



## Education Philanthropy Program

Ascendium is working to change postsecondary and workforce training systems so that all learners have equitable opportunities for socioeconomic mobility. Our grantmaking focuses on removing systemic barriers faced by learners from low-income backgrounds, especially those in historically underrepresented groups: first-generation students, incarcerated adults, rural community members, students of color and veterans.

### OUR FOCUS AREAS

Remove Structural Barriers to Success

Streamline Key Learner Transitions

Expand Postsecondary Education in Prison

Support Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

## Support Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

Ascendium supports efforts that can help the field better understand rural learners and postsecondary providers, strengthen those providers, and improve collaboration and partnership to support rural learners from enrollment to workforce entry.

### An investment priority to...

Better understand rural learners and postsecondary providers through high-quality research

### Means we support...

- Providing resources and opportunities for applied research collaboration between researchers, employers, funders and postsecondary providers
- Investing in high quality research to inform the field
- Increasing rural postsecondary provider ability to gather, analyze and use data and data systems

### Which will lead to...

- Identifying, completing, and disseminating applied research supporting rural learners
- Understanding postsecondary access and attainment in the context of career and community outcomes
- Exploring diverse education and training delivery models administered through and with postsecondary providers
- Supporting data infrastructure for cross-system data sharing, tracking and reporting among postsecondary providers

### An investment priority to...

Build the capacity of rural postsecondary providers to support learners from enrollment to workforce entry

### Means we support...

- Expanding job training models in high-demand fields for learners in rural communities
- Postsecondary programs of study aligned with geographic, economic, and cultural needs and assets of rural communities
- Increasing student supports designed to help rural learners navigate postsecondary providers and workforce entry
- Supporting professional development for student-centered postsecondary leaders in various roles— from front-line staff to institutional researchers to senior leadership and boards

### Which will lead to...

- Rural learners having the education and skills needed to transition to meaningful jobs in their communities and chosen careers
- Increasing rural learners' ability to navigate postsecondary enrollment, completion and workforce entry
- Increasing postsecondary providers' capacity and ability to implement best practice, data-based models to support academic success
- Supporting postsecondary providers refine their processes and operations to better support rural learners

### An investment priority to...

Catalyze investment in and support for rural learners and providers through partnerships

### Means we support...

- Facilitating strong connections between postsecondary education providers and employers to offer high-quality postsecondary opportunities and pathways to employment
- Solidifying relationships between secondary systems, postsecondary providers and employers through regional and national networks
- Supporting communities of practice tailored toward postsecondary providers, employers and learners

### Which will lead to...

- Partnerships at the systems level that are based on postsecondary and career success to increase peer learning, network building, and best practice sharing that highlights promising models among practitioners and partners

Visit [ascendiumphilanthropy.org](https://ascendiumphilanthropy.org) to learn more.