



## A Resource for Higher Education Providers

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### AT A GLANCE

Developed to meet the needs of a rapidly changing workforce and labor market, Google Career Certificates are a flexible suite of digital credentials that offer opportunities for short-term skill development leading to high-growth jobs in high-demand fields. In this guide, we offer higher education providers best practices for building and scaling effective credit and noncredit programs that embed the Google Career Certificates to create more accessible pathways to IT and tech-adjacent careers for all learners and workers.

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## About Jobs for the Future

Jobs for the Future (JFF) drives transformation of the American workforce and education systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all. [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org)

## About JFF's Language Choices

JFF is committed to using language that promotes equity and human dignity, rooted in the strengths of the people and communities we serve. We develop our content with the awareness that language can perpetuate privilege but also can educate, empower, and drive positive change to create a more equitable society. We will continually reevaluate our efforts as language usage continues to evolve.

## About Grow with Google

[Grow with Google](#) started in 2017 to help Americans grow their skills, careers, and businesses. It provides training, tools, and expertise to help small business owners, veterans and military families, jobseekers and students, educators, startups, and developers. Since Grow with Google's inception, it has helped more than 10 million Americans develop new skills. Grow with Google has a network of more than 9,000 partner organizations, like libraries, schools, small business development centers, chambers of commerce, and nonprofits, to help people across the country.

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# Executive Summary

This field guide, developed by Jobs for the Future, is a resource for colleges (including community and technical colleges as well as four-year colleges and universities) that are considering offering one or more Google Career Certificates to their learners through credit and noncredit programming. The goal of the guide is to answer your questions about the Certificates, highlight best practices for Certificate delivery, and inspire creative thinking about how to leverage the Certificates in new and existing programs.

The recommendations in this guide are based on JFF's five years of experience providing programmatic technical assistance to 180 colleges offering Google Career Certificates. Throughout this experience, JFF has conducted robust research and evaluation of practices colleges have used to successfully recruit, retain, and support learners as they complete the Certificates and pursue entry-level roles in high-demand fields.

This field guide is meant to be used as a foundational tool as you begin to consider how your Google Career Certificates programming may take shape. We encourage you to be innovative, agile, and collaborative as you build out your Certificate programs.

# Quick-Start Guide

Looking for a quick overview of how to get started offering Google Career Certificates to your learners? Use the links below to jump to specific sections:

## Step 1: Determine Your Why and What

Determine [whether and why](#) your college should offer the Google Career Certificates. Then, select [which certificates](#) you should offer to your learners.

## Step 2: Prepare for Change

Prepare for the introduction of a new initiative by following [change management](#) best practices: develop a vision, identify a champion, and be ready to iterate based on lessons learned.

## Step 3: Design Your Program

In designing your program, determine whether you will offer the Certificates [for credit](#) through your academic programs or start by offering a pilot program in your [workforce development or continuing education](#) departments. Consider how and whether you'll award [credit for prior learning](#) upon completion. Determine whether the program will be delivered in a [hybrid](#) or [fully remote](#) method. Consider what [wraparound supports](#) you will offer to learners to ensure they are successful throughout and after their enrollment in Certificate programs.

## Step 4: Recruit Learners

Once you have designed your program, develop a strategy to [recruit](#) learners to enroll in your Google Career Certificate programs. Don't forget to use the Google [Brand Resource Center](#) when developing your materials.

## Step 5: Engage Employers

Most learners enroll in Google Career Certificates because they want to advance in their careers. Point them to [CareerCircle](#) as they complete their programs to support their career development. [Engage local and regional employers](#) to communicate the value of the Certificates and help socialize the benefit of hiring Google Career Certificate graduates for their entry-level positions. Consider encouraging your employer partners to join the [Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium](#).

# Purpose and Framing

The number of individuals in the United States who have some college experience but no credential (certificate or degree) has been growing in nearly every state for the past several years, most recently reaching 40.4 million in July 2021.<sup>1</sup> Burdened by high costs and inaccessible institutions, more learners are leaving higher education in favor of entering the labor market at a faster pace. According to JFF's [Big Blur](#) report, "Many students simply cannot manage and finance school, work, and family over the years it takes to complete a degree. They end up 'stopping out,' never to return."<sup>2</sup>

Inclusive of and beyond these learners with some college experience but no degree is a large community of individuals who are actively seeking work but unable to access full-time, high-wage employment. Also known as "hidden workers," this diverse group consists of caregivers, veterans, immigrants and refugees, those with physical disabilities, and relocating partners and spouses.<sup>3</sup> One of the greatest challenges facing this population of 27 million potential workers is the widening training gap, which has made it challenging to obtain the skills needed to keep pace with the rapid change in many high-growth occupations.<sup>4</sup>

As such, there is a widespread and growing need for short-term skill development and credentialing opportunities that lead to high-wage, high-demand jobs for a broader population of learners and workers. For these programs to be successful, there must be collaboration across sectors to expand validation, adoption, and recognition of non-degree training pathways that supply learners and workers with the necessary skills to transition into and advance in these careers. Digital credentials, such as Google Career Certificates, offer an accessible, fast-paced, and flexible response to this need.

## The Role of Digital Credentials

With learners stopping out of college at a higher rate, there has been a dramatic shift in employer expectations for entry-level credentials. In early 2022, Burning Glass (now [Lightcast](#)) projected that "an additional 1.4 million jobs could open to workers without college degrees over the next five years."<sup>5</sup> Some large employers are beginning to lead this change. In 2021, IBM announced it was reconsidering its talent requirements and expectations in job postings and had already removed "bachelor's degree requirements from more than half of their U.S. job postings."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, across its organization, Accenture reduced the number of information technology (IT) jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher by over 10% between 2017 and 2021.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these shifts, and a general willingness to consider a new approach to hiring, many employers and learners are hesitant to be early adopters of this trend. While "68% of employers

believe that organizations should hire candidates from non-degree pathways,” according to the JFF and the American Student Assistance’s (ASA) Degrees of Risk report, 54% are still hesitant to forego a college degree requirement given the belief that hiring a candidate without a college degree is risky. Similarly, 74% of Gen Z individuals, defined as those born after 1997,<sup>8</sup> “want to learn skills that prepare [them] for jobs that will be in demand in the future” but are concerned that college is the only place they can go to be prepared for these jobs.<sup>9</sup>

Learners and employers want more information about non-degree pathways to help inform their decisions and promote skills-based hiring pathways. Institutions of higher education are established entities that can expand adoption of digital credentials like Google Career Certificates by pairing the technical knowledge of the credential with wraparound supports, professional development, and job-readiness training to enhance learner employability. These supplemental resources are often necessary to support positive career outcomes for learners beyond skill and knowledge attainment.<sup>10</sup> Offering “blended courses that couple in-person coaching and supplementary instruction with accessible, asynchronous online college-level content” is an evidence-based practice that has expanded access to college credits and relevant career development opportunities for learners.<sup>11</sup> By integrating short-term digital credentials into their academic and workforce development programs, colleges can be leaders in driving change, helping learners develop the skills they need to achieve a high-wage job at a pace aligned with employer needs. Best practices for designing this integration are the focus of this guide.

## **Creating On-Ramps to Tech and Tech-Adjacent Careers**

As technology advances and becomes ever-more prevalent across our society, the growth of tech sector employment is expected to grow at twice the rate of overall employment across the economy over the next 10 years.<sup>12</sup> This demand is not exclusive to tech sector employers, which account for only about 10% of technology jobs. Some 90% of technology jobs, which have a median annual wage of \$76,000,<sup>13</sup> are at companies in non-tech sectors such as finance, manufacturing, professional services, and management.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the widespread and ongoing growth of tech occupations, access to these jobs has not been equitable. Across the United States in 2022, Black and Latinx workers represented 12% and 16% of the overall workforce, respectively, but only 8% of tech occupations. Self-identified women represented 49% of the overall workforce and only 26% of tech occupations. The data does not provide insight into people identifying as nonbinary. These gaps demonstrate underrepresentation of each of these identity categories across the tech sector; however, that does not mean there is a corresponding lack of interest in these career opportunities.<sup>15</sup> In a recent survey by JFF, while more than 60% of Black adults indicated they would consider a career change into tech sector occupations, more than half of those respondents said they did not know where to begin on such a



transition and did not feel they had the necessary skills, resources, and connections to make the switch.<sup>16</sup> The expansion of digital credentials that train for high-wage tech sector jobs is helping to reduce these gaps.<sup>17</sup> Some 75% of Black Google Career Certificate graduates in JFF's 2023 college portfolio reported positive impacts (e.g., continued education, internships, job interviews, and increased confidence) as a result of Certificate completion.<sup>18</sup>

## Intended Audience and Covered Topics

In recognition of these changing trends in career education, this field guide is meant to provide a roadmap to help higher education leaders build robust, evidence-based programs for offering the suite of Google Career Certificates to their learners. It covers not only tangible information about the delivery of the Certificates but offers some considerations for change management and how to effectively socialize this new initiative to faculty, staff, and learners.

The guide may initially be of use to those at the executive level, those at the dean level and other higher education leaders and decision makers, program administrators, and directors in academic, workforce development, and dual enrollment programs who are identifying opportunities for integrating short-term digital credentials into their programs. As the design and delivery of these programs begins, instructors, program managers, and campus partners will find the available resources and examples helpful to inform strategies for content delivery and learner support.

Topics covered include:

- About the Google Career Certificates and Career Pathways
- An Overview of JFF's Google Career Certificates Community College Program
- An Introduction to Change Management and College Readiness
- Learner Journey Mapping
- Program Models and Delivery Methods
- Wraparound Supports
- Learner Recruitment
- Employer Engagement

# Why Offer the Google Career Certificates

As technology-related jobs continue to expand and employers broaden their commitment to skills-based hiring, as opposed to just degree-based hiring, there is a growing need for colleges to provide short-term credentialing opportunities that are accessible and responsive to student needs. Offering Google Career Certificates allows colleges to meet students where they are and expand the institution's portfolio of flexible and market-ready credential options. In addition to strengthening the institution's offerings, the Certificates present unique opportunities and methodologies for learner engagement.

Google Career Certificates are a way for colleges to offer flexible training for tech and tech-related roles that can be embedded within a degree program or offered as a standalone course. The Certificates are aligned with high-growth, in-demand jobs in tech and tech-adjacent fields, enabling colleges to position themselves as key training providers within a growing ecosystem of quality jobs—from learners, to employers, to incumbent workers. You can learn about the ever-growing suite of Google Career Certificates by visiting the [Grow with Google website](#).

Department of Labor market data can support your college's initial decision on which specific Certificate(s) to offer. JFF recommends that colleges considering the Certificates review data on current employment, projected employment, job postings, and skills to identify which occupations are most relevant within the region. These data can be accessed from the U.S. Department of Labor's [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) and from companies such as [Lightcast](#), which aggregates both government data and job posting analytics. Comparing these data with enrollment interest from learners can inform how to begin and sustainably grow your program.

This section explores ways in which Google Career Certificates can advance your college's strategic goals in terms of learner recruitment and engagement, particularly those related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Below are some of the key features that make the Google Career Certificates a compelling learning program for colleges to offer.

## College alignment with career learning and increased ROI

As more learners worry about the high cost of college and are hesitant to accrue student debt, sentiments about the value of higher education have never been lower. In fact, 56% of Americans reported that they don't feel the cost of a college degree is worth it because people graduate without the skills they need to land a job and with too much debt to pay off. That number has increased by 9% since 2017.<sup>19</sup>

Offering Google Career Certificates is a strategic way for colleges to respond to both of these concerns. First, colleges can communicate that they are offering opportunities to obtain in-demand skill sets for high-growth jobs. Second, the Certificates can help increase a learner's return on investment, alleviating financial concerns. For example, business administration and management majors who acquire data analysis skills can increase their entry-level salary by 29%.<sup>20</sup> By integrating the Google Career Certificates into postsecondary options, colleges can demonstrate that they hear learners' hesitations and are identifying ways to be responsive to those concerns. This guide explores ways colleges can offer the Certificates to engage new audiences, re-engage alumni, and increase their visibility with local communities.

### **Diverse options for learners**

Google Career Certificates are designed to be accessible to learners from a variety of backgrounds, education levels, languages, and career paths, including those with no prior knowledge or experience working in tech-related fields. Offering short-term credentials with the opportunity for flexible, asynchronous learning across a variety of topic areas enables greater accessibility for learners who are working or managing childcare or eldercare responsibilities, and other learners who otherwise may have previously faced barriers to accessing higher education.

The Certificates provide targeted curriculum aligned with in-demand jobs and are intended to prepare learners for entry-level positions in high-growth occupations in tech and tech-adjacent fields. Importantly, these roles are found across all sectors of the economy, including but not limited to technology, business, health systems, and hospitality. As such, the Certificates can be embedded into a diverse range of program offerings and leveraged to meet the needs of a wide variety of learners.

### **Recruitment strategy for college enrollment**

The trust and respect of an established entity such as a college combined with the brand recognition of Google presents a strong value proposition for learner enrollment. Your college's decision to offer these Certificates in conjunction with existing wraparound services provides an enticing opportunity for learners to enroll in your institution's other available programs. Colleges can leverage this attraction by offering credit for prior learning to learners who have completed one or more of the Google Career Certificates. This offers a bridge from noncredit to credit programs and accelerates learners toward additional certificates or degrees. More details on implementing CPL pathways for the Google Career Certificates are provided in the [Program Models](#) section.

It is important to identify clear reasons for offering Google Career Certificates and understand individuals' motivations for participation before building out a comprehensive recruitment strategy. More information on how to recruit learners into your Google Career Certificates program can be found in the [Learner Recruitment](#) section.

## Flexible structure, design, and approach

Google Career Certificates are flexible and can be implemented in a variety of ways, ranging in modality, degree of integration, timeline, and other factors. To achieve a Google Career Certificate, learners must be able to pass all required assessments and peer-graded assignments in the curriculum. Therefore, you can customize when and how to leverage Google course content to deliver key information based on the subject matter expertise of your current instructors and support staff.

Some decisions you will be able to make as you design your program include:

- Which content may be most relevant to an existing course
- Which content may be taught by the instructor as opposed to using Google's videos and essays
- Whether the Certificate content will be used as the primary mode of instruction or as a supplemental resource (for instance, in place of a textbook)
- Whether learners will complete modules asynchronously or during class time
- How to design classroom discussions and learning experiences based on your program's goals and how your students are experiencing the material
- Which supportive services learners in credit or noncredit programs will have access to and how they will connect with these services (for example, through your institution or local and regional partners)

Because of this flexibility, Google Career Certificates can be a great resource for your institution whether you are introducing a brand-new subject area or enhancing an existing program. More details and considerations that may be useful when designing your service delivery model are discussed throughout this guide.

## Employer demand for skills

Google Career Certificates prepare learners for a variety of occupations and can connect them to both entry-level and more advanced roles with in-demand skill sets that prepare them for high-growth career options. While learners' previous education and experiences will inform how they are able to navigate the job market, you can expect them to increase both technical skills and soft skills, such as time management, self-motivation, and a commitment and willingness to learn. The Certificates are increasingly being leveraged in new ways with existing and new employer relationships, with some employers using them as a tool to upskill incumbent workers. The [Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium](#) consists of more than 150 employers committed to skills-based hiring in fields aligned to Google Career Certificates. Learn more about the employer consortium and development employer partnerships in the [Employer Engagement](#) section.



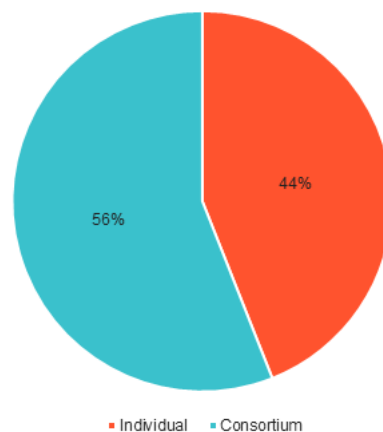
The portfolio included a diverse range of colleges in terms of size, classification, and population focus. Notably, implementation of the Google Career Certificates requires time, attention, and resources to launch, to varying degrees based on implementation methods. Small and very small institutions will need to be thoughtful and realistic about available capacity as they design their programs.

Institution Type	N	Percent of Portfolio
<b>Associate's (Two-year only)</b>	85	87%
<b>Bachelor's + Associate's</b>	6	6%
<b>Bachelor's</b>	1	1%
<b>Master's</b>	1	1%
<b>Doctoral</b>	5	5%
<b>Total Institutions</b>	98	100%

The majority of colleges in this initiative were two-year, associate-granting institutions, though several institutions also granted bachelor's, master's, and/or doctoral degrees. While 13 institutions offered degrees beyond an associate's, Google Career Certificates were offered only in baccalaureate programs at these institutions.

Thirty-eight institutions in the portfolio were designated rural-serving institutions. Nearly one-quarter of the sample included Hispanic-serving institutions, while two institutions in the portfolio were a historically Black college or university and three were predominantly Black institutions. (Note: There was some overlap with a few HSIs also having HBCU or PBI designations). Overall, 28% of the institutions in the portfolio were minority-serving institutions.

**Figure 1. Institutions Classified as Individual or Consortium Participants**



Colleges had the opportunity to join this portfolio independently or as a member of a consortium based on location and existing partnerships (e.g. the City University of New York, or CUNY, system). The breakdown of these institutions was roughly even, with 44% opting to offer the Certificates independently and 56% offering them as a member of a consortium. Consortia were diverse in their makeup, with some offering Certificates to individual colleges through a more formal, centralized program and some working with one another to share lessons learned throughout the implementation process.

Throughout their implementation, all colleges had access to a community of practice, including both a community of practitioners designing and delivering their Google Career Certificate programs and a resource website. Colleges were also invited to regular webinars and affinity group discussions and given access to individual coaches to support their unique implementation needs. By connecting with other colleges, whether in a consortium or through the community of practice, college administrators and instructors were able to gain feedback on implementation strategies, discuss the challenges they faced, and innovate on their existing programs. JFF recommends finding ways to build community with other Google Career Certificate providers as you build out your program.

## Leading Organizational Change

The introduction of industry-developed credentials, such as the Google Career Certificates, into academic curriculum and workforce development programs may be new for many institutions of higher education. To ensure a smooth adoption and integration process, it is important for those leading the introduction of the Certificates to acknowledge the change management process and implications of change as they dive into this work. The Project Management Institute defines change management as “a comprehensive, cyclic, and structured approach for transitioning individuals, groups, and organizations from a current state to a future state with intended business benefits.”<sup>22</sup> Generally speaking, change management theory suggests that the most effective and successful changes occur when institutions employ “purposeful and dynamic strategies that anticipate, influence, and respond effectively to emergent and shifting external trends, patterns, and events.”<sup>23</sup> Being thoughtful and strategic as you prepare to introduce Google Career Certificates to your academic or workforce ecosystem will enhance the success of your efforts.

### Agile and Entrepreneurial Leadership

Colleges that cultivate an agile and entrepreneurial spirit when introducing Google Career Certificates into their offerings have been the most effective at building successful, scalable, and sustainable programs. As discussed earlier in this guide, the higher education landscape is changing and demand for stackable credentials, flexible learning programs, and rapid upskilling opportunities is on the rise. Colleges that hold rigidly to traditional methods of education delivery may struggle to compete in this changing market. As growing numbers of corporations develop their own education

programs for deployment in secondary, postsecondary, and workforce contexts (such as the Google Career Certificates), colleges that respond by identifying opportunities for collaboration are likely to best capitalize on this trend in support of their enrollment and retention goals.<sup>24</sup>

Designing new programs—or integrating credentials into existing programs—that leverage available skills-based curricula with your college’s strengths presents an opportunity for educational innovation. One of the most important things to keep in mind as you embark on this initiative is that leadership is about momentum, not consensus. You are encouraged to start with an initial, small-scale pilot effort so you have opportunities for further development and iteration of your Google Career Certificate programming.

### **Principles of Effective Change Management in Higher Education**

In 2017, [Deloitte](#) released a report on the following seven principles of effective change management in higher education, each of which aligns with recommended strategies for introducing the Google Career Certificates at your institution:

- **Start with the end in mind.** What goals do you hope to achieve by offering Google Career Certificates at your institution? Having a clear vision of your program’s intended impact will help drive decision-making throughout the planning phase. Anticipate who might be an early supporter and who might be a strong critic of this new program and engage those individuals early in the planning process to cultivate buy-in and inform program design. For example, Illinois Central College [received a grant](#) through the Economic Development Administration’s Good Jobs Challenge to upskill incumbent workers in IT jobs and make room for new individuals to join the IT workforce. The college sees the Google Career Certificates as a key tool to meet that need and is designing its program to achieve those goals.
- **Understand the institution’s culture.** Take the time to assess how the Certificates fit into your institution’s mission, align with your college’s values, and contribute to the institutional identity. Carefully consider which divisions and departments might be the best place to pilot this type of initiative. For instance, Shawnee Community College recognized that many of its learners work at small local businesses, so it adopted the Digital Marketing and E-commerce Certificate to achieve the dual goal of providing valuable skills to its learners and strengthening small businesses in its community.
- **Communicate, communicate, communicate.** Once you have clarified your vision and identified how the Certificates fit into your institution, give voice to your vision. Communicate regularly with all relevant stakeholders and leverage various methods to reach the diverse communication styles of your audience. For example, provide frequent status updates via email, create a virtual collaboration space (such as a Google Group) for those engaged in the project, and identify a regular meeting cadence to discuss progress toward initiative milestones.



- **Walk a mile in the shoes of those whose roles will change.** As already mentioned, you will need to cultivate buy-in from faculty and instructional staff when introducing your Certificate programs. Take time to understand how the Certificates will change people's current roles and responsibilities. Identify champions and collaborate with them to understand and collect feedback on the impact of your changes. Successful colleges often enlist those who communicate the most interest and enthusiasm in the Certificates to contribute to the design and implementation of pilot programs. These individuals can then help communicate the value of the program to others in a way that fosters greater trust.
- **Create win-wins and align incentives.** Find ways to make your Google Career Certificates program work for multiple programs. How can this improve various areas of the institution? How can you leverage diverse interests as you navigate change? Identify these benefits and communicate how collaboration on this initiative will positively impact colleagues across the institution. Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College sees the Google Career Certificates as helpful tools that can serve a broad population of students across programs, including local high school students, first-year experience students, students enrolled in TRIO programs, adult education students, students participating in recovery programming, and students in several other academic and workforce development programs.
- **Embrace relentless incrementalism to help achieve radical change.** Pilot a smaller program by engaging the faculty who are excited to experiment with initiatives. Introduce the Certificates with a specific class or program where there is clear alignment. Collect feedback regularly and implement changes as you learn from the process. The University of Texas at Arlington began offering the Google Career Certificates to a small number of transfer students through its Power Up + Tech Up pilot. It expanded the learners served and the support services offered as it understood what types of encouragement learners responded to and needed to be successful.
- **You won't get what you don't measure.** Coursera offers metrics for measuring impact and program success. Using these tools can help quantify the impact of your program. The [Coursera Administrator's Guide](#) provides an overview of available reports and metrics. You may also consider conducting interviews and focus groups for qualitative assessment. Chippewa Valley Technical College found that women were enrolling and completing the Google IT Support Professional Certificate at a higher rate than they were in the institution's traditional IT program, demonstrating the impact that the Certificate is having on expanding access to IT careers for women, who are underrepresented in tech sector jobs.<sup>25</sup>

When deciding to implement Google Career Certificates, several key players should be involved in early conversations. Colleges that are able to successfully introduce this initiative loosely follow the roles and responsibilities outlined in the table below.

Key Decision Makers		Core Faculty and Staff
<b>Role</b>	<p>Contribute to strategic planning and vision and help steer institutional commitments.</p> <p><b>Examples include</b> provosts, vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, and executive directors</p>	<p>Directly responsible for delivering the Certificates through instruction, wraparound supports, administrative oversight, management of the delivery platform, and other day-to-day operations.</p> <p><b>Examples include</b> instructors, professors, program administrators, coordinators, program managers, student success coaches, career services, and instructional designers</p>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and communicate alignment with strategic plan and vision</li> <li>• Decide where the program(s) will live</li> <li>• Develop a sustainability and resourcing approach</li> <li>• Identify scaling strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regular communications with relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Identify and deliver wraparound supports to learners</li> <li>• Recruit learners</li> <li>• Provide instruction and technical support</li> <li>• Report on outcomes and progress</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Shared Responsibilities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design program delivery model</li> <li>• Coordinate articulation agreements through credit for prior learning processes</li> <li>• Socialize and champion your college's Google Career Certificates offering throughout the campus</li> <li>• Support assessment and evaluation efforts for continuous improvement and iteration</li> </ul>		
<b>Sample Certificate Implementation Committee</b>		
<p>As a best practice, JFF recommends that the following staff (or their equivalents) be involved in the implementation of the Google Career Certificates: <b>dean</b> (of unit or area offering the Certificates), any <b>faculty members or instructors directly delivering the Certificates</b>, <b>career and academic coach(es)</b>, <b>instructional designer</b>, <b>IT representative</b>, and <b>career services representative</b>.</p>		

# The Learner's Journey

Take some time to map out a learner's journey through your Google Career Certificate program. While learner journeys across institutions may vary, all learners will generally progress through a linear process, beginning with enrollment and ending with program completion and successive outcomes (for example, job placement or continued academic enrollment). It's important to consider the challenges that may arise at each stage as well as anticipate what support you can provide for learners throughout their experience. Additional information on recommended supports can be found in the [Wraparound Supports](#) section. The below chart provides an example of the challenges that learners may face throughout their journey, along with the relevant supports that may support them in overcoming these challenges.

	Learner Challenges	Potential Supports	Suggested Resources
<b>Recruitment and Enrollment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of familiarity with the field or program</li> <li>• Limited sense of time commitment and required equipment</li> <li>• Gaps in knowledge around career pathways and day-to-day experience of careers</li> <li>• Messaging that isn't culturally relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host synchronous information sessions</li> <li>• Create opportunities for career exploration</li> <li>• Create a pacing calendar outlining the time to complete the program</li> <li>• Share localized earning information</li> <li>• Offer one-on-one appointments to talk through the opportunity</li> <li>• Create recruitment materials that gear messaging toward the target audience and their lived experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Google Career Certificate Overview Page</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Google Career Certificate Promotional Materials</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Google Career Certificate Navigation Tool (designed for nonprofit providers but applicable to all)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Google's Brand Resource Center</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Grow with Google Landing Page</a></li> </ul>
<b>Retention and Completion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to build foundational knowledge (for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct learner readiness assessments before enrollment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NorthStar Digital Literacy Assessments</a></li> </ul>

	<p>example, reading, math, digital literacy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule and availability changes</li> <li>• Lack of access to hardware and broadband</li> <li>• Confusion with the Coursera platform</li> <li>• Persisting through challenging content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage learners to put their goals in writing</li> <li>• Provide consistent touchpoints from instructional teams and student support staff; consider having advanced students act as peer mentors</li> <li>• Document where learners can go for assistance</li> <li>• List locations where learners can access hardware and Wi-Fi</li> <li>• Establish learner support group and communication channels</li> <li>• Provide incentives</li> <li>• Celebrate milestones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Coursera Technical Support Resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Offering of Academic, Career Exploration, and Wraparound Supports (from JFF's Framework for a High-Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">“When ‘Life’ Becomes a Barrier to Success in Tech, Support Services Can Help”</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Career Guidance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps in social capital and personal connections to relevant fields</li> <li>• Difficulty navigating different career pathway options</li> <li>• Difficulty understanding which roles to search for and where</li> <li>• Difficulty finding opportunities aligned with interests and skill sets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange internship or career exploration events</li> <li>• Connect learners with opportunities for industry mentoring and informational interviews</li> <li>• Encourage learners to build portfolios to showcase their work products and accomplishments</li> <li>• Create a job search action plan template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Grow with Google Career Advancement Resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">JFF Professional Social Capital Framework: A Key to Black Economic Advancement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Generation USA Introduction to Tech</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">O*NET OnLine</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SAMPLE Job Search Action Plan Template (Regis College)</a></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage the Google-provided <a href="#">CareerCircle</a> platform</li> </ul>	
<b>Work-Based Learning and Job Placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges communicating one's skills and what one has learned</li> <li>Variability of local job opportunities</li> <li>Feeling overwhelmed by job search</li> <li>Work experience or college degree requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct mock interview events</li> <li>Host resume writing workshops</li> <li>Share resources available to learners (CareerCircle, Big Interview)</li> <li>Check in with learners post-completion</li> <li>Host job fairs with local industry partners</li> <li>Update LinkedIn profiles</li> <li>Engage employers in recognizing Certificate value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">CareerCircle</a></li> <li><a href="#">Grow with Google Job Search Resources</a></li> <li><a href="#">Building Effective Technology Internships</a> (JFF research with the National Science Foundation)</li> <li><a href="#">Big Interview resources</a></li> <li><a href="#">JFF's Employer Engagement Resources</a></li> <li><a href="#">CareerOneStop</a></li> </ul>

Work with faculty and staff supporting the Google Career Certificate program at your college to create a timeline for learner milestones, check-ins, and deadlines. Communicating with learners on a regular basis will help them remain connected to your institution throughout their journey. Offering opportunities for learners to be involved in the process can also yield important insights, such as when it is helpful to hear from an instructor or how a Certificate can help a learner achieve their goals.

Questions to keep in mind as you review your learner journey:

1. Which learners will your college be focusing on for this initiative?
2. Where can you identify or anticipate gaps, pitfalls, or challenges happening?
3. What do you want to achieve at each phase of the learner journey?
4. Which stakeholders do you need to engage throughout the learner experience?

# Program Models

Depending on the capacity of your college and the needs of your learners, Google Career Certificate programming can be taught through various program designs. Each method of Certificate integration requires its own level of engagement from faculty and staff and offers its own benefits to learners. Certificate programming can be offered in noncredit workforce development and continuing education programs, at high schools as dual enrollment, or within a degree program. The Certificates are nimble enough to serve as standalone curriculum or be embedded within an existing course. There are numerous opportunities to develop an instructional design that works for you and your learners.

Regardless of program design, JFF recommends that instructors complete or audit the Certificate they're offering before sharing with learners. This will enable instructional teams to more intimately understand the content material, forecast where learners may experience challenges, and identify relevant supplemental resources.

## Workforce Development and Continuing Education

Offering Google Career Certificates as noncredit workforce development or continuing education programming draws a diverse population of learners, including those who may be deterred by college admission requirements and the rigid academic semester schedule. Working adults and individuals with limited postsecondary experience may be more apt to commit to short-term, noncredit training to build confidence and better manage competing priorities due to work and family obligations. In fact, one-quarter of Google Career Certificate completers from community colleges and universities report feeling more confident about their education after completion.<sup>26</sup>

Participating colleges have found that noncredit learners benefit from the same holistic learner supports as their counterparts in credit-bearing programs to ensure success. Many colleges offering Google Career Certificates for the first time start with a small, noncredit pilot, as it is one of the quickest and fastest ways to get a program started and enroll learners. This initial design may allow you to understand the capacity it takes to run the program, troubleshoot challenges, train faculty on the Coursera platform and modules, and socialize the adoption of the Google Career Certificates across campus. It also provides time to collect the necessary data (e.g., enrollment numbers, full-time equivalent hours required to implement, and cost of delivery) to make the case for developing a sustainable model and identify which wraparound services are most effective to support learner success. Running a pilot also gives colleges the opportunity to align noncredit courses with existing workforce development programming—for example, integrating these courses with other offerings that are eligible for federal and state training funding.

You can integrate Certificates into your college's workforce development or continuing education programming in various ways. The following are some specific approaches.

## **Strategies for Workforce Development Program Integration**

### **Standalone Offering**

One of the most common ways colleges implement Google Career Certificates in their workforce development programs is as a standalone offering, whereby learners can enroll in the Certificate program of their choice through the college and focus on the coursework provided by the Certificate. Colleges may decide to provide this offering as a self-paced asynchronous option or require built-in lab or synchronous class meeting times. Shawnee Community College in Illinois has built out its standalone programming through [ICAPS](#), the state's I-BEST model, that informs their teaching. In this model, learners enrolled in Google Career Certificate programs are concurrently enrolled in an adult education support course.

### **Career Pathway Programs**

Colleges have also built Google Career Certificates into their existing workforce development programs for specific career pathways, which are typically composed of short-term stackable trainings or credentials. The main example of this type of programming to date has been the IT Support Certificate, through which learners who have no experience in IT can gain valuable foundational skills that prepare them to take the CompTIA A+ coursework and certification exams. Given the alignment in content between Google Career Certificates and other industry-aligned credentials, this approach can work for a range of pathway programs beyond IT support.

Pathway programs aligned with Google Career Certificates include:

- Google IT Support Certificate and CompTIA A+ Certification
- Google IT Support Certificate and Google IT Automation with Python Certificate
- Google Project Management Certificate and PMP Project Management Certification
- Google Cybersecurity Certificate and CompTIA Security+ Certification
- Google Data Analytics Certificate and Google Advanced Data Analytics and Business Intelligence Certificates

### **Work-Based Learning**

Google Career Certificates can also be leveraged as a curriculum for learners participating in work-based learning programs. The Certificates can provide valuable foundational knowledge as part of a pre-apprenticeship or internship training program or be used as a co-curriculum for learners during a work-based learning experience to develop industry knowledge while building skills from hands-on

experiences. For example, College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California, uses the Google IT Support Professional Certificate to prepare learners for a Cybersecurity Apprenticeship program. The Certificate is offered remotely as a noncredit option. CoC maintains a robust network of employer partners for learner job placement and to engage incumbent workers in upskilling opportunities.

## Case Study

### Implementing Google Career Certificates in Noncredit Adult Education Programs

[Lassen Community College](#) in Susanville, California, has been offering Google Career Certificates for three years and, in that time, has expanded its suite of offerings through noncredit workforce development programming. The college, situated in rural northern California, has found the Certificates to be helpful for learners to explore remote and in-person jobs in the area.

The Google IT Support Professional Certificate has been consistently offered to Lassen's learners on a semesterly basis within the Adult Education program catalog. Offering the Certificate as a virtual, standalone option has removed barriers for potential learners. Lassen views the Certificate as a low-risk, no-cost way for learners to explore the tech industry within their workforce preparation courses. As learners progress through the Certificate's modules, Lassen instructors offer individual career coaching conversations.

The instructor managing the Google Career Certificate program created tailored videos to smoothly onboard learners in a completely remote learning environment. The instructor also established multiple touchpoints for virtual peer sharing via Canvas, Lassen's LMS, and provided guidance through the course, including a calendar with guided pacing. This completely remote delivery model allows learners at the rural institution to engage without traveling to campus.

Depending on interests, some learners are connected to for-credit courses that have been mapped to the individual IT Support modules. Other learners begin working in related fields immediately after completing their Certificate, with at least one learner being hired to join the Lassen IT department following completion.

Lassen continues to look toward the future, thinking creatively about how the Google Career Certificates can be further integrated into noncredit programming to reach more learners and help them achieve their education and career goals.



## For-Credit Academic Programming

Embedding Google Career Certificates into existing credit programs lets learners earn a short-term credential while working toward a degree. The Certificates supplement program learning outcomes, providing the learner with additional skill sets and a competitive advantage when seeking employment. Google Career Certificate curricula are also a means for learners to explore a potential career pathway by earning a Certificate while earning credits toward a degree. Some participating colleges see value in offering Certificates as electives in non-IT pathways such as engineering, logistics, business, or the humanities, because the foundational knowledge and skills gained from Certificate coursework can be applied in a range of industries and occupations.

Faculty across various academic departments have embedded one or more of the Certificates into existing classes, using Certificate content to both supplement preexisting curricula or comprise the majority of the course. When embedding into a broader curriculum, some faculty have required the completion of the Certificate for students to receive credit while other participating colleges have offered Certificate access as an optional resource that supplements the formal coursework. It's important to note that faculty who required completion of the Certificate for a grade, or toward completion of the course, saw much higher completion rates among Certificate earners. Google has made it easy to award credit for the Google Career Certificates, as they have already been accredited by the [American Council on Education](#).

The following are some ideas for where and how to integrate the Certificates into your academic programs.

### Ideas for Academic Program Integration

#### Computer Science, IT, Tech

The Google Career Certificates have been embedded in computer science and adjacent specialties since the initial IT Support Professional Certificate was launched in 2018. As Google released additional Certificates, the ways in which they could be offered to students pursuing degrees in computer science, IT, and other tech sectors also expanded.

Each of the currently available Certificates can be situated within a computer science-related discipline, depending on what type of role learners may be seeking post-completion. For example, the Google IT Support Professional Certificate prepares learners for roles as help desk operators, while the Google IT Automation with Python Professional Certificate builds on that foundation to prepare learners for jobs as junior systems analysts. Certificates such as the Digital Marketing and E-Commerce Professional Certificate complement the field and provide applicable skills for a variety of computer science and IT-related positions as well, including search engine optimization (SEO) specialist. Dallas College has integrated several of the Certificates into IT pathways, including

Project Management into ITSC 1315 – Project Management Software and IT Automation into ITSE 2370 – Intermediate Python Programming. It also offers a standalone course for the Google IT Support Professional Certificate, ITSC 1370 (which is also offered as a noncredit continuing education course, ITSC 1070).

### **Business and Marketing**

Many of the skills and tools presented within the suite of Google Career Certificates have broad-reaching applications, including within business and marketing professions. Learners who are broadly interested in a career in business or marketing may find that the Certificates help them identify whether they like a certain area of work and develop skills that prepare them more adequately for their first role after graduating. The Certificates can be embedded in programs with various areas of focus, including entrepreneurship, business management, marketing, supply chain, and more.

The Google Marketing and E-Commerce Professional Certificate helps prepare learners for entry-level roles in marketing and social media management. The Google UX Design Professional Certificate provides learners with critical digital visual design skills that can be applied to a career in marketing. Learners who complete the Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate may be positioned for roles such as business performance analyst, which is particularly helpful for those interested in starting or growing their own business. The University of Texas Permian Basin has integrated the Data Analytics Certificate into MRKT: 4304 – Digital Marketing Analytics.

### **Humanities**

One of the more recent innovations from colleges has been the implementation of the Google Career Certificates in four-year humanities programs. Particularly as online short-term credentials increase in popularity among learners and employers, “humanities departments might embrace ... cross-cutting programming as a way to bring in students who are drawn to such disciplines but feel they need computing skills for their careers.”<sup>27</sup> This unique approach provides humanities students with access to both a broad liberal arts education and a specific skill set, leading to an opportunity for increased wages, that often feels out of reach to students not explicitly studying IT or computer science. Psychology majors who acquire IT management skills can increase their entry-level salary by 35%. Similarly, English language and literature majors who acquire project management skills can increase their entry-level salary by 29% and history majors who acquire data analysis skills can increase their entry-level salary by 38%.<sup>28</sup>

To determine which Certificate to include in which humanities and liberal arts pathway, you may start by identifying entry-level jobs aligned with humanities disciplines and compare the skills gaps to the available Certificate programs. For example, the University of Texas System wanted to increase the earning potential of humanities majors, so it charged institutions with identifying which Certificates would provide career-ready skills to complement the writing and critical thinking gained in humanities

coursework and support access to entry-level jobs. As part of the initiative, the University of Texas at Tyler now embeds the UX Design Professional Certificate into a course for English majors to help learners develop relevant skills for jobs in technical writing and copywriting.

## Case Study

### Embedding Google Career Certificates Into Credit-Bearing Academic Course Curricula

[South Texas College](#) in McAllen, Texas, offers certificates and associate's and bachelor's degrees to learners in the Rio Grande Valley, serving primarily Latinx learners. Because colleges and community organizations that serve the region have enthusiastically noted that "students who learn in the Valley stay in the Valley," they are engaging learners as they progress through a technology-related bachelor's program to prepare them for the local job market. South Texas College has embedded the Google Career Certificates into two credit-bearing courses within its bachelor of applied technology in computer and information technologies (BAT-CIT): the Google Project Management Professional Certificate in the CITP 4340 Special Topics course and the IT Automation With Python Professional Certificate in the CITP 4301 Capstone.

Thanks to the efforts of those within the computer science and BAT-CIT department, South Texas College learners achieve the relevant Google Career Certificate upon completion of the course. These two courses are offered completely remotely, providing additional flexibility to learners, many of whom continue working in fields related to IT throughout instruction. Completion of the Certificate is 50% of the learner's grade, with the other 50% comprised of complementary activities. South Texas College has found success in offering the Certificate during one course (trying both a 10- and 16-week course with similar success), with a significant weight assigned to completion. Courses are generally structured to include two hours of lecture and three hours of lab each week, with the expectation that learners complete a Certificate course every two weeks. Learners have reported that having a Google Career Certificate in addition to their bachelor's degree has made them more competitive in the job market.

South Texas College's approach to offering the Google Career Certificates has resulted in a completion rate of at least 85% in one semester. As more learners engage with the Certificates, it is the institution's hope that learners advance in their careers. Internal efforts are also underway to expand access to Google Career Certificates through other bachelor's programs within South Texas College.

## Credit for Prior Learning

With the flexible nature of the Google Career Certificates, institutions are increasingly deploying the use of credit for prior learning as a recruitment, retention, and partnership incentive, as well as to serve as an effective bridge between credit and noncredit programs. Participating colleges have used the success of noncredit pilots to make the case for engaging in an accreditation process and to cultivate faculty buy-in. This strategy is compelling for learners as well: Those who initially enroll in the Certificate program as a career exploration opportunity know they can apply earned credits if they complete the program and continue in a credit pathway, which is a powerful motivator. These learners have also already established a relationship with and connection to their college, which supports the transition from noncredit to credit programming. [Delta College](#) and [Peirce College](#) both articulate the academic value of Google Career Certificates clearly to their current and potential students, demonstrating how learners can save time and money by leveraging the Certificates for transfer credit.

Regarding community partnerships, there is also an opportunity to collaborate with existing high school partners to offer CPL to students who may not be dual enrolled but are interested in engaging with the college to earn a Certificate.

While the number of credits to award for Google Career Certificate completion is a decision that is ultimately up to your college, the American Council on Education provides a set of [recommendations](#) that offers foundational assessments for institutions to evaluate the amount of credit to award per Certificate (e.g., completion of the IT Support Certificate awards 12 credits and the Project Management Certificate awards 9 credits). Providing these recommendations to a curriculum committee can be particularly helpful when making the case for CPL to be awarded.

Offering CPL can be a successful strategy in terms of encouraging learners to enroll in your institution, persist through the program, and matriculate into a degree program. However, note that this validation process can take time and requires cooperation among multiple college divisions, including workforce development, continuing education, academic affairs, and especially academic departments whose curriculum is implicated. If your college doesn't already have formal CPL policies and an existing standardization process in place, please see [this JFF resource](#) for more detail.

# Delivery Method

The flexibility Google Career Certificates afford gives colleges a variety of options for implementation, including the method of service delivery. Participating institutions have experienced success with program implementation in a range of modalities. Because the Certificates are offered through Coursera's online platform, this section will focus on fully remote and hybrid delivery methods.

When considering which modality to employ, consider the following questions with your team:

1. How is the broader program being offered? For instance, if the Certificate is embedded within a credit-bearing course, in which modality does that course operate?
2. What learner support resources are available? Is there a physical space or computer lab where learners can gather? Is there a dedicated instructor within the college or region to support learners, either virtually or in person? Do learners otherwise have the technology required to complete Certificate coursework remotely?
3. Do your learners have experience with online education programs or remote learning opportunities? Are your learners socialized to prefer face-to-face or remote learning? How is the majority of the student population engaging with the college? Is the target population for the Certificates aligned with that majority?

Thinking through these questions should yield insights into the best way for you to implement the Google Career Certificates, either fully remote or hybrid. This section explores how to offer the Certificates across these delivery methods, with the caveat that there is no right way to offer Google Career Certificate programming. These decisions are informed by what you know to be best for your community and what works best for your learners.

## Hybrid

Hybrid models can be implemented in a variety of ways, depending on the needs of your learners and instructors. Implementation models can vary from classes with an in-person component that offers open office hours or access to a computer lab to existing in-person classes that provide cohort-model support to learners. Offering components of the Certificates in person, especially if the coursework is required, can increase individual course and Certificate completion rates.

Based on JFF's evaluations of previous work with Google to implement the Google IT Support Professional Certificate, it is our recommendation that you adopt a hybrid model whenever possible. Learners and instructional staff have consistently noted the need to integrate more hands-on lessons

or labs to apply the concepts learned through the Certificate in real-world settings to effectively prepare for work.

Colleges that have chosen a hybrid model often host in-person office hours and other spaces for learners to convene, but most of the learning happens remotely and often asynchronously. Another approach is for learners to take part in an in-person course that meets regularly and complete a Certificate online as one component of the formal coursework. These touchpoints for learners to meet with peers and their instructor in person provide a space for increased community and opportunities for learners to engage more fully with the college.

Rockland Community College in New York engages learners in three 3-hour classes in person before conducting a fourth 3-hour class virtually. This model may be best for learners who thrive in a more structured environment and can be supported with specific dates and times designated for Certificate coursework, like the structure recommended for remote programs. Your college may also consider a hybrid model for learners who may have had less formal education or training, particularly those without postsecondary degrees.

## LMS Integration

To facilitate a positive and seamless learner experience, colleges offering Google Career Certificates can integrate the curriculum, hosted on Coursera, with their institutional internal learning management systems. This is an optional benefit and not required by Google. The process is a one-time configuration, compatible with Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle, and other LMS platforms.

This integration is enabled by single sign-on, meaning learners don't need to log into Coursera separately to access their course of study. When engaging with Certificate programs, learners can view Coursera content in tandem with course curriculum and supplemental resources, streamlining the user experience. As an added benefit, faculty and learners can view grades alongside other activity within the college LMS. However, instructors and faculty will need to know that grade syncing is summative only, populating within the LMS upon module completion and not for individual assignments.

Before pursuing LMS integration, it's important to bring in your IT and technical staff to support the initial setup and provide ongoing back-end maintenance post-setup. For instructions on how to begin the integration process at your college, contact [clientsupport@coursera.org](mailto:clientsupport@coursera.org).

## Fully Remote/Online

As online short-term credentials, Google Career Certificates lend themselves to remote instruction, either synchronous or asynchronous. While offering the Certificates as a remote learning option can give learners the flexibility to complete coursework on their own schedules, it is important to consider which learner support services need to be put in place to ensure learners are set up for success.

If provided with the proper support and guidance, offering the Certificates remotely strengthens learners' time management skills and self-motivation. Learners completing the Certificates remotely also have the chance to explore whether they enjoy and thrive in remote learning environments and if they would be interested in working in a similar setting.

A consideration for this modality is to have a designated instructor or facilitator within the college who can serve as the point of contact for the Certificate program. Additionally, individuals providing support in this capacity are encouraged to create a course calendar or syllabus for learners to ensure they are meeting milestones in line with course objectives. This structure has been critical for persistence and completion, particularly for asynchronous online programs.

Learners in a remote setting may benefit from virtual office hours or other peer networking opportunities to increase feelings of community and camaraderie within the program. This model may be best for learners who have strong time management skills and self-motivation and are comfortable with asynchronous communication.

## Statewide Delivery Models

Many participating colleges offer the Google Career Certificates independently, with their own unique implementation design. Other colleges have collaborated closely with statewide system offices to reap the benefits of partnership and systemic adoption of the Certificates. Approaches to these partnerships include centralized resources, standardized practices, and funding support.

System offices can also support colleges in getting the Certificates on the state's Eligible Training Provider List for ongoing sustainable programming, primarily in noncredit and continuing education settings. Getting your Google Certificate programming approved on the ETPL is important in noncredit and adult education contexts because learners will then be able to leverage WIOA vouchers to enroll in the program, ensuring they can access the Certificate offering(s) at no cost. This is particularly important if there are any learner fees or costs associated with your implementation.

## How to Apply for Your State's ETPL

### For Noncredit Providers

While application process and approval rigor varies by state, all colleges or consortia that want their Certificate offering approved should prepare to connect with their state's workforce agency office and be able to demonstrate, with local labor market information, that their Certificate training is aligned with current labor market conditions to train learners for high-growth, in-demand occupations in their region. Colleges can tie Certificate training to specific occupations using [Standard Occupational Classification](#) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) or [O\\*NET](#). Additional information regarding the Eligible Training Provider List in your state can be found at [CareerOneStop.org](http://CareerOneStop.org).

The documentation typically needed to apply includes a syllabus, a course description, and any supporting material to show how content prepares learners for those identified occupations. You will also need to have the proposed cost, course availability, and other information for career counselors and prospective students to consider as they assess the program. If possible, identify the staffer who oversees the ETPL applications to advocate for and socialize the Google Career Certificate programs and associated outcomes. The ETPL approval process varies by state but can take several months to complete, so colleges are encouraged to build that time into their internal workflow and timeline. One other consideration is that training providers can offer their services across state lines, so consider applying in your state and adjoining state(s) if you regularly enroll out-of-state learners.

Creating a statewide consortium can take time. If individual colleges are operating independently but interested in a statewide approach, it can be helpful to consider integrating the Google Career Certificates into a relevant academy or center of excellence where they are a natural fit. Red tape, lack of experience or awareness of the Certificates, and competing priorities can hinder these efforts. It's recommended that you pilot your Certificate program(s) before implementing at scale. Start the process early and socialize the successes of individual programs publicly—and often—to generate collective buy-in.



In addition to statewide approaches, participating colleges have also found success establishing consortia based on proximity and service delivery area. Examples include city-specific models (for example, The City University of New York) or regional partners (for example, New England Workforce Network), all of which can offer similar collaborative value as statewide approaches.

The following are practical examples of statewide partnership and collaboration.

## Examples From the Field

### Ivy Tech

A strong example of how this approach has been successfully applied in the field is Ivy Tech Community College's statewide [Ivy+ IT Academy](#). Through this centralized tech academy, Google Career Certificate programming is standardized and offered to learners at 19 participating colleges, with built-in flexibility for individual institutions. A team, including a director of operations, onboarding specialist, and marketing and communications staffer, is dedicated to this effort and serves as the liaison to participating colleges. The team provides support by convening colleges as needed, centralizing communication, and understanding individual college capacity to meet overall system goals.

Currently, the IT Support offering is standardized across the system as a noncredit, workforce development program. However, the goal is to offer five Certificates (IT Support, UX Design, Digital Marketing, Project Management, and Data Analytics) as interest grows. Recognizing the need to incorporate wraparound supports to ensure student success, staff expertise is used via train-the-trainer sessions and dedicated instructional support hours for participating students. This statewide academy approach enables capacity for the colleges, with marketing, recruitment, and enrollment being centralized through the system office to socialize the program across the state and use the system office's expansive reach.

### North Carolina Community College System

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) has also promoted the Google Career Certificates as valuable training programs for community colleges in the state. Currently, all 58 colleges within the system have access to all of the Certificates to offer at their discretion. Colleges have the option to develop and deliver courses for any of the Certificates based on their individual goals, student populations, and existing faculty expertise.

At the same time, the system has been working on designing centralized curricula that embed Certificates into academic, credit-bearing courses. Two of the Certificates, Data Analytics and Project Management, have been used in centralized curricula offerings by NCCCS in database management (DBA 118 and DBA 218) and computer information technology (CTS 137 and CTS 237) courses, relieving colleges of the heavy lifting required to create and design their own offering.

As colleges request curricula for additional Certificates, the state is prioritizing and pursuing the development of these curricula to support ongoing expansion of the Google Career Certificates.

### **Arizona Community College Coordinating Council**

The Arizona Community College Coordinating Council (AC4), the association of the state's public community college CEOs and trustee leadership, is in the process of establishing a coordinated statewide approach based on the initial success of Google IT Support Professional Certificate programming at participating colleges over the past three years. In this example, the AC4 workforce committee lead, who is a dedicated champion at Arizona Western College, has stewarded the conversation with AC4 leadership, which is receptive to scaling these efforts based on a direct working relationship with her. The suite of Certificates is currently available to nine colleges in Arizona, with each institution having the flexibility to choose which Certificates to offer based on local LMI. The association office is particularly enthusiastic about using the Project Management and Data Analytics Certificates within noncredit and credit programs to help learners develop industry-specific knowledge and prepare for high-demand jobs in the region.

There is significant interest and opportunity to scale to additional colleges throughout Arizona. AC4 supports the standardization of curricula for these purposes when appropriate for the college to implement. In the future, AC4 envisions a future where high schools across the state serve as pathways for dual enrollment learners to access credit programs, with dual enrollment serving as an effective tool for recruitment.

## **Population-Specific Support**

With creative consideration and a commitment to continuous improvement, the Google Career Certificates can be leveraged to support any population of learners. The adaptability of the Certificates offers a unique opportunity for you to engage learners from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and bring them together under your institution's roof, increasing the richness of your community and expanding learners' perspectives. The Certificates are also an opportunity to engage learners who may have previously faced barriers to accessing postsecondary education, as they are flexible enough to fit a variety of learners' needs.

The following section explores how to best tailor your program to meet the needs of a variety of student populations. More about recruitment methods for these learner populations is discussed in the section on [Learner Recruitment](#).

## Youth and High School Students

The Google Career Certificates are an effective tool for engaging learners ages 16 to 24, including high school students. Several of the Certificates are designed to provide insight into a variety of career options and can facilitate career exploration while building highly marketable skills for secondary students.

### High School Partnerships

Partnering with local high schools, career centers, or school systems can provide new opportunities to engage the community through the Google Career Certificates. High school students may be interested in enrolling in Certificate programs to explore potential career pathways aligned with their coursework or to build cross-cutting skills in areas such as data analytics and project management. If your college is offering credit for prior learning or some form of articulation for completion of a Certificate, high school students can earn credits to support their progress toward a postsecondary degree. This can be a way to establish a pipeline of learners without the additional requirements associated with dual enrollment. For example, some colleges have offered the Certificates to high school students who may not qualify academically for dual enrollment but can still benefit from participation in the program and obtain CPL.

Collaborating with high school or career center staff—particularly school counselors, career and technical education teachers, and administrators—opens more direct pathways for students to understand how a Google Career Certificate program can align with a postsecondary program of study and facilitate matriculation into college upon graduation.

### Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment lets high school students concurrently enroll in a high school course and a community college course, often without commuting to the college campus. This model enables students to earn college credit and complete more advanced coursework in the supportive environment of their own school. However, dual enrollment is not without challenges, including confirming high school faculty are certified, curriculum is aligned with college content, and students are able to pay college tuition for credit hours earned, if applicable.

Arizona Western College in Yuma offers dual credit and concurrent credit Google Career Certificates in partnership with a local high school. Learners are able to earn a Google Professional IT Support Certificate or the Google Data Analytics Certificate through combinations of hybrid, face-to-face, and completely remote delivery. When engaging students, Arizona Western has encountered challenges similar to other implementation methods, such as learner persistence and engagement, alongside challenges that are unique to high school learners. For instance, it can be hard to connect the Google Career Certificate content to relevant real-world experiences due to the limited work experience that high school students have.

As you explore the merits of dual enrollment within your particular context, consider this [working paper](#) from the Community College Resource Center. The costs and administrative burdens associated with dual enrollment can be offset by delivering one or more of the Certificates to high school learners and granting CPL upon completion.

## Incumbent Workers

Colleges with strong employer partnerships may be able to establish incumbent worker training programs that leverage the Certificates to support upskilling, as part of workforce development or business service programming. In some cases, individuals who are currently employed may be interested in enrolling in your college to learn a new skill set for potential career changes or to perhaps use professional development programs through an employer. Offering this opportunity directly to employees also opens avenues for colleges to engage with companies and area employers.

See the section on [Employer Engagement](#) to learn more about how to engage employers to support incumbent worker strategies, partner on internship or other work-based learning opportunities for learners, and hire completers.

## Learners With Disabilities

Google's collaboration with Coursera to build accessible curricula positions Google Career Certificates as an option for learners with disabilities. The curricula can be adapted to different learning styles, made more accessible by providing learners with options to move through material at their own pace and in the way that best suits their needs. Also, by offering the Certificates with a remote option, learners with physical disabilities that may make commuting to the college challenging are able to learn wherever they are most comfortable.

The platform conforms with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1<sup>1</sup> Level AA).<sup>2</sup> The Coursera platform offers a [variety of features](#) to support accessibility, including:

- **Closed captions:** All course lecture videos are closed captioned.
- **Transcripts:** Transcripts are available for all course lecture videos and other course content.
- **High-contrast mode:** A high-contrast mode is available to make the platform easier to see for learners with visual impairments.
- **Zoom:** Learners can zoom in on text and images to make them easier to see.
- **Screen reader support:** Coursera is compatible with a variety of screen readers.

- **Ability to request accommodations:** Learners with disabilities can request accommodations from Coursera.

Meeting learners where they are—in terms of physical location, ability, or preference—increases learner buy-in, improves outcomes, and creates a more collaborative and welcoming learning environment. Mohawk Valley Community College in New York has partnered with the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a local nonprofit organization, to train blind and visually impaired learners. CABVI delivers the instruction with assistive technology while MVCC supports learners' access to the Google IT Support Professional Certificate.

## People Impacted by the Criminal Legal System

People who are currently incarcerated, along with those with records, have historically faced major barriers to accessing education and career development programs. Google Career Certificates can provide training for individuals who are currently incarcerated, in transition and reentry programs, or navigating employment attainment post-incarceration. While implementing this type of programming has challenges—including lack of internet access and the need to provide wraparound supports and navigate employer hiring policies, especially in states that have not passed [“ban the box” legislation](#)—this is a promising pathway that some colleges are pursuing to support successful reentry for learners with records. Read more about JFF's point of view on fair-chance hiring [here](#).

Motlow State Community College is leveraging a financial incentive from the state to expand its education programs by offering the Google Career Certificates to individuals currently incarcerated in and transitioning out of incarceration from Tennessee jails. Access to the Certificates sets up learners for success once released and provides job placement opportunities. Motlow State continues to learn from this process and hopes to expand the model to other regions in the state. The college has found that establishing relationships with Department of Corrections staff, including those responsible for educational programming in corrections facilities and transitional housing, has been crucial to success. To get around challenges related to internet access, Motlow State has been working to offer downloaded and low-bandwidth content to expand access. In the meantime, organizations like [Unlocked Labs](#), are working on long-term solutions by making secure internet access available at scale to currently incarcerated learners.

## Additional Populations

Google Career Certificates are a flexible, adaptable option that can be offered to a variety of populations in a number of modalities. As adoption and implementation of the Certificates increases, JFF expects to see more innovative and creative approaches to welcome broader communities of learners. Colleges have been creative in finding ways to support specific program populations

depending on context, resources, and interest. Learn more about Google's work to make these Certificates appropriately accessible to more communities [here](#).

## **Alumni**

Google Career Certificates are an excellent tool to engage alumni networks at large, especially as an opportunity for learners to return to your college for upskilling. Flexible asynchronous learning enables currently employed learners to connect with your college to build on existing skills, move laterally within their field, or develop a new skill set to change careers. Engaged alumni may also be interested in supporting your college as subject matter experts or mentors for current students enrolled in the same Certificate program.

## **English Language Learners**

The Google Career Certificates are available in nine languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, French, German, Turkish, Russian, and Indonesian Bahasa. Each Certificate offers closed captions and transcripts in these languages. Significant efforts have been made to offer Google Career Certificates fully in Spanish and to showcase Latinx learners' successes. More information about Spanish language offerings are available [here](#).

## **Veterans and Their Families**

Veterans transitioning from active duty to civilian life can benefit from short-term, flexible programming that enables them to build on skills they may have developed in the military and to earn industry-aligned credentials that can facilitate employment. Google and JFF have partnered with [Hiring Our Heroes](#) and other organizations committed to advancing workforce equity within military and veteran communities. Service members transitioning to civilian life can access Google Career Certificates curricula that open options for job opportunities that align with their service experiences. Family members of service members are also able to connect with resources that support the frequent moves and change of environment associated with military service, providing career stability throughout their service member's tenure. When recognized as CPL, Google Career Certificates facilitate moving veterans and their families into pathways for further education, training, and advancement.

# **Wraparound Supports**

Google Career Certificates are widely available to learners and increasingly well-marketed by Google and Coursera. Certificate outcomes can be enhanced by many existing programs, including wraparound supports available to learners to increase retention and, ultimately, learner success. Highlighting the wraparound supports your college offers can be an incentive for learners to earn the Certificates with your institution rather than on their own.

Wraparound supports encompass programs traditionally housed within student services, including access to computer labs and other technology support, transportation assistance, childcare, and other services designed to ensure student success. For the purposes of this guide, wraparound supports are expanded beyond enrollment and persistence resources to include career counseling, job-readiness training, job search support, and other post-placement supports.

When offering Google Career Certificates, you may find that learners require additional or different support in certain areas. As you expand your offerings to engage new audiences and communities, it may be necessary to expand wraparound support offerings to appropriately welcome those learners. This section explores some of the specific types of supports that have proved most helpful to Certificate learners.

## **Accessibility Supports**

### **Basic Needs**

Learners engaging with Google Career Certificates may require support to meet basic needs, including housing, transportation, or childcare. Removing these barriers to accessing the Certificates can set up learners for greater success and provide benefits in terms of learner diversity and increased completion rates.

While some of these resources might be readily available through your college, consider which might be most necessary for learners in your specific context. For example, colleges offering the Certificates through a completely remote delivery method may be able to shift resources from transportation supports to another helpful resource. Leveraging community partnerships to refer learners to additional services has also been an effective strategy in meeting the holistic and comprehensive needs of learners. JFF recommends identifying a specific college contact for learners to connect with to help navigate the local resources ecosystem. This point of contact may also serve as the liaison with external organizations providing additional services, including community-based organizations (CBOs) and employer partners.

### **Technology**

The Google Career Certificates are intended for learners who may not have technical or educational backgrounds in the technology sector, but they do require a level of foundational digital literacy and a high school-level of reading and math skills. Learners with lower levels of digital literacy may benefit from an on-ramp program that builds foundational digital skills before they begin one of the Certificates. Opportunities for these learners to complete coursework in a hybrid method as opposed to an entirely online format can help support their success.

In addition to digital literacy, learners must also have access to the technology required to interact with the Certificate curriculum. This includes a device that can access the internet and a stable

internet connection. While the content is accessible on mobile devices, it is recommended that learners engage with the Certificates using a laptop or desktop computer for the most streamlined user experience. Colleges have explored different ways to meet this need, including offering access to on-campus computer labs, making laptops available through loaner programs, and partnering with local CBOs to leverage off-campus computer labs for broader community reach. In some cases, colleges have also issued laptops to learners who need them, to ensure they have access to the necessary technology for the program.

## **Learning Supports**

### **Academic Coaching and TA Support**

Having a coach can help learners stay motivated and overcome the challenges they experience as they work through their Certificate program. Learners who have completed their Certificate, or have advanced the furthest in a particular course, may be tapped to mentor or coach their peers. Some colleges have created student teacher assistant positions for these learners. Motlow State Community College in Tennessee has been successful inviting Certificate completers, peers of those currently enrolled in the program, to serve as TAs.

Learners in these positions can support instruction, answer questions, and provide guidance to their peers based on insight from their own experiences. This part-time employment also enables more advanced learners to use and strengthen important in-demand employability skills. In addition to benefiting current learners, the perspective of TAs can benefit instructors leading the course.

### **Career Coaching**

Career coaches or advisors can be helpful to support learner engagement and retention in a variety of ways. JFF recommends that any career coaches working to support learners have experience with Certificate coursework themselves. Program administrators are able to assign licenses to career coaches and support staff through your college's Coursera instance. Coaches are then able to offer specialized support to learners as they navigate the online curriculum and continue on their career exploration journeys. Specifically, coaches can help learners understand how Certificate content aligns with their career of interest, identify next steps in their educational or professional journey, or look for available jobs. The University of Texas Permian Basin has employed this approach by hiring full-time career coaches who have completed a Certificate to provide specific and informed support to learners.



## Building Support via Peer Networks

Across all modalities and implementation designs, learners who build and maintain community with their peers are more likely to remain engaged with your college and succeed in earning their Certificate. Colleges have found different avenues to build peer networks within different implementation structures. These various modalities are also a space for instructors and learners to engage in a continuous improvement feedback loop, sharing real-time feedback and posing questions that inform how the Certificate program may be best improved for your college's context.

### Asynchronous Learning Community Development

Offering learners a space to communicate with one another, compare notes, ask questions, and build camaraderie is a unique facet of offering these Certificates in a college environment. Online platforms such as WhatsApp, Slack, and Discord can provide an additional space for learners to interact and ask questions of their peers and for instructors to share milestone reminders.

Your college can also use these tools to support continuous improvement via asynchronous communication, or it can conduct anonymous surveys using platforms such as Google Forms or Survey Monkey to help identify current or emerging supports that may benefit your learners.

### Synchronous Learning Community Development

As mentioned in the [Delivery Methods](#) section of this guide, peer convenings can be implemented regardless of delivery modality. Faculty and staff managing the implementation of Certificates have seen success holding face-to-face office hours as part of a completely in-person or hybrid model, or with virtual office hours as part of hybrid or completely remote structures. Office hours can provide space for learners to connect with one another and directly with the instructor. Programs have also brought in external speakers, such as other faculty or an employer partner, to host virtual or face-to-face lunch-and-learn sessions.

Providing space for learners and instructors to communicate in real time—as opposed to relying on the often asynchronous nature of online platforms—helps strengthen continuous feedback loops and ensure learner success.

## Career Development and Post-Completion Supports

Career services and adjacent departments should be involved in programming related to Google Career Certificates, especially as learners near completion of a Certificate. Supporting learners as they complete their Certificate increases job placement and retention rates and offers opportunities for learners to engage with often preexisting resources within your college. These services can

include activities such as mock interview practice, resume development, career fairs, and networking events with employers.

## Career Resources Linked to Certificate Completion

Learners who complete one or more of the Google Career Certificates have access to a suite of additional services designed to support post-completion job placement and career development. After completing a Certificate, learners receive an automated email outlining access to resources designed to support job search and placement, including:

- **CareerCircle:** This job board is where Google recommends learners search for job opportunities post-completion. Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium members post jobs here specifically for Google Career Certificate completers. Learners also gain access to valuable career development tools for career pathing, resume building, and interview prep, as well as exclusive [Grow with Google](#) content.
- **Big Interview:** This platform provides opportunities for learners to practice and improve their interview skills throughout their job search journey. It is available to Google Career Certificate completers at no cost.
- **Interview Warmup:** This AI-powered tool helps learners practice answering interview questions to get more confident and comfortable with the interview process. Learner answers are transcribed in real time so they can review what they said and discover patterns in their responses.

Learners who complete a Certificate are also well-positioned to explore additional stackable credentials, both within the suite of Google Career Certificates and those offered by other providers. For example, learners who complete the Google IT Support Professional Certificate are eligible for a 20% discount on the CompTIA A+ exam. Additional details about these resources for learners can be found [here](#).

## Post-Placement and Retention Coaching

Once a learner has completed their Certificate and begun working, there are still opportunities for your college to remain a resource. Maintaining communication with learners to ensure job fit and continued success could also lead to expanding, building, or maintaining relationships with their employers for future opportunities to collaborate on upskilling efforts. Learners also have an opportunity to reengage with the college for additional Certificates.

# Learner Recruitment

As part of the design phase, prior to the launch of your program, you will need to determine which Google Career Certificate(s) to offer as well as which type of learner population your college would like to enroll. The Certificates were intentionally designed with an equity lens, to expand access to high-growth, in-demand fields to learners who have been historically underrepresented in these sectors. This includes learners from Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, as well as women of all backgrounds and transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals. Consider the following questions: Who are your learners? What are their unique barriers and needs? What are their community and individual assets that can be leveraged? How can your college make a compelling case for individuals to enroll in these Certificate programs?

Once these questions are answered, your college can begin to design an associated marketing and outreach plan to recruit new learners. In addition to traditional, wide-scale communication mechanisms to raise the visibility of your program, plan to engage external partners and conduct targeted outreach to other workforce entities that touch potential learners in your community.

In the following sections, you'll find more information on successful recruitment strategies, how to leverage labor market information for marketing purposes, and guidelines for creating promotional collateral aligned with Google's vision and branding.

## Recruitment Strategies

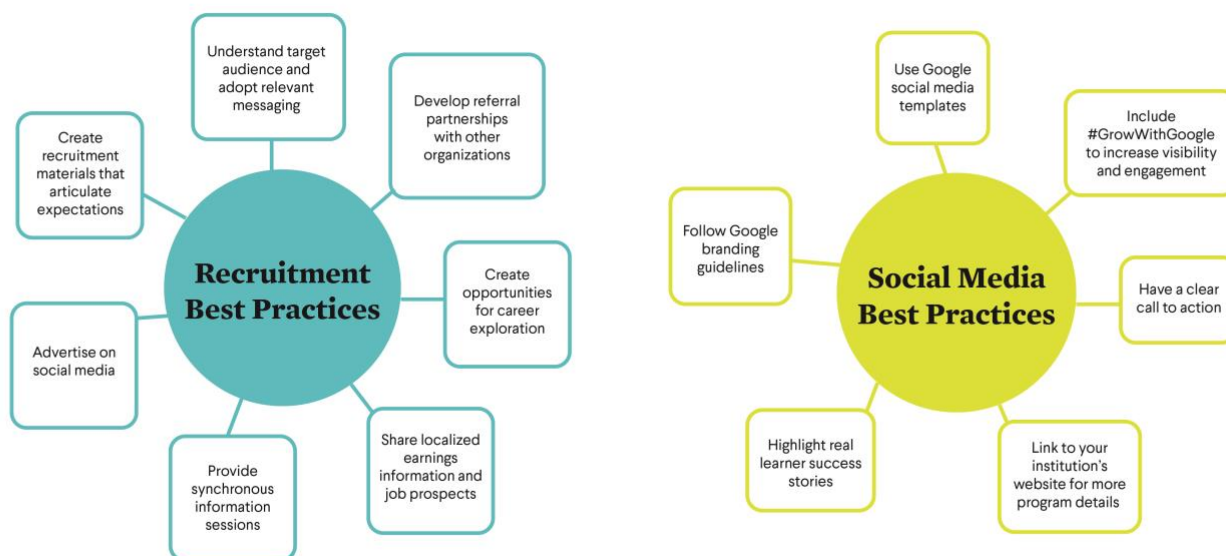
As you begin to think about your recruitment strategy, consider how you'll define success and what metrics you'll use to measure impact and outcomes. Set goals for program recruitment and develop a process for tracking progress and ensuring all internal stakeholders (e.g., workforce and continuing education departments, academic and career advising, and student support services) are aligned. When setting goals, remember that the recruitment process can take time. By setting expectations with learners up front and designing a simple and seamless enrollment process, your program can mitigate attrition between initial interest and enrollment.

Recommended talking points to set baseline expectations for learners include:

- Clearly communicate the **time commitment** required for the program (eight to 10 hours per week for three to five months for part-time programs) as well as the **technology** and **basic digital literacy skills** needed to complete the program successfully.
- Explicitly state that the program doesn't guarantee employment at Google, a common assumption from learners, while emphasizing the **career and placement services** your

college can offer, whether those opportunities come in the form of work-based learning opportunities, internships, or part-time or full-time jobs. Also note that Google Career Certificate completers will have exclusive access to [CareerCircle](#) and roles posted on this platform by employers in the Google Employer Consortium who recognize the Google Career Certificates as hiring qualifications to support their job search.

- Meet learners where they are at by leveraging **social media** (LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) to attract learners, inform them of the benefits of your program, and provide them the steps needed to register for your Certificate program. See “Social Media Best Practices” visual below for best practices for social media recruitment.
- Outline the **wraparound support services** available to learners and how individuals can access them. Learners who face academic, non-academic, or employment barriers should have access to supportive services to ensure those barriers don’t impede their ability to complete the Certificate coursework and find a job. Examples might include resume writing or interview preparation services, transportation, childcare services, technology, or social and emotional supports. You can find more information in the [Wraparound Supports](#) section.



Additionally, with many learners operating in a saturated landscape of various short-term training opportunities, it's important to differentiate your college's Certificate program from other no- or low-cost learning programs so learners understand the value of the Certificates, the benefits of enrolling via your college, and opportunities to stack Certificates offered by your college.

To build excitement and awareness of your college's Certificate program within your community, local community partnerships can help spread the word and recruit learners. These partnerships can take shape in the form of CBOs, employer and industry partners, faith-based organizations, and workforce development boards (WDBs), among others. Bring partners in early throughout the planning process so they have time to socialize the opportunity throughout their networks and consider which of their participants would be a good fit for the program. Depending on the target learner population, you may also find successful recruitment avenues through dual enrollment programs, English language program graduates, and local corporate incumbent worker programs.

Strong partnerships, along with well-crafted messaging and compelling promotional materials, are all essential components of a robust recruitment strategy and will help your college meet Certificate program recruitment goals. Read on for more information regarding effective Google Certificate branding and promotional materials.

## Promotional Materials and Using the Google Branding Guide

Once your institution determines what its Certificate program offering will be, you'll need effective marketing and promotional materials to complement your recruitment strategy and attract learners from the identified target learner population(s). Colleges typically leverage promotional content such as one-page flyers, social media campaigns, press releases, and new website landing pages. Once collateral is developed, you can share the materials with local CBOs, WDBs, alumni, and current institutional listservs to generate interest in your program.

To get started, visit JFF's CoP [Promotional Materials](#) page, where you'll find pre-developed flyers for each Google Career Certificate as well as a [Google Branding Guide](#). This helpful resource provides instructions and best practices for how to market the Certificates, including pre-developed language, co-branding guidelines, customizable social media templates, and impact testimonials. Please note these materials are meant to be a helpful starting point as you create promotional materials, but colleges are encouraged to customize recruitment and marketing collateral to be reflective of the local region and culturally responsive. You should feel empowered to adopt language that best speaks to your target learner audience. You may also visit Google's [Brand Resource Center](#) for more information on branding expectations.

## Leveraging Labor Market Information

As mentioned previously, labor market information can help colleges identify which Certificate(s) to offer their learners, enabling them to assess employer demand, job openings in the region, and skills or competencies required by local industry. LMI can also be a compelling recruitment and marketing

tool to inform your marketing collateral. Using local data to connect Google Career Certificates to local employment opportunities (e.g., specific occupations that are in demand locally and employers with current job openings) and possible outcomes upon completion is a proven strategy and one that colleges often deploy when designing and preparing to launch a Certificate program. For example, the University of Texas Permian Basin analyzed regional LMI to understand typical wages for tech and tech-adjacent roles, the number of current job postings, current employment, and projected growth. It used this information to create a digital infographic to attract new learners and invite them to an informational session to learn more about its Google Career Certificate program offering.

For additional resources that highlight national LMI for IT on-ramps, please review the following JFF publications:

- [\*JFF's Framework for a High-Quality IT Pre-apprenticeship Program\*](#), which includes LMI for the IT/technology sector that can support case making
- [\*When Is a Job Just a Job\*](#) report, which makes the case for tech roles, including those that require sub-bachelor's credentials, as springboard opportunities that can support long-term advancement

## Employer Engagement

A key metric of success for any workforce development or education program is whether the program leads to measurable career outcomes, including new employment, career advancement, increased wages, and successful career transitions. Colleges that pursue strategic employer engagement can expand and improve these post-completion outcomes for Certificate completers.

As mentioned earlier in this guide, employers may be interested in recognizing short-term digital credentials as qualification for entry-level roles but may still need additional encouragement and guidance to begin doing so. As respected institutions, colleges can support the scaled adoption and recognition of Google Career Certificates by educating and engaging with local employers as they develop and implement their Certificate programming. This type of proactive engagement can help increase the interest and confidence of employers in skills-based hiring and provide expanded opportunities for Google Career Certificate completers to be hired into quality jobs.

Provider colleges have engaged their employer partners in various ways, including:

- **Offering Google Career Certificates to upskill incumbent workers.** This can be a particularly valuable opportunity for workers interested in engaging or reengaging with formal education systems or seeking career advancement. Workers who are independently

interested in earning a Certificate to increase skills or pursue career advancement opportunities may be able to use professional development funds to cover any costs associated with the Google Career Certificates within a college system. Such a collaboration between college and employer also helps to strengthen that partnership in the short and longer term.

- **Hosting activation events such as career fairs, hiring events, and information sessions.** Coordinating these events with employer partners can support both learners and employers, as learners can network with potential future employers, and employers can continue to socialize and build a diverse and sustainable talent pipeline.
- **Providing work-based learning opportunities to learners and completers.** Google Career Certificates can be combined with work-based learning programs to provide supplemental instruction to hands-on learning experiences. Local employers may be able to provide internships or apprenticeships to either current learners or completers to help strengthen both their technical and employability skills. Additionally, project-based work with local employers can be a great way to provide a less time-intensive, hands-on experience to learners. When these types of arrangements are paid, they provide an important mechanism for learners to earn and learn simultaneously. Providing a living wage helps to remove a key barrier to completion, as noted earlier in the field guide.

You are encouraged to consider your college's existing employer partners and how they may be able to participate in your Certificate programs. To learn more about how to engage employer partners in activation activities, see JFF's [Employer Engagement Activation Information Sheet](#).

## The Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium

One unique component of offering Google Career Certificates at your institution is having access to the ever-expanding [Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium](#).

As Grow with Google has scaled the adoption of the Google Career Certificates nationwide, it has also sought to expand recognition of the Certificates by building a robust consortium of more than 150 employers that are committed to using the Google Career Certificates in their recruitment, onboarding, and upskilling efforts. JFF has been supporting the expansion of the consortium through recruitment of new employers across the United States and encourages you to inform your college's employer partners of the opportunity to participate.

Participation in the Google Employer Consortium provides employers with the following benefits:

- Connection to a robust and inclusive talent pipeline, with access to high-quality candidates, many from nontraditional employment backgrounds

- Exclusive access to [CareerCircle](#), a recruiting tool that includes a job board for posting open, entry-level positions that will be visible only to Google Certificate completers and a platform on which employers can review the profiles of Certificate completers
- Recognition as a Google Participating Employer via a digital badge that can be posted on the company website or in other promotional and recruitment materials

Being a member of the Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium is an easy lift for the employer, and it includes great benefits by connecting the employers directly to skilled talent locally and nationally. When considering your college's employer partners for this opportunity, employers focused on skills-based hiring for roles aligned with the Google Career Certificates are ideal for consortium membership. See JFF's [Employer Engagement Guide](#) for more information about the Google Employer Consortium and identifying potential members. Employers can indicate their interest in learning more about the Certificates by visiting Grow with Google's [employer partners page](#).

## Conclusion

As this field guide demonstrates, offering the Google Career Certificates at your college presents a multitude of possibilities and considerations to build programs that will best serve your learners and help prepare them to access entry-level roles in high-demand fields. This culmination of JFF's efforts to support a nationwide portfolio of 180 colleges and consortia with their implementation of the Certificates illustrates that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to offering this flexible suite of digital credentials. There are myriad opportunities to use partnerships, stack credentials, scale offerings to a systems level, and engage diverse populations of learners. This is especially exciting to consider as the higher education landscape continues to evolve to meet the needs of a dynamic workforce and labor market.

We hope the case studies and evidence-based best practices offered in this guide equip you with the information and tools needed to build robust and effective credit and noncredit programs as well as inspire continuous ideation and discussion around how the Google Career Certificates can be integrated into institutional offerings and used in new ways. Colleges are an important conduit to unlocking and creating these opportunities, which will ensure that learners of all backgrounds and experiences can prepare for and access high-growth, in-demand jobs. While the findings shared here represent a strong foundation of what is possible with the Google Career Certificates, the possibilities for innovation and creative thinking are limitless.



# Endnotes

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