



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES TRAINING GRANTS

Grantee Success Indicators for SCC4-5

These Indicators identify key areas that grantees can focus on to support success in the fourth and fifth rounds of Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants (referred to as SCC4 and SCC5). The Success Indicators will guide technical assistance (TA) efforts, and grantees can use them for self-assessment. They are aligned with Funding Opportunity Announcements FOA-ETA-23-15 (SCC4) and FOA-ETA-24-23 (SCC5) and were developed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Indicators are organized logically and are not listed by rank. **Indicators in blue font and identified with (E) denote early-stage focus areas that grantees should address at the beginning of the grant period of performance.** These Success Indicators are offered as technical assistance to support grantee success but are not considered official U.S. Department of Labor guidance.

1. Strong Grants Management

Grant success is supported by effective use of personnel, resources, and communications to implement and operate a high-quality project. Indicators of strong grants management include:

- Identifying and onboarding grant-funded staff in a timely¹ manner (E)
- Hiring or assigning a dedicated Project Director at 1.0 FTE (E)
- Hiring or assigning a Data Coordinator (E)
- Identifying and allocating leveraged staff and resources in a timely manner (E)
- Instituting strong grant fiscal management practices (e.g., know your budget, stay informed on your expenditure rate, make any needed changes as early as possible. NOTE: SCC does not permit grant extensions/no cost extensions) (E)
- Launching Third-Party Evaluation procurement (E)
- Developing Subrecipient Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding as needed (E)
- Implementing regularly scheduled communications processes and timelines (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly team meetings, monthly or quarterly project administration meetings to share progress toward goals, presentations to college administrators and other stakeholders) (E)
- Instituting strong work plan implementation and tracking project progress (e.g., know your work plan, know when and how your milestones will be achieved, plan for how you will address delays and project implementation shifts, and communicating progress regularly with all partners) (E)
- Maintaining communications with Federal Project Officer (FPO) (E)
- Engaging with and using TA resources from the [College Connections Community](#) such as the [SCC4-5 Foundational Documents](#), the [SCC4-5 Performance TA Resource Page](#), and elsewhere on [WorkforceGPS](#) (E)

¹ As specified in the FOA: “We expect that start-up activities such as hiring appropriate grant program staff and project design activities will begin immediately.” (FOA-ETA-23-15 p. 23)

2. Strong Operational Systems

Grant success is supported by data-informed decision making, program evaluation and continuous improvement, and data collection that is integrated into project design and clearly delineates progress towards good jobs and capacity building goals. Indicators of strong operational systems include:

- Developing and using a “Performance Dashboard” to track and communicate real-time performance progress including but not limited to activities intended to advance employment outcomes and partnership-level data to inform improvements (E)
- Establishing benchmarks for performance outcome progress and target achievement (E)
- Communicating partnership expectations and performance measures for each partner that align with roles and individual duties, checking in on these measures early and often (E)
- Training staff on performance management and data collection tools and systems (E)
- Implementing participant data collection and reporting processes that ensure reporting accuracy and security of Personal Protected Information (PPI) (E)
- Employing data-informed decision making through business processes used in the project including but not limited to adjusting budgets and expenditures
- Engaging with the Third-Party Evaluator in evaluation and/or continuous improvement
- Using frequently updated performance data in day-to-day processes and embedding decision making in comprehensive performance thinking and project analysis
- Convening partnership group to monitor quality and suggest improvements to the method of implementation (work plan)

3. Sector-Based Career Pathways

Grant success is supported by employer engagement and leveraging of the public workforce system in the development and implementation of industry sector strategies. Indicators of strong [sector strategy](#)² implementation that engages multiple employers within an industry include:

- Assessing whether target educational programs and certificates meet your state’s definition of quality³ (e.g., in demand, accessible to unemployed or underemployed, supports business growth) or other quality assurance mechanism (E)
- Intentionally designing and structuring career pathways to enable students to attain credentials, further their education, secure a job, and advance in employment (E)
- Implementing an evaluation process that addresses the key components of a Career Pathways approach (e.g., articulated education and training steps between occupations in an industry sector, supportive services, ease of entry and exit points at various levels, advancement over time to higher skills, recognized credentials, and quality jobs with higher pay) and basing improvements on the data acquired through evaluation (E)
- Using the [ETA Self-Assessment Tool](#)⁴ to assess your industry sector strategy (E)
- Understanding the labor market and human resource needs of industry sector employers and mapping instruction/credentials to employers’ in-demand occupations /competencies
- Delivering several distinct or combined sector-based strategies within the Career Pathway⁵

² ETA Sector Strategies TA Initiative, “Sector Strategies Implementation Framework.”

³ National Skills Coalition defines a quality non-degree credential as leading to further education and employment.

⁴ ETA Sector Strategies TA Initiative “Sector Strategy Self-Assessments.”

⁵ The SCC4 FOA (pgs. 8-11) encourages several accelerated career pathways strategies.

4. Good Jobs, Employment Impacts, and Student Voice

Grant success is supported by efforts and initiatives that go beyond individual programs or partners and aim to transform how the community college and the public workforce system effectively support employers and the workforce in achieving desired employment outcomes. Indicators of success in outcomes-minded capacity building that advances employment attainment include:

- Articulating a clear, specific, and compelling vision of what your project plans to do among all partners using a Theory of Change, and the strategies addressing the specified outcomes (E)
- Preparing a plan for project metrics to be included in the required annual data review and analysis process and scheduling the first review, with support from the Developmental evaluator (E)
- Testing and updating the Logic Model in alignment with a deepening understanding of the workings of the system and the needed capacities (the third-party evaluator can support this process) (E)
- Determining what, where, and why of your student voice⁶ practice (E)
- Engaging students and workers along the career pathway through an iterative process to support continuous improvement and monitoring of impact
- Developing systematic alternatives to disconnected practices that are informed by student voice and advance employment milestones
- Creating a process for rapid response to the needs of employers and workers in the region, incorporating an iterative feedback process that includes and elevates the voices of those most impacted by proposed responses (e.g., student voice, worker voice)
- Driving enhancements with a view for short- and long-term barriers and impacts, while watching for expected and unexpected impact on employment outcomes

Figure 1: Types of student voice

Types of student voice

Adapted version of Toshalis and Nakkula's "The Spectrum of Student Voice Oriented Activity" and Mitra and Gross' Pyramid of student voice"



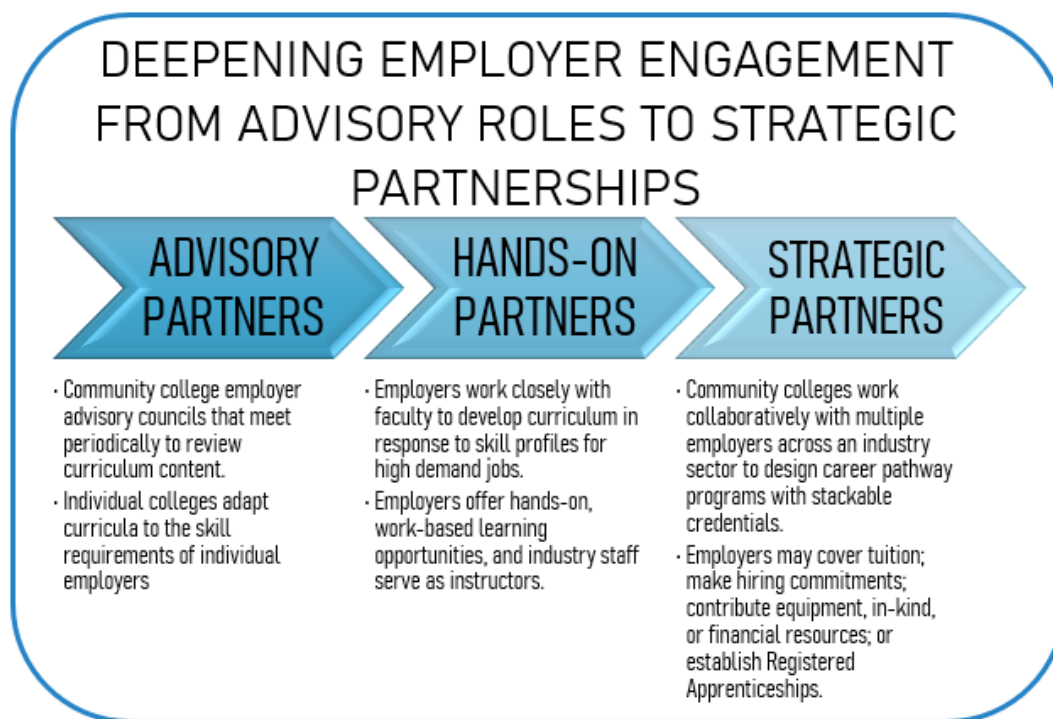
⁶ Elevating Student Voice in Education, Center for American Progress

5. Strategy Implementation

Grant success hinges on the effective implementation of selected Strategy Options and through a cohesive combination of partnerships, policies, pedagogical approaches, and data. Indicators of strong implementation of selected Strategy Options include:

- Strengthening cross-agency partnerships, identifying common goals, and clarifying roles (exemplary partnerships include multiple employers from the specific industry, educational institutions, economic/workforce development agencies, labor-management organizations, community organizations, and other State and local agencies) (E)
- Aligning with the workforce development system (workforce development boards, American Job Centers, the Adult Education and Literacy Program authorized under title II of WIOA, and other service providers) and other educational entities (E)
- Ensuring employer partners provide leadership functions from the beginning in simultaneous and iterative work on the programmatic and systems levels ensuring customized responses (E)
- Leveraging employer resources at all levels (See Figure 2), but particularly at the strategic level, designing career pathways, stackable credentials, and facilitating work-based learning opportunities levels
- Engaging in regular dialogue with all partners, with special attention to employer and industry partners who represent strategic approaches to building talent pipelines
- Providing coordinated comprehensive student supports to improve credit accumulation and completion of non-degree credentials along career pathways
- Offering flexible instructional delivery schedules and models to improve credit accumulation and completion of non-degree credentials along career pathways

Figure 2: Deepening Employer Engagement



6. Sustainable Systems Change

Grant success is supported by the strategic use of grant funds to implement, track, and institutionalize new or modified systems, programs, policies, and practices that provide enhanced capacity and services to employers, students, and workers. Indicators of sustainable systems change include:

- Immediately identifying the grant-funded improvements in programs, policies, or practices that will be targeted for ongoing sustainability during and after the project period (E)
- Implementing continuous communication and “co-leader and co-investor” contributions from workforce partners, college leadership, deans, and directors, as appropriate (E)
- Developing and regularly monitoring a sustainability plan (E)
- Identifying and showcasing how aspects of the grant project align with broader priorities of entities that are critical to sustainability, e.g., sector entities, college educational system leadership, the governor, the WIOA State Plan, etc.
- Developing ongoing processes for identification and documentation of “key drivers,” “corrections,” and “lessons learned” as the project design is modified such that the system that once perpetuated a ‘problem’ now perpetuates a ‘solution’
- Proactively evaluating impact and outcomes
- Implementing proactive strategies and/or aligning investment and income streams to continue innovative programs, policies, and practices once grant funding ends

The content below is provided for those using screen readers

Figure 1: Types of Student Voice – Full Text Version

TYPES OF STUDENT VOICE, FROM BEING HEARD TO LEADERSHIP

Adapted version of Toshalis and Nakkula’s “The Spectrum of Student Voice Oriented Activity” and Mitra and Gross’ “Pyramid of student voice”

EXPRESSION

Volunteering opinions, student contributions acknowledged by decision-makers

CONSULTATION

Sharing feedback and opinions in focus group or survey

PARTICIPATION

Participating in meetings with decision-makers

PARTNERSHIP

Explicit, institutionalized role in decision-making

ACTIVISM

Identifying problems and solutions; advocating for change

LEADERSHIP

Co-planning, co-executing, and having shared responsibility for outcomes

Figure 2: Deepening Employer Engagement – Full Text Version

DEEPING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT, FROM ADVISORY ROLES TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

ADVISORY PARTNERS

- Many community colleges have employer advisory councils that meet periodically to review curriculum content.
- Individual colleges adapt curricula to the skill requirements of individual employers.

HANDS-ON PARTNERS

- Employers work closely with faculty to develop curriculum in response to skill profiles for high demand jobs
- Employers offer hands-on, work-based learning opportunities, and industry staff serve as instructors.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- Community colleges work collaboratively with multiple employers across an industry sector to design career pathway programs with stackable credentials.
- Employers may cover tuition; make hiring commitments; contribute equipment, in-kind, or financial resources; or establish Registered Apprenticeships.