



## Embedding Student Success and Workforce Relevance Strategies into Federal-State Partnerships

Our rapidly changing economy demands a renewed national focus on building talent to help Americans secure family-supporting careers. College access and affordability have become significant barriers to economic advancement, particularly for low-income and underserved populations. But making college affordable will not solve our challenges if postsecondary education is not consistently offering high quality and relevant programming, and students are not completing high-value credentials and degrees with positive outcomes.

Across the country, colleges have developed effective strategies to improve student success and program relevance, including innovative strategies developed through TAACCCT and other evidence-based initiatives. But more work is needed to take effective student success strategies to scale. Unfortunately, the Higher Education Act (HEA) does little to incentivize system reforms. Systems changes can best be accomplished through statewide efforts to scale evidence-based strategies and can be accomplished in tandem with efforts to focus on postsecondary affordability.

**Scaling State Change:** Federal-state partnerships should incentivize changes in the design and delivery of postsecondary education and training. Partnership grants should require states to describe how the state is implementing or has a plan to implement the following activities:

- **A statewide longitudinal data system** built upon student outcome data, including labor market outcomes by institution and by program, with information made available to the public in easy-to-understand formats;
- Development of **credit articulation agreements** between 2 and 4 year state postsecondary education institutions;
- Development of articulation agreements between **non-credit and credit education** at state postsecondary education institutions;
- Statewide policies to support expansion of high-quality **dual and concurrent enrollment pathways**, which may include early college high schools;
- Statewide policies to support expansion of education and training in **in-demand industry sectors or occupations**;
- Statewide policies to support design and expansion of **guided and career pathway programs**, including the development of stackable credentials;
- Statewide policies to support expansion of **work-based learning opportunities**, including apprenticeship programs;
- Statewide policies to support **accelerated learning strategies**, including competency-based education, credit for prior learning, developmental education redesign, and other strategies for reducing time to credential attainment;
- Increased **alignment between workforce, postsecondary, poverty alleviation, and economic development** systems in the state;
- Statewide policies to support **financial stability of students** to help them complete a postsecondary credential, including design and implementation of **navigation and case management** services.

**Structure:** In addition to requiring a state describe their existing implementation of these state activities or plan for implementation, federal-state partnerships should provide set-aside funding to states for implementing these activities, which may include technical assistance, professional development, or scaling best practices. A state matching requirement should also be included.