



Introducing Our New Program Officer for Strategic Engagement, Amy Kuether

Our Education Philanthropy team continues to grow with the addition of Amy Kuether as program officer for strategic engagement. In this role, she leads investments in strategic media partnerships and field engagement. This role will help further amplify insights generated by our grant partners' work and extend the impact of our grantmaking. [Read more...](#)



Rural Community Colleges Utilize Strengths and Assets to Improve Learner Success

Rural community colleges offer many examples and lessons on how to improve postsecondary education success for learners from low-income backgrounds. Institutions across the country can learn from the rural community colleges profiled in the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program's (CEP) latest report, which highlights how they utilize their strengths and assets to best serve their learners. Insights shared in the report will also inform continued enhancements to CEP's curriculum for community college leadership and its on-the-ground support of institutions working on transforming to better serve learners. [Read more...](#)

Perspectives from the Field:

Community Colleges Connect Learners to Credentials that Meet Local Workforce Needs



Dr. Marcia Ballinger
Lorain County
Community College



Dr. Kathleen Plinske
Valencia College



Dr. Jason Wood
Southwest Wisconsin
Technical College

Perspectives from the Field: Community Colleges Connect Learners to Credentials that Meet Local Workforce Needs

As postsecondary education costs continue to rise, today's community colleges are vital to delivering high-value, affordable credentials that result in upward mobility and meet regional labor market needs. To develop these paths and guide learners through them, these institutions need strong data, advising and partnerships. We talked to leaders from three colleges, Valencia College, Lorain County Community College and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College. They share how their work with the Aspen Institute Unlocking Opportunity Program will shift learners into identified high-value credentials, serving as a model for others to follow. [Read more...](#)

New Resources

Our grant partners regularly create resources that benefit organizations focused on student success. These resources are published to our [Resource Library](#) often; here's what's new this month.

- [Designing Career and Technical Education Programs that Help Students Get Good Jobs](#) (The Urban Institute)
- [Do Low-Income Students Benefit from Stacking Credentials?](#) (RAND Corporation)
- [From Degrees to Dollars: Six-Year Findings from the ASAP Ohio Demonstration](#) (MDRC)
- [Higher Ed's Role in Growing Rural Economies](#) (Academic Intelligence)
- [Improving Outcomes for Men of Color in College: Recommendations for Advancing Success in the "Dual Pandemics"](#) (MDRC)
- [Lessons from a Multi-College Transfer Partnership](#) (Kent State University Foundation)
- [Stackable Credential Pipelines and Equity for Low-Income Individuals](#) (RAND Corporation)
- [States Can Take Steps to Address Potential Barriers to Equity in Stackable Credential Pipelines](#) (RAND Corporation)

Recent Grants

Remove Structural Barriers to Success

Addressing Inequity in College Retention of Low-Income Students: Collaboratively Creating Pathways to Careers in Four-Year Degree Programs Yes We Must Coalition | \$2,500,000 | 06/2023 - 05/2026

This grant supports the Yes We Must Coalition in helping 10 member institutions adopt reforms to strengthen career advising and outcomes for learners.

Participating institutions will redesign one to two bachelor's degree pathways to better connect learning with career opportunities in those fields of study.

Streamline Key Learner Transitions

Increasing Equity and Effectiveness in Work-based Learning and Career Preparation at Smaller Independent Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities The Council of Independent Colleges | \$1,735,592 | 05/2023 - 12/2027

This grant supports the Council of Independent Colleges in partnering with 25 member institutions to develop and evaluate employer-driven, work-based learning projects embedded in courses. It aims to eliminate barriers to professional opportunities for learners from low-income backgrounds and improve their post-graduation career outcomes.

Building Career Pathways to Economic Mobility and Capacity Growth Project Quest Inc | \$3,150,000 | 06/2023 - 09/2026

This grant supports Project QUEST in expanding its evidence-based career training and job coaching services to reach many more low-income individuals in the Bexar County, Texas region. This grant leverages a major investment from the city of San Antonio and allows Project QUEST to scale sustainably.

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming virtual and in-person events.

- 🚩 **Grantmakers for Effective Organizations: 2023 Learning Conference**
Washington, D.C.
May 22-23, 2023
- 🚩 **ASHE Webinar: Building Evidence to Increase Rural Learner Success**
Virtual
June 1, 2023
- 🚩 **Community Colleges of Appalachia: 30th Annual Conference**
Asheville, NC
June 4-6, 2023
- 🚩 **Jobs for the Future: Horizons – Without Limits**
New Orleans, LA
June 14-15, 2023
- 🚩 **United Negro College Fund: UNCF Unite 2023**
Atlanta, GA
July 17-20, 2023
- 🚩 **State Higher Education Executive Officers Association: 2023 SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference**
Denver, CO
August 7-10, 2023

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