

Seamless Pathways to Degrees and Careers



Overview

Students [universally aspire](#) to thriving adult lives that include financial stability, personal choice and the ability to make meaningful contributions to their communities. Yet the pandemic has put on hold the goals and continued education of many students, especially Black and Latino students and students from low-income backgrounds who typically receive less support transitioning between high school and college and into the workforce.

[One million fewer students](#) are enrolled in college now than before the pandemic began. Even before the pandemic, it was clear that our current high school and postsecondary systems were not equitably supporting all young people as they navigate different pathways to opportunity in today's economy.

Fortunately, there are promising cross-sector initiatives across the country—from dual enrollment models to career and technical education (CTE) and other work-based learning opportunities—that are helping to streamline the pathway from high school to college and beyond. The most successful have led to improved college transition, persistence, and completion, and share a focus on helping students figure out their occupational aspirations, build social capital, and acquire relevant work experience.

Inspired by these examples, we asked ourselves: *What if every high school student had the chance to take an additional year of courses related to their interests and earn enough credits to complete their associate degree one year after high school while gaining valuable experience and career preparation—at little to no cost?*

One of the ways we believe we can reach that goal faster is by accelerating great work already happening in the field. That's why we're proud to announce our **Accelerate ED: Seamless Pathways to Degrees and Careers** grantees who will be expanding initiatives for students that get us closer to that ultimate goal.

With Accelerate ED, we sought to identify partners in diverse communities to work towards the goal that high school students have a chance to take an additional year of courses related to their interests and earn enough credits to complete their associate degree one year after high school while gaining valuable experience and career preparation—at little to no cost to students.

Out of a diverse pool of over 50 applicants, the 12 teams to receive grants span geographies and varied labor markets and will each receive approximately \$175K to scale existing initiatives to help ensure more students obtain an associate degree by the end of one additional year after high school graduation and are set on a path to future economic opportunity. The 12 teams selected to participate in this Accelerate ED initiative include local K-12 and higher education leaders, employers, and youth-focused community-based organizations that are committed to aligning on common goals for what experiences and opportunities all students should have in grades 9-13 and identifying innovative ways to increase access to reach all students. These grantees are being supported in their design efforts by Education Strategy Group (ESG), a national leader in helping communities design accelerated, career-connected pathways for student success.

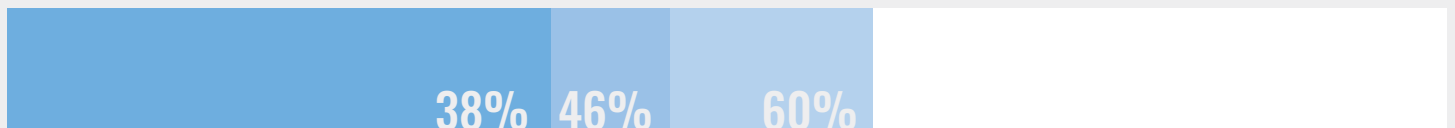
Each grantee shares a commitment to four key design principles that drive Accelerate ED, including:

- Establishing a shared goal of early postsecondary success anchored to attainment of an associate degree by year 13, or one year post traditional high school graduation, leading to a good job and/or transfer to a bachelor's degree;
- Designing programs of study that provide an intentional, integrated curricular experience and integrated student supports that span high school and college;
- Using a delivery approach that minimizes transitions for students and uses innovative instructional models to make opportunities equitably accessible for all students across the region; and
- Identifying creative ways to tap multiple funding sources and plan for sustainability via public funding to ensure ongoing affordability for students

Why Education-to-Career Pathways?



65% of jobs today require education and training beyond high school, making postsecondary credentials a prerequisite to achieving greater social mobility and economic prosperity.



Only **60%** of Black and Latino high school graduates immediately enroll in a postsecondary program after high school. Of those who enroll, only **38%** of Black students and **46%** of Latino students earn a postsecondary degree or certification in six years.

The relationships a young person has and the real-world experiences they access along the pathway to a career make a big difference in their early employment outcomes.

By blurring the lines between high school and higher education and career learning experiences, students can earn a career-aligned credential or degree one year after high school. This is especially critical for Black and Latino students and students from low-income backgrounds who have historically had less access to high-quality career-aligned education pathways.

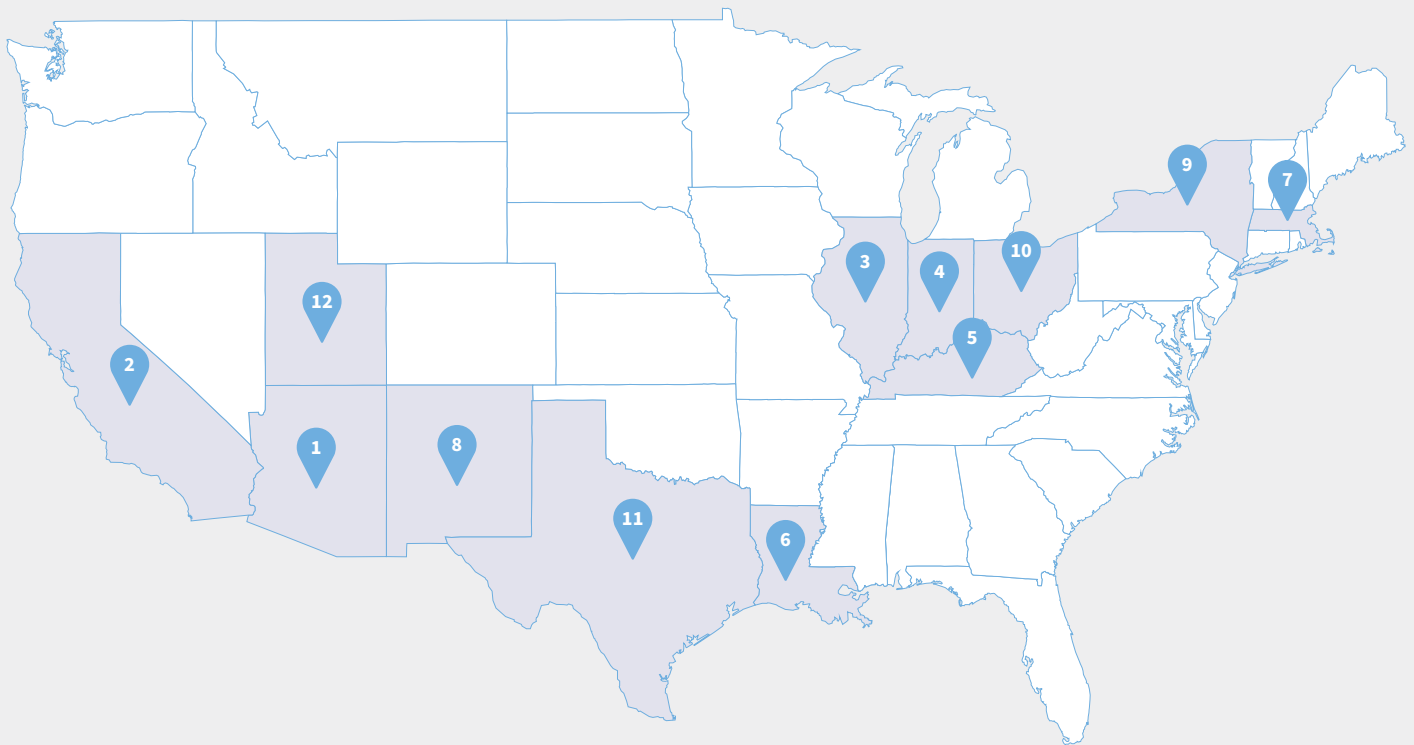
These initiatives are already proving to be effective in improving outcomes and creating opportunity for students. [Research](#) on effective practices across early college, CTE, and dual-enrollment models shows strong evidence of impact on outcomes, including

increases in [high school graduation](#), college enrollment, and [degree attainment](#). Dual enrollment students [are more likely](#) to finish high school, persist in postsecondary education, and accumulate college credits than students not in dual enrollment.

In addition, growing evidence about community college guided pathways suggests that redesigning and streamlining students' journeys to and through college can improve student outcomes, and in many cases, institutions are continuing to use an equity lens to reduce completion gaps based on race. In [Tennessee](#), for example, the percent of students completing 24 or more credits in their first year doubled from 12 percent to 24 percent after guided pathways implementation.



Accelerate ED Grantees



- 1 Arizona – ElevateEdAZ: Advanced Manufacturing Career Connected Pathways
- 2 California – Linking Learning for Completion
- 3 Illinois – Accelerated Model Pathways for Information Technology
- 4 Indiana – Indianapolis Career Pathway
- 5 Kentucky – Eastern Kentucky Student Success Pipeline
- 6 Louisiana – Growing Bridge Year Pathways Across New Orleans
- 7 Massachusetts – Early College Promise
- 8 New Mexico – The Four Corners Energy Transition Initiative
- 9 New York – FutureReadyNYC
- 10 Ohio – 13th Year Pathway to Career Success
- 11 Texas – Scalable Success
- 12 Utah – Promise Partnership Pathways Initiative

Arizona – ElevateEdAZ: Advanced Manufacturing Career Connected Pathways

ElevateEdAZ, the strategic education initiative of the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation, will use advanced manufacturing as a model industry to help students earn 30 credits of dual enrollment toward manufacturing degrees at Maricopa County Community Colleges and attain a 13th-year associate degree. The team will replicate the pathway developed in Mesa Public Schools at other high schools in Phoenix Union High School District and provide a demonstrative model to other districts throughout the state to meet the needs of the industry in Arizona.

The Design team is led by the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation. District partners include Phoenix Union High School District and Mesa Public Schools. Maricopa County Community College District, which includes 10 colleges, serves as the higher education partner. The Mesa Public Schools-affiliated student chapter of Skills USA represents the youth-serving agency. The Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation’s Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Collaborative serves as employer and economic development partners. The Education Design Lab completes the team.

California – Linking Learning for Completion

Building on a variety of current dual enrollment strategies across three communities, Linking Learning for Completion will help students attain an associate degree by the end of their 13th year by mapping a set of pathways that meet California’s four-year institution entrance policies, connect to community-specific industry fields, and incorporate work-based learning for credit. These efforts will include the development of a College Acceleration Playbook for Linked Learning Communities along with community-specific action plans to launch, strengthen, or expand 13th year strategies.

The Design team is led by the Linked Learning Alliance. District partners include Oakland Unified School District, Long Beach Unified School District, and Antelope Valley Union High School District. Higher education partners include Peralta Community College District, Long Beach City College, and Antelope Valley College. The youth-serving agencies represented on the team are Lao Family, Youth Empowerment Program, Unity Council, Treasure Island, Youth Uprising, Pacific Gateway, and the Antelope Valley Boys & Girls Clubs. Alameda Health Systems, the Port of Long Beach, the Antelope Valley Economic Development and Growth Enterprise (AV EDGE) serve as employer and economic development partners. The Career Ladders Project (CLP) and the Long Beach College Promise complete the team.

Illinois – Accelerated Model Pathways for Information Technology

Accelerated Model Pathways for Information Technology will engage three leading Illinois school districts and their postsecondary partners to design and launch an accelerated version of the existing IT Model Programs of Study. High school students will earn up to 30 hours of early college credit that seamlessly stacks into college certificate, associate, and bachelor’s degree programs. Students will be able to complete an IT associate degree program in year 13 that directly leads to high-quality employment opportunities or further education and will have flexibility to pursue computer science bachelor’s degree programs through accelerated models at Illinois universities.

The Design team is led by the Education Systems Center (EdSystems) at Northern Illinois University. District partners include Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Belvidere District 100 (D100), and Township High School District 214 (D214). City Colleges of Chicago and Rock Valley College serve as the higher education partners from a community college, with Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) supporting in this capacity from a university perspective. Code Nation is the youth-serving organization partner and P33 serves as the regional technology industry association partner.

Indiana – Indianapolis Career Pathways

Working with 12 partner high schools within two school districts, Indianapolis Career Pathways will design a comprehensive pathway in healthcare, IT, or advanced manufacturing that blurs the line between secondary and postsecondary by granting students an associate degree at the end of year 13, one year after high school graduation. Career pathways in key sectors will be designed and expanded with 13th year opportunities through existing delivery models such as the dual credit program, Associate Accelerated Program, and/or Modern Apprenticeship.

The Design team is led by EmployIndy. District partners include MSD Warren Township/Walker Career Center and Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Ivy Tech Indianapolis, and Purdue Global serve as the higher education partners. TeenWorks is the youth-serving organization partner. The Indy Chamber, Ascend Indiana, the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet, and Amazon Web Services represent employer and economic development partners.

Kentucky – Eastern Kentucky Student Success Pipeline

The Eastern Kentucky Student Success Pipeline will inform the design of a smoother, more comprehensive pipeline to and through postsecondary programs in Appalachian Kentucky by assessing local workforce needs, aligned schooling and training opportunities for students, existing college degrees as pathways to employment, and existing student-readiness interventions. The long-term goal is to provide more than 12,000 rural students across 35 schools in 12 districts with access to flexible, credit bearing general education coursework, specific courses aligned to workforce needs (nursing, manufacturing, education, etc.) and embedded tutoring services through local collaboration efforts and products such as the Wiley Degree Accelerator.

Convening regional partners toward a shared goal (that by 2030, twice as many students in Eastern Kentucky achieve postsecondary readiness and success), the Design team is led by Teach for America Appalachia. District partners include Harlan Independent Schools and the Floyd County School of Innovation. Big Sandy Community and Technical College and Wiley Advancement Courses serve as higher education partners. Prosper Appalachia's Youth Advisory Council and the Thompson Scholar Foundation are the youth serving organization partners. Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program - Prosper Appalachia represents the employer/economic development partner. The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky completes the team with their in-depth model of regional partnership and collective impact.

Louisiana – Growing Bridge Year Pathways Across New Orleans

Growing Bridge Year Pathways Across New Orleans will support three local training providers in expanding their pathways from 11th grade through postsecondary credentials. These training providers will use Louisiana's 13th year bridge year program to create industry aligned pathways to an associate degree or equivalent industry-based credential. The New Orleans Design team, led by career-technical education intermediary YouthForce NOLA, seeks to increase the number of young people attending

Bridge Year Programs in New Orleans to 160 in 2022-23 and 250 in 2023-24. The team also will produce a guide on establishing career-technical education (CTE) dual enrollment courses for organizations throughout the state.

Next Level NOLA is a bridge year program with business services, digital media/IT and skilled crafts pathways. New Orleans Career Center is a technical training provider in health care, engineering, and hospitality/tourism; beginning next year they will operate LAUNCH, another bridge year program. Operation Spark is a training provider in software development and is focusing on expanding programming into a 13th year.

Massachusetts – Early College Promise

This pilot program in Massachusetts aims to build upon the statewide Early College designation by offering current Early College participants underrepresented in higher education the opportunity to attain an associate degree or 60 credits toward a four-year degree through the Early College Promise year, free of charge. Under this model, students in state approved Early College programs can opt to defer high school graduation for year and take a full load of college courses while continuing to receive high-quality wrap-around supports from both the high school and college. Assuming successful outcomes during the pilot, Massachusetts hopes to make this program available to underrepresented students in Designated Early College programs throughout the state.

The Design team is led by the Massachusetts Alliance for Early College (MA4EC). District partners include Lynn Public Schools, Salem Public Schools, Lowell Public Schools, Lawrence Public Schools, and Haverhill Public Schools. Salem State University, North Shore Community College, Northern Essex Community College, and Middlesex Community College serve as higher education partners. LEAP For Education represents the youth serving agency. The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) represents the employer community.

New Mexico – The Four Corners Energy Transition Initiative

The Four Corners Energy Transition Initiative is committed to designing pathways in New Mexico that ensure high school students in grades 11 and 12 have the opportunity to complete 30 college credits. Building on work that is already underway in Farmington Municipal Schools and Gallup McKinley County Schools, the Initiative seeks to build a regional system of college and career pathways ensuring that students will not only have access to a sequence of three or four career and technical courses but also aligned core academics emphasizing related real-world application, project-based learning, and performance assessment. Additionally, a continuum of work-based learning experiences and personalized student supports are essential components of each pathway.

The Design team is led by ConnectED: The National Center for College and Career. District partners include Aztec Municipal School District, Bloomfield School District, Cuba Independent School District, Farmington Municipal Schools, and Gallup McKinley Public Schools. San Juan College, Navajo Technical University, and the University of New Mexico serve as higher education partners. San Juan Safe Communities Initiative represents the youth-serving agency. Four Corners Economic Development, Inc. and Process Equipment & Service Company represent the employer/economic development partners.

New York – FutureReadyNYC

FutureReadyNYC will work to develop a blueprint for high schools within the New York City Department of Education for dual enrollment and year 13 connected to career pathways that incorporate personalized advising, work-based learning, and the acquisition of skills for an increasingly technology-driven workforce. The partnership will implement a sequence of early college credits, paid work experience, essential skill building, and advising, as well as onramps to year 13 programming. The objective is to accelerate paths toward a degree and help identify best-in-class practices so they can be scaled and applied in other locations.

The Design team is led by The Fund for Public Schools, in coordination with The New York City Department of Education, and the City University of New York. The Mayor’s Office of Youth Employment represents the employer/economic development partners. The Partnership for New York City, ExpandedED Schools, and HERE to HERE complete the team.

Ohio – 13th Year Pathway to Career Success

In Dayton, Ohio, leaders across K-12, higher education, and the local workforce have come together to strengthen pathways to in-demand jobs such as healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing using dual enrollment. Students who earn a critical number of “pathway” college credits by 12th grade will be automatically accepted into a 13th year to complete an associate degree. Successful candidates are guaranteed acceptance to a four-year university to complete their bachelor’s degree after completion of their associate degree. This grant will support Ohio leaders to expand this approach beyond Dayton to all 16 districts in Montgomery County, to all the Ohio early colleges, and to other cities in the state.

The Design team is led by Learn to Earn Dayton. Dayton Public Schools and Kettering City Schools are the district partners. The higher education partners include the Sinclair Community College, Wright State University, Central State University, the University of Dayton and Miami University. The Boys and Girls Club of Dayton represents the primary youth-serving agency. The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce represents the employer/economic development partners. Montgomery County ESC, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and the Ohio Mayors Alliance constitute the rest of the implementation team

Texas – Scalable Success

Leaders in Central Texas are working to update the current [P-TECH](#) model to enable students to complete an associate degree by their 13th year. Using several existing P-TECH campuses as a guide, this grant will support developing a blueprint for how other P-TECH high schools across the state can offer a 13th year model and identify key policy and funding conditions to enable greater scale within the region and statewide.

The Design team is led by the E3 Alliance. District partners include four Independent School Districts, including Austin ISD, the largest school district serving Central Texas students, as well as three suburban and rural Central Texas ISDs close to Austin, Del Valle, Elgin, Manor. Austin Community College District is the primary higher education partner for this initiative, with others including Huston-Tillotson University, Texas State University, and St. Edward's University. Workforce Solutions of the Capital Area oversees the regional workforce system to empower job seekers, employers and youth.

Utah – Promise Partnership Pathways Initiative

The Promise Partnership Pathways Initiative will work with a single pilot high school serving 2,000 students in Salt Lake City to create intentional pathways designed for students to earn 30 college credits by senior year with an additional year resulting in an associate degree. To do so, the initiative seeks to identify a clear set of concurrent enrollment and 13th year courses that lead to an associate degree or can transfer to a four-year program. Through a combination of student recruitment and awareness-building across the community, developing student work opportunities and business partnerships, and teacher recruitment and retention efforts, the initiative hopes to grow the pathways of focus and replicate the effort at three high school sites in Salt Lake City School District.

The Design team is led by the United Way of Salt Lake. The district partner is Salt Lake City School District, the higher education partner is Salt Lake Community College, and East High School is the site. The Department of Workforce Services represents the employer/economic development partners, and the Salt Lake Education Foundation completes the team.

