdays in May 2021

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